

CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19) MANAGEMENT POLICY

(Effective from 04 May 2020)

COVID-19 is a new strain of coronavirus that was originally identified in Wuhan, Hubei Province, China in December 2019. The World Health Organization (WHO), has declared that COVID-19 outbreak as a 'pandemic'- a Public Health Emergency of International Concern (effective 11 March 2020). This is mainly due to the speed and scale of transmission of the virus in countries around the world, including Australia.

COVID-19 is transmitted from someone who is infected with the virus to others in close contact through contaminated droplets spread by coughing or sneezing or by contact with contaminated hands or surfaces. According to Department of Health, the time of exposure to the virus and when symptoms first occur is anywhere from 2-14 days.

Symptoms can range from a mild illness, similar to a cold or flu, to pneumonia. People with COVID-19 may experience:

- fever
- flu-like symptoms such as coughing, sore throat and fatigue
- shortness of breath
- temperature

The [Australian Government](#) is constantly updating the current status of COVID-19 including health recommendations, travel restrictions, and a vast collection of resources and information to help people make informed decisions.

As this information is changing rapidly, our Service is monitoring health alerts and implementing measures suggested by key health experts to minimise the transmission of COVID-19.

Our Service has a range of comprehensive policies in place to guide best practice in relation to health and safety, dealing with infectious diseases and maintaining a child safe environment. Our duty of care and responsibilities to children, parents, families and all staff to provide a safe environment is of utmost importance.

The evolving nature of COVID-19 and the unprecedented steps required to protect our community as recommended by the Australian Government, has resulted in the development of a specific policy to assist our Service manage this pandemic.

This policy will change as required to ensure the protective measures against COVID-19 as advised by our Government are implemented by our Service. [\[updates will be noted as they become available\]](#)

NATIONAL QUALITY STANDARD (NQS)

| QUALITY AREA 2: CHILDREN’S HEALTH AND SAFETY | | |
|--|---------------------------------|--|
| 2.1.1 | Wellbeing and comfort | Each child’s wellbeing and comfort is provided for, including appropriate opportunities to meet each child’s needs for sleep, rest and relaxation. |
| 2.1.2 | Health practices and procedures | Effective illness and injury management and hygiene practices are promoted and implemented. |
| 2.2 | Safety | Each child is protected. |

| EDUCATION AND CARE SERVICES NATIONAL REGULATIONS | |
|--|---|
| 77 | Health, hygiene and safe food practices |
| 85 | Incident, injury, trauma and illness policies and procedures |
| 86 | Notification to parents of incident, injury, trauma and illness |
| 87 | Incident, injury, trauma and illness record |
| 88 | Infectious diseases |
| 90 | Medical conditions policy |
| 93 | Administration of medication |
| 162 | Health information to be kept in enrolment record |
| 168 | Education and care service must have policies and procedures |

RELATED POLICIES

| | |
|--|--|
| Control of Infectious Diseases Policy Family Communication Policy Hand Washing Policy Health and Safety Policy Immunisation Policy Incident, Illness, Accident & Trauma Policy Interactions with Children, Families and Staff Policy | Medical Conditions Policy Nappy Change & Toileting Policy Payment of Fees Policy Physical Environment Policy Sick Children Policy Work Health and Safety Policy |
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PURPOSE

Club House will minimise our staff and children’s exposure to COVID-19 by adhering to all recommended guidelines from the Australian Government- Department of Health and local Public Health Units to slow the spread of the virus. We will implement practices that help to reduce the transmission of the virus including the exclusion of any person (child, educator, staff, parent, visitor or volunteer) that is suspected or has tested positive to having COVID-19. Our Service will implement effective hygiene practices as per our existing policies and procedures and increase the frequency of cleaning and disinfecting high touch areas as per SafeWork Australia recommendations.

Our Service will provide up-to-date information and advice to parents, families and educators sourced from the Australian Government, Department of Health and state Ministry of Health about COVID-19 as it becomes available. Recommendations and health measures mandated by the Federal Government Department of Health will be strictly adhered to at all times.

SCOPE

This policy applies to children, families, staff, management, and visitors of the Service.

IMPLEMENTATION

Our Service is committed to minimise the spread of the COVID-19 virus by implementing recommendations provided by the [Australian Government- Department of Health](#) and Safe Work Australia.

Our Service implements procedures as stated in the *Staying healthy: Preventing infectious diseases in early childhood education and care services* (Fifth Edition) developed by the Australian Government National Health and Medical Research Council as part of our day-to-day operation of the Service.

We are guided by explicit decisions regarding exclusion periods and notification of any infectious disease by the *Australian Government- Department of Health* and local Public Health Units in our jurisdiction under the Public Health Act. COVID-19 is a notifiable condition in all states and territories of Australia.

In the event of any child, educator, staff member or visitor attending our Service who is suspected or confirmed to have the infection, the Approved Provider will contact their Public Health Unit.

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|--|
| National Coronavirus (COVID-19) Health Information Line |
| 1800 020 080 Call 131 450 for translating and interpreting service |
| Health Direct 1800 022 222 |
| Public Health Unit- Local state and territory health departments |

Minimising the transmission of COVID-19

Risk Management

Our Service has effective and systematic risk management processes in place to identify any possible risks and hazards to our learning environment and practices related to COVID-19. Where possible, we have eliminated or minimised these risks as is reasonably practicable. Control measures are reviewed in consultation with staff members. Due to the constant changes in managing our Service during the pandemic, our approach to risk management is ongoing and fluid.

Effective 15 March 2020, the [Australian Health Protection Principal Committee](#) made recommendations to the general public to help manage the spread of COVID-19. These measures include implementing good hygiene, self-isolation and social distancing.

Recommendations for risk mitigation measures such as:

- exclusion of unwell staff, children and visitors
- enhanced personal hygiene for children, staff and parents
- full adherence to the NHMRC childcare cleaning guidelines and cleaning and disinfecting high touch surfaces daily, washing and laundering play items and toys

The AHPPC also notes that alternative arrangements should be considered for highly vulnerable children.

Parents and carers of children with complex medical needs are encouraged to seek medical advice from their health practitioner to support decision-making regarding the suitability of their child accessing on-site education. Although this statement directly relates to primary schools, our Service recommends families to seek medical advice and relay this information to management. (AHPPC 24 April)

Staff with compromised immune systems are also requested to seek medical advice whilst working in early education and care during the pandemic.

Immunisation

Whilst there is no vaccination for COVID-19, we **strongly** recommend that all staff, children and families receive the seasonal influenza vaccination.

Hygiene practices

Our Service will ensure [signs and posters](#) remind employees and visitors of the risks of COVID-19 and the measures that are necessary to stop its spread including hand washing and hand rub procedures and information about COVID-19. These will also be communicated to families through email, newsletters and social media. Alcohol-based hand sanitiser will be available for use. If parents decide to apply this to their child, they must supervise the child to avoid rubbing it into their eyes or a child swallowing the gel/liquid. Our Service will supply disposable tissues and have bins available with plastic liners available in several locations for disposing used items. All high touch surfaces are disinfected daily including door handles and sign in tablets are disinfected after each parent.

The Approved Provider, Nominated Supervisor, educators, staff, families and visitors will comply with the following:

Exclusion/ Self-isolation/ Self-quarantine

Our Service has an obligation to ensure the health and safety of employees, children and visitors in our workplace, so far as reasonably practicable. We may therefore collect information from visitors about their potential exposure to COVID-19 in order to identify, assess and control risks of infection in line with Department of Health guidelines. Information collected will only be viewed by designated staff members, the Supervisor and/or the Director and will be stored securely. To comply with privacy laws, personal information will only be disclosed on a 'need to know' basis to the Public Health Unit to prevent and manage COVID-19 if required. (ACTU Privacy at work)

- any person who has been in close contact with someone who has a positive diagnosis must self-isolate for 14 days
- household members of a person who has a confirmed case (including children) of COVID-19 must also be isolated from the childcare Service and general public
- families must immediately advise the Service if they, or anyone in their family, develops any symptoms of the virus or receives a positive result of the virus whilst in isolation
- any person (employee, enrolled child, parent, caregiver, visitor or contractor) who is displaying symptoms such as: **fever, coughing, sore throat, fatigue and shortness of breath**, must seek

urgent medical attention to determine if they need to be tested for COVID-19 and not attend our Service **under any circumstance**

Implement effective hygiene measures

The national campaign *Help Stop The Spread and Stay Healthy*, launched by the Australian Government has emphasised that effective handwashing is a vital strategy to help reduce the spread of the COVID-19 virus. Handwashing with soap and water for at least 20 seconds whenever you cough, sneeze or blow your nose, prepare food or eat, touch your face or use the toilet is recommended. Club House Educators supervise handwashing.

Our Service will adhere to National Regulation requirements and Government guidelines to ensure all educators, children, families and visitors to the Service implement best practice.

Our Service will ensure:

- all employees, parents, children and visitors must wash their hands with soap and water or use the alcohol-based hand sanitiser provided upon arrival to the Service
- hands must be thoroughly dried using disposal paper and disposed of in the bin provided
- disposable tissues must be used to wipe noses, eyes or mouths and disposed of in the bin provided immediately after use
- hands must be washed following the use of tissues
- hands must be washed thoroughly using soap and water before and after using the toilet
- cough and sneeze etiquette must be used- cover your cough and sneeze with your hand or elbow
- educators and staff must adhere to our *Handwashing Policy* at all times
- children are supervised when washing hands
- educators and staff must adhere to effective food preparation and food handling procedures
- educators will wash their hands or use alcohol based sanitiser, before wearing gloves and wash their hands after wearing gloves
- educators and staff must adhere to our *Health and Safety Policy* for cleaning and disinfecting surfaces and equipment (such as toys, puzzles, outdoor toys, bedding, playdough etc) as per *Staying healthy: Preventing infectious diseases in early childhood education and care services* recommendations
- staff will maintain a cleaning register of all surfaces and equipment conducted
- equipment, resources and surfaces including high-touch surfaces- taps, door handles, light switches, and toys will be cleaned more frequently as required using detergent and water followed by disinfectant

- cleaning contractors hygienically clean the Service to ensure risk of contamination is removed as per [Environmental Cleaning and Disinfection Principles for COVID-19](#)
- washroom facilities for employees have adequate supplies of soap, toilet paper and alcohol-based sanitiser

NOTE: According to the World Health Organisation, COVID-19 may survive on surfaces for a few hours or up to several days. (March 14 2020)

Social/Physical distancing in childcare

Social or physical distancing is important because COVID-19 is most likely spread from person-to-person through close contact with a person while they are infectious, close contact with a person with a confirmed infection who coughs or sneezes or from touching objects or surfaces (such as door handles or tables) contaminated from a cough or sneeze from a person with a confirmed infection and then touching your nose or mouth. (source: Australian Government Department of Health. Coronavirus disease)

Social or physical distancing in early childhood education and care is not feasible for educators to perform their job, however we will implement measures to minimise the risk of exposure as reasonably practicable. Guidelines have been developed according to Safe Work Australia- Early childhood education and care workers: [Minimising the risk of exposure to COVID-19](#)

To reduce the spread of COVID-19 parents are reminded of the following:

- if your child is sick, do not send them to our Service
- **do not visit our Service if you or another family member is unwell**
- sanitise your hands at regular intervals throughout the day
- avoid physical contact with other people who may be sick- such as older people and people with existing health conditions
- clean and disinfect high touch surfaces regularly (door handles, car seats, mobile phone, toys, dummies)
- promote strictest hygiene measures when preparing food at home and at the Service

To minimise the risk of exposure to COVID-19 our Service will:

- undertake a risk assessment to identify potential risks and mitigate with consideration risks to children and staff
- revisit the risk assessment whenever new risks or potential risks are identified and adjust our management plan

- restrict the number of visitors to our Service (including students, delivery of goods or outside providers)
- restrict the number of family members visiting our Service [insert any restrictions your Service may be imposing] for example:
 - parents not coming into the Service at all- parents are to call using mobile phone to alert the Service that they have arrived and are ready to collect children
 - use of witches hats/sports cones as markings on the floor near the front entry indicating a 1.5 metre mark for parents/families to use
- where possible, outdoor play will be promoted within our Service to provide children with additional personal space
- large groups will be monitored to provide flexible learning to ensure groups are smaller in both the indoor and outdoor environment
- increase ventilation within the Service

Suspected cases of COVID-19 at our Service

As per our *Sick Child Policy* we reserve the right to refuse a child into care if they:

- are unwell and unable to participate in normal activities or require additional attention
- have had a temperature/fever, or vomiting in the last 24 hours
- have had diarrhoea in the last 48 hours
- have been given medication for a temperature prior to arriving at the Service
- have started a course of anti-biotics in the last 24 hours or
- if we have reasonable grounds to believe that a child has a contagious or infectious disease (this includes COVID-19)

If your child becomes ill whilst at the Service, educators/staff will respond to their individual symptoms of illness and provide comfort and care.

Parents are reminded to ensure their contact details are current and emergency contact details are updated if required.

Our Service also reserves the right to prevent employees, parents, family members or visitors to enter our premises if the Approved Provider or Nominated Supervisor suspects instances of COVID-19.

Notification

The Approved Provider or Nominated Supervisor is mandated by law to notify the Public Health Unit or [Health Information hotline on 1800 020 080](tel:1800020080) of any confirmed or suspected cases of COVID-19. In

addition, the Approved Provider must also notify the [Regulatory Authority](#) in their state or territory within 24 hours.

Management reserves the right to request employees to self-isolate if they suspect they have come into contact with someone who has a confirmed COVID-19 infection.

Children considered at risk

Where a child is enrolled and is considered 'at risk' of serious abuse or neglect, our Service will refer the child or family to the appropriate support agency in order to comply with the legislative requirements.

What happens if our Service is forced to close?

The decision to close our Service will be made, and advised, by relevant state and territory governments or the Regulatory Authority. This may be due to a confirmed case of COVID-19 in our Service community.

Should this occur, all families will be notified immediately via email and/or phone.

The Approved Provider will notify the [Regulatory Authority](#) within 24 hours of any closure via the [NQA IT System](#)

Staff entitlements if sick or suspected to have COVID-19

Under workplace health and safety laws, our Service must ensure the health and safety of all employees.

Confirmed COVID-19

If an educator or staff member is confirmed to have COVID-19, they are unable to attend the workplace and cannot return to work until they have completed a period of self-isolation of at least 14 days.

Employees must make a declaration that they are *fit for work* and have no symptoms of COVID-19 and have been advised they no longer need to be in isolation from their doctor or public health unit. (updated 3 April)

Full and part-time employees who cannot attend work due to illness can take paid sick leave.

Self-Isolation directed by Service

Where an employee is directed by the Approved Provider to stay home and self-isolate as they have shown symptoms of a flu-like illness, and the employee is not sick and able to work, **our Service will continue** to pay the employee as per their rostered hours if the employee is able to complete work from home negotiated with the Approved Provider.

Self-isolation as a precaution

If an employee wants to stay home as a precaution of contracting COVID-19 they **may negotiate** to take unpaid leave. There will be no leave paid for casual staff.

Waivers

In the event of staff members requiring to self-isolate due to possible infection of COVID-19, the Approved Provider will apply to the Regulatory Authority for waivers for qualifications and/or ratios to minimise disruptions to our provision of care. (Payment for waivers must be paid, however will be reimbursed by the regulatory authority)

Communicating with families

Our Service will establish continue regular communication channels with families and share information about COVID-19 as required.

Due to the fluid nature of COVID-19 and the necessity of self-isolation for some staff members, our Service will endeavour to inform parents and families of any staff changes on a daily basis.

Staff who have approved leave will be replaced with casual staff and families will be informed as per our usual practices to ensure continuity of care where possible.

Caring for our community

We understand that the outbreak of COVID-19 and the constant amount of information received through the media may be very stressful to young children and parents. The anxiety about this virus may be overwhelming and cause fear and anxiety to some people, especially children.

Our Service is committed to continue to provide quality education and care to all children and support families responsibly during this unprecedented challenge with the COVID-19 outbreak.

Knowing how to look after yourself, and others is very important during this crisis.

We will promote a safe and supportive environment by:

- reassuring children they are safe
- acknowledging and listening to children’s questions
- promoting and implementing hygiene routines for handwashing and cough and sneezing
- keeping regular and familiar routines within our Service
- ensuring children eat well throughout the day
- engaging children in play, games and other physical activities
- being alert to children’s level of anxiety and provide quiet and relaxing activities
- ensuring children are provided with rest when needed
- providing information to families and support services as required

Dr Michelle Dickinson- Video for kids about COVID-19

<https://youtu.be/OPsY-jLqaXM>

Emerging Minds- Talking to Children about Natural Disasters, Traumatic Events or Worries About the Future

<https://emergingminds.com.au/resources/supporting-children-during-the-coronavirus-covid-19-outbreak/>

Play School- Hello Friends! (A COVID-19 Special)

<https://www.abc.net.au/abckids/shows/play-school/covid-19/12114308>

UNICEF- [How to talk to your child about COVID-19](#)

Asthma Australia- [What does Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) mean for people with Asthma](#)

Disclaimer

Management Note: The information contained in this ‘draft’ policy is based on current information from the Australian Government Department of Education, Skills and Employment, Australian Government Department of Health, Australian Government- The Treasury, Family Assistance Law and Fairwork Ombudsmen.

More information and resources

[Australian Business Lawyers & Advisors](#)

[Australian Government Department of Education Skills and Employment- Coronavirus \(COV-19\) information sheet regarding periods of local emergency and absences for child care providers and services](#)

[Australian Government Department of Education Skills and Employment Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) information for early childhood education and care providers and services from 6 April 2020](#)

Australian Government Department of Health Australian Health Protection Principal Committee

(AHPPC) [Children in early childhood and learning centres](#)

Australian Government The Treasury [JobKeeper payment](#)

Beyond Blue [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) Supporting educators, children and young people](#)

CCS Helpdesk 1300 667 276

[Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) frequently asked questions](#)

[Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) resources Australian Government](#)

[COVID-19 Infection control training](#)

[Emerging Minds Community Trauma Toolkit](#)

[Fairwork Australia- Coronavirus and Australian workplace laws](#)

[Healthdirect Coronavirus hub](#)

[Home Isolation Information](#)

[Information for people with a suspected case](#)

[Information for employers](#)

[Information on Social distancing](#)

[Local state and territory health departments](#)

[Raising Children](#)

[Safe Work Australia](#)

[Victoria State Government Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) advice for early childhood services](#)

Posters and Visuals

[COVID-19 coronavirus in pictures](#)

[Manuela Moina- Children's book- "Hello! I am the Coronavirus"](#)

[Simple Steps To Help Stop The Spread Poster](#)

State and Territory specific information

[Victorian Government Department of Health and Human Services – Coronavirus disease \(COVID-19\)](#)

Source

Australian Children’s Education & Care Quality Authority. (2014).

Australian Government Department of Health *Health Topics* [Health Topics Coronavirus COVID-19](#)

Australian Government Department of Health Coronavirus (COVID-19) advice for travellers

<https://www.health.gov.au/resources/apps-and-tools/covid-19-infection-control-training>

Australian Government Fair Work Ombudsman *Coronavirus and Australian workplace laws* (updated 13 March 2020) <https://www.fairwork.gov.au/about-us/news-and-media-releases/website-news/coronavirus-and-australian-workplace-laws>

Australian Government Department of Health

Fair Work Ombudsman *Coronavirus and Australian workplace laws* (2020)

<https://coronavirus.fairwork.gov.au/coronavirus-and-australian-workplace-laws>

Guide to the Education and Care Services National Law and the Education and Care Services National Regulations. (2017).

Guide to the National Quality Standard. (2020)

National Health and Medical Research Council. (2012). *Staying healthy: Preventing infectious diseases in early childhood education and care services.*

Public Health Act 2010

Public Health Amendment Act 2017

Public Health and Wellbeing Regulations 2019 Victoria

The Australian Parenting website Raisingchildren <https://raisingchildren.net.au/guides/a-z-health-reference/coronavirus-and-children-in-australia>

Revised National Quality Standard. (2018).

Safe Work Australia (2020) *Early childhood education and care workers: Minimising the risk of exposure to COVID-19*

<https://www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au/doc/early-childhood-education-and-care-workers-minimising-risk-exposure-covid-19>

REVIEW

| POLICY REVIEWED | May 2020 | NEXT REVIEW DATE | June 2020 |
|---------------------|---|------------------|-----------|
| Updated 09 Sept | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Removed information relating to Jobkeeper and Early Childhood Education and Care Relief Package payments (effective 6 April) | | |
| Updated 04 May | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Added a section at the top of page 5 relating to privacy laws Updates from the April 30 review remain highlighted – see below | | |
| UPDATED 30 April | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Risk assessment and risk management plan information updated Consideration included for children with chronic medical conditions or immunosuppression Updated recommendations from Australian Health Protection Principles Committee Additional information related to Exceptional Circumstances Supplementary Payment additional resources for supporting families and educators | | |
| UPDATED 16 April | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Additional information for JobKeeper- nomination acceptance form Fair Work Australia laws- direction to perform different duties Self-isolation and Pandemic leave Additional information regarding children ‘at risk’ notification Additional resources added as highlighted | | |
| UPDATED 5 April | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Major changes to Payment of fees related to CCS and ACCS introduction of Early Childhood Education and Care Relief Package payments (effective 6 April) introduction of JobKeeper Payments | | |

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • removal of 'stand down' information • addition of Safe Work Australia suggestions • amendment to return to work requirements for positive COVID-19 employees requiring a medical certificate • additional information about staff travel to and from work |
| UPDATED 28 March | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • changes to reflect changes in periods of local emergency and absences • new isolation restrictions for people travelling interstate • small edits to leave entitlements for staff • Fair Work information added- employee entitlements, stand down |
| UPDATED 24 March | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • updated effective 24 March 2020 • changes due to Ministerial update re: increase in absences for children to receive CCS payments and CCS payments if services are forced to close • new information for CCCF funding for COVID-19 • modification to staff requested to be isolated from Service due to flu-like symptoms • modifications of entitlements relating to sick pay if employees are forced to be self-isolated • additional resources for state/territory specific information |
| 16 March 2020 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • original policy drafted |