

CORONAVIRUS POLICY

Best Practice – Quality Area 2

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to outline the strategies and actions that Camberwell Kindergarten and Child Care Centre Inc intends to take to prevent the transmission of infectious diseases that are epidemics or pandemics, and control the transmission of infectious diseases when a case /s is identified.

POLICY STATEMENT

1. VALUES

The education and care services will provide regularly updated information about COVID – 19 which will be communicated to families. CKCC will comply with government guidance to ensure the health and wellbeing of all educators, staff, families, children and others are adhered to.

2. SCOPE

This policy applies to the Approved Provider, Persons with Management Control, Nominated Supervisor, Person Responsible, educators, parents, guardians, contractors' students on placement, and volunteers

Background and legislation

Coronavirus (COVID-19) can cause illnesses similar to the common cold, but it can also cause more serious respiratory diseases. Most people displaying symptoms such as fever, cough, sore throat, tiredness or shortness of breath are likely suffering with a cold or other respiratory illness—not coronavirus. People at higher risk of catching the virus include older people, those with underlying medical problems and Indigenous Australians. The threats posed by the virus mean serious steps must be taken to stop the spread of the disease.

As outlined in our Infectious Disease and Health, Hygiene and Food Safety Policies, the Approved Provider, Nominated Supervisor, educators, and staff implement strict hygiene and infection control procedures at all times to prevent or minimise the spread of contagious illnesses. Hygiene measures and exclusion principles outlined in these policies continue to apply, and will be informed by current guidance on coronavirus issued by relevant Commonwealth and State/Territory Governments including:

- [Federal Department of Health coronavirus health alerts](#) which are updated daily
- [State/Territory Education Departments](#) which may issue coronavirus updates directly to service providers. Latest updates and resources can also be reviewed online
- [Federal Department of Education, Skills and Employment Information](#) including [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) information for sheet for child care providers and services](#), [Frequently Asked Questions](#) and email updates [Federal Department of Education, Skills and Employment](#)
- [Federal Department of Health](#) coronavirus Information Sheets which include:
 1. ['Information for schools and early childhood centres, students and their parents'](#) which covers when children and staff cannot attend, what home isolation means, what happens if children and staff become sick while in isolation, and how to help prevent spread of Coronavirus (available in Chinese and Farsi)
 2. ['Isolation guidance'](#)
 3. ['Home isolation guidance when unwell \(suspected or confirmed cases\)'](#)
 4. ['Coronavirus what you need to know'](#)
 5. ['Information on the use of surgical masks'](#)
 6. [Environmental Cleaning and Disinfection Principles for COVID-19](#)
 7. [COVID-19-Frequently Asked Questions](#)

8. [Information on social distancing](#)
9. ['Information for employers'](#) which covers when staff cannot go to work, what to tell staff, cleaning precautions and how to help prevent spread of Coronavirus.

If in doubt about current coronavirus guidance, the Approved Provider or Nominated Supervisor will contact the **Federal coronavirus hotline on 1800 020 080** or their State/Territory health

Legislation and standards

- Educational and Care Services National Regulations 2011. Regulation 77
- Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010. Section 167
- Fair Work Act 2009
- Fair Work Regulations 2009
- National Quality Standard Area 2: 2.1.2 – Health practices and procedures. Effective illness and injury management and hygiene practices are promoted and implemented.

DEFINITIONS

The terms defined in this section relates specially to this policy. For commonly used terms e.g. Approved Provider, Nominated Supervisor etc to refer to the General Definitions section of this manual.

- **Infectious Disease** – diseases caused by pathogenic microorganisms, such as bacteria, viruses, parasites or fungi, the diseases can be spread, directly or indirectly, from one person to another.
- **COVID – 19** - Corona Virus Disease 2019 is a **severe viral** infection of the **lungs** characterized by **fever**, a dry **cough**, **breathing** difficulties, and **fatigue**
- **Pandemic** - (of a disease) prevalent over a whole country or the world
- **Social Distancing** – not touching other people which includes handshakes, hugs, also keeping 1.5 meters away from a person.
- **Self-Isolation** - being in a place or situation that **is** separate from others
- **Quarantine** - a strict isolation imposed to prevent the spread of disease. a period specified by the DHHS per the condition, when suspected of carrying some infectious or contagious disease.
- **Epidemic** - is the rapid spread of infectious disease to a large number of people in a given population within a short period of time, usually two weeks or less.
- **Close Contact** – is someone who has been face to face for at least 15 minutes, or been in the same closed space for at least 2 hours as someone who has been tested positive for COVID – 19 while that person was infectious (including the 24 hours before their symptoms appeared)
- **Vulnerable workers / groups** – people at most risk of serious infection from the COVID – 19 which includes the following.
 - People of any age with an existing chronic health problem, including but not limited to diabetes, heart, respiratory conditions or suppressed immune systems.
 - Indigenous people aged over 50 and older with one or more chronic medical condition.
 - People aged over 65 and older with chronic medical conditions. Conditions included in the definition of “chronic medical conditions” will be refined as more evidence emerges
 - People 70 years and older.
 - People living with household members who have any of these risk factors.

- **Essential workers** – anyone that has employment a job.

Sources

- Education and Care Services National Law and Regulations
- Fair Work Act 2009
- Fair Work Ombudsman 'Coronavirus and Australian Workplace laws'
- Federal Department of Health coronavirus information sheets
- Federal Department of Education, Skills and Employment coronavirus information sheets
- National Quality Standard
- Work, Health and Safety Laws and Regulations

Services policies

- Excursion Policy
- Fees Policy
- Food, Nutrition and Active Play Policy
- Hygiene Policy
- Food Safety Policy
- Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Policy
- Dealing with Infectious Diseases Policy
- Dealing with Medical Conditions Policy
- Health and Wellbeing Policy
- Interactions with Children Policy
- Relaxation and Sleep Policy
- Occupational Health and Safety Policy

PROCEDURES

The Approved Provider, Persons with Management Control, Nominated Supervisors, Person in Day to Day charge and other educators is responsible for:

- To be given this policy to read and understand.
- To inform the service of any international travels or visitors arriving from overseas to stay with them.
- To inform the service if they have been in contact with anyone who may have contracted COVID – 19.
- Seek medical attention if they develop symptoms of coronavirus including fever, cough, sore throat, or shortness of breath. Call ahead before visiting the doctor / hospital to advise them of your symptoms and wear a surgical mask when visiting the medical facility.
- Employees / families must advise the Approved Provider or Nominated Supervisor immediately if they are being tested for coronavirus. They and their close contacts including enrolled children must not come to the service until they are cleared by medical authorities and return a negative coronavirus test.
- Advise the service if they develop symptoms of the virus or are confirmed to have the virus. This is particularly important if they have at the service before a positive test.
- Agree to have their temperature tested before entry to the service if the Nominated Supervisor or staff reasonably believe a child or adult may have a fever.
- To abide by the services Dealing with Infectious Disease and Illness Policy and to tell parents to keep their child home if they are unwell with a cough, fever, running nose, or other.
- Their own Health and Wellbeing. (refer to policy).

- To follow the services Hygiene Policy.
- Report instances of (suspected) coronavirus to the local state/territory health department immediately and follow all guidance.
- Comply with notification requirements for serious incidents which include:
 - any incident involving serious illness of a child at the service where the child attended, or should have attended, a hospital
 - any emergency where emergency services attended i.e. there was an imminent or severe risk to the health, safety, or wellbeing of a person at the service
- Comply with other notification requirements including:
 - notifying the Regulatory Authority within 24 hours if directed to close or closing voluntarily because of coronavirus. Note where possible the Approved Provider or Nominated Supervisor will contact the Authority before making decision to close because of low numbers. (If closing voluntarily, children cannot be reported as absent and CCS will not be paid unless the closure is determined as a local emergency by State/Territory Education Departments)
 - notifying the Regulatory Authority within 7 days about any changes to service days or operating hours
 - notifying the Regulatory Authority as soon as possible if they're a Kindergarten receiving funding under the Kindergarten Funding Scheme, an Early Childhood Teacher (ECT) is on unexpected leave and they've been unable to immediately replace the ECT
 - reporting a break in program delivery to the Regulatory Authority as soon as possible if they're a long day care service receiving funding under the Kindergarten Funding Scheme, and an Early Childhood Teacher (ECT) is on unexpected leave (for more than 10 days without a replacement)
- Apply for waivers from ratio and qualification requirements if required where staff are required to self-isolate
- Provide families with current and updated information about the coronavirus

The Approved Provider and Nominated Supervisor will ensure all staff complete the online [COVID-19 Infection Control Training](#) made available by the Federal Department of Health. Certificates of completion will be displayed. Employees and volunteers will ensure they continue to implement hygiene processes outlined in the Hygiene and Food Safety Policy to ensure high standards of hygiene and infection control at all times. This includes ensuring they and where relevant children:

- wash hands frequently with soap and water including before and after eating or handling food, going to the toilet, changing a nappy, handling play dough, using gloves, and after wiping or touching nose and cleaning up spills of body fluids
- wash hands in ways that meet the principles recommended by the World Health Organisation in the following videos [wash hands with soap and water](#) and [wash hands with alcohol based sanitiser](#)
- cough and sneeze into their inner elbow or use a tissue to cover their mouth and nose and placing tissues in the bin immediately after use.
- If using alcohol – based hand sanitiser in place of soap it will contain 60/80% alcohol and antibacterial soap / gel will never be used.

In addition, the Approved Provider and Nominated Supervisor will ensure educators engage in regular handwashing with children and cleaning requirements are documented and completed more frequently than usual. This includes regularly cleaning and disinfecting frequently touched surfaces like doorknobs, bathrooms (e.g. taps, toilets), tables and chairs, phones, tablets and keyboards. Cleaning staff, including contracted cleaning staff, will implement the procedures outlined as per their organisation's requirement / policy.

- wearing gloves and using alcohol-based hand sanitiser before and after wearing gloves
- washing hands thoroughly each time gloves are worn / removed.

- avoid touching face while cleaning.
- advise supervisor if they are feeling unwell prior to commencing a shift
- wearing surgical masks and eye protection if person with the virus or in isolation has been in the area being cleaned or there are spills of body fluids which could be infected with the virus.
- washing cloths regularly with disinfectant avoiding cross contamination.
- disinfecting surfaces with an hospital grade disinfectant on surfaces

The Approved Provider, Nominated Supervisor and educators will ensure hand hygiene posters are displayed in areas which can easily be seen by families, including the front entrance, and require all employees and families to use hand sanitiser provided at service entrances. Educators will ensure children's bags and bottles are wiped with sanitiser / disinfectant at the beginning and end of each day.

- **Interactions with Children** - Where appropriate, educators will speak with children about the coronavirus in ways that do not alarm them or cause unnecessary fear or distress. Educators may, for example, discuss with children their feelings in relation to the virus, remind children that the risk of catching the illness is very low, review hygiene measures they can take to reduce the risk of infection, discuss some of the good things happening in the world, or implement other strategies outlined in our Interactions with Children Policy. Educators will be careful not to speak to others in an alarmist way about the coronavirus if children are present or within hearing.
- **Social distancing** - We're also implementing the following social distancing strategies where possible to limit the potential spread of the infection:
 - restricting number of parents in service dropping off or picking up children e.g. by asking parents to wait in the main foyer, ring the doorbell and an educator will collect their child / ren and then to sign in / out on the tablet which is wiped down after each use.
 - putting marks on the floor so families and visitors stand at least 1.5 metres away from the counter and form each other
 - if possible, deferring activities that lead to mixing of children and staff from different rooms/groups in relation to staff child ratio.
 - avoiding situations where children are required to queue, assemble in large groups or hold hands
 - cancelling all excursions and unnecessary visitors
 - requiring essential visitors to sign a COVID-19 declaration that they are healthy and do not have any symptoms of the virus
 - increasing the use of technology like Facetime, Zoom and Storypark to ensure children can continue to communicate with community members in a protected environment
 - maintaining 1.5 metres distance when children are seated e.g. by removing every second chair from tables and using tape to mark sitting spots
 - maintaining 1.5 metres between cots, stretchers, floor cushions etc and between furniture and seating arrangements in staff common rooms.
 - ceasing activities which may have a higher risk of infection including play dough, cooking and dress up activities
 - providing children with resources rather than letting children select from communal resources
 - serving food to children rather than providing sharing plates
 - increasing supervision in bathrooms and only allowing 1 child at tap at a time to wash hands
 - opening windows and adjusting air-conditioning for more fresh air
 - conducting more learning and activities outside

Parents/guardians are responsible for:

- To be given this policy to read and understand.
- Asthma Australia has advised doctors to ensure all patients with asthma have a current Asthma Action Plan and to update if need via a phone consultation, with any new plan delivered electronically. If tehri child has an asthma Plan, families must consult their doctor an

provide the Nominated Supervisor with an updated Plan or written confirmation from the doctor that the current Plan can continue. The Nominated Supervisor will distribute any updated Plans to relevant educators.

Comply with guidance issued by Government agencies, including in relation to attendance, quarantine and self-isolation. This includes:

- ensuring they/a child/a family member comply with isolation requirements and stay home for 14 days where required e.g. arriving in Australia from overseas or close contact with someone who has the virus i.e. face to face for at least 15 minutes or in the same closed space for at least 2 hours
- ensuring they/a child/a family member stays at home if unwell
- **seek medical attention** if they develop a fever, cough, sore throat or shortness of breath Call ahead before visiting the doctor / hospital to advise them of your symptoms and wear a surgical mask when visiting the medical facility. a confirmed case.
- **advise the service** if they develop symptoms of the virus or are confirmed to have the virus. This is particularly important if they have been at the service before a positive test.
- **provide written clearance** from a doctor after a period of isolation or quarantine related to coronavirus confirming they/child/family member are not contagious and may return to the service.
- **agree to have their temperature tested** before entry to the service if the Nominated Supervisor or staff reasonable believe a child or adult may have a fever.
- **complete a Health Declaration** if requested by staff declaring they are healthy and do not have any symptoms of coronavirus before entering the service,

Employees, volunteers and families must also comply with any isolation/exclusion periods in relation to coronavirus implemented by the Approved Provider or Nominated Supervisor including periods which exceed government requirements.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Fees

On 2 April 2020 the Government announced that from 6 April 2020 until the week ending 28 June 2020, services that remain open and have children enrolled will receive weekly payments to ensure they can deliver early childhood education and care to families. The payments will be approximately 50% of the fees charged in the fortnight preceding 2 March 2020 up to a maximum of the hourly rate cap. Larger payments may be available in exceptional circumstances. These payments will be made instead of Child Care Subsidy (CCS) and Additional Child Care Subsidy (ACCS) payments, and services will be able to waive out of pocket fees for enrolled families, even where children are not attending for COVID-19 reasons. This change will apply from 23 March 2020.

In order to receive these payments, the Approved Provider and educators will:

- keep the service open unless it's closed on public health advice or for other health and safety reasons (payments will continue in this event)
- ensure families are not charged a fee, including gap fee
- prioritise care to essential workers, vulnerable and disadvantaged children and previously enrolled children
- continue to record attendance of children
- comply with all other provider obligations including National Quality Framework and other relevant conditions of approval under Family Assistance Law.

Families are encouraged to remain enrolled, or to re-enrol to ensure they maintain their eligibility for CCS, and do not have to wait for CCS claims to be assessed in the future.

Staff Entitlements - Employees are ill or need to care for family member

Permanent employees are entitled to paid sick leave if they're ill with coronavirus. Employees must provide a medical certificate confirming they have the virus. Permanent employees who need to look after a family member or someone in their household who's sick with the virus are also entitled to paid carer's leave, or unpaid carer's leave if they have no paid sick or carer's leave left. Casual employees are entitled to 2 days unpaid carer's leave per occasion. Employees must provide evidence supporting an application to take carer's leave if requested. Permanent employees who want to stay at home as a precaution against exposure to coronavirus must apply for paid or unpaid leave.

Staff Entitlements - Employees required to self-isolate or wish to stay home as precaution

The Approved Provider or Nominated Supervisor will discuss available employment options with permanent employees who can't return from overseas or are required to enter quarantine or isolation but aren't sick. Options include taking annual leave or other leave e.g. long service leave and taking unpaid leave.

Staff Entitlements - Employees directed not to work

Permanent employees will be paid if they are directed not to work to prevent the spread of the illness, cannot work because numbers of children have declined, or the centre is voluntarily closed by the Approved Provider.

In cases where service viability is threatened, for example because enrolments have significantly reduced, the Approved Provider will discuss the situation with all permanent and seek their views on possible changes to staffing arrangements e.g. reductions in hours. Employees' written consent to any new arrangements will be obtained.

Staff Entitlements - Stand downs

Under the Fair Work Act, an employee can only be stood down without pay if:

- there's a stoppage of work
- the employees can't be usefully employed (not limited to an employee's usual work)
- the cause of the stoppage is one the employer cannot reasonably be held responsible for (e.g. service is directed to close by Government).

Note employees may use paid leave entitlements if the Approved Provider agrees. During stand down periods there is no interruption to continuity of service and leave accruals continue. The Approved Provider may seek legal advice to confirm payment of salaries is not required under the 'stand down' provision of the Fair Work Act if directed to close by the Government.

Under new measures the services will continue to receive Child Care Subsidy (CCS) payments for enrolled children if directed to close, and this is intended to help services pay wages and remain viable so they can re-open. During this time employees may engage in activities which don't involve children, for example, training, deep cleaning or administration.

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Job Keeper Payments

Eligible employees receiving Jobkeeper payments, including those stood down or on unpaid leave, have an obligation to work their usual contracted hours of employment if requested but the Approved Provider or Nominated Supervisor unless there is a reasonable reason why this cannot occur. Job keeper does not replace an employee's normal rights and responsibilities in relation to sick leave, unpaid leave, employment contracts etc. The Approved Provider or Nominated Supervisor can however implement Jobkeeper Enabling Directions for these employees which provide business with the flexibility they may need to meet the adverse effect of the current Pandemic. The Directions can cover reductions in hours, duties to be performed and work locations, The Approved Provider or Nominated Supervisor must give employees at least 3 days written notice of their intention to give Job keeper Enabling Direction (can be shorter if employee genuinely agrees) and consult with an employee

before giving the Direction. Jobkeeper Agreements can cover employees taking annual leave on half pay and days or times of work.

EVALUATION

In order to assess whether the values and purposes of the policy have been achieved, the Approved Provider will:

- Regularly seek feedback from everyone affected by the policy regarding its effectiveness, particularly in relation to identifying and responding to child safety concerns.
- Monitor the implementation, compliance, complaints and incidents in relation to this policy.
- To ensure that all information related to infectious diseases are on displayed and supplied to parents/ guardian is current
- Keep the policy up to date with current legislation, research, policy and best practice.
- Revise the policy and procedures as part of the service's policy review cycle, or as required.
- Notify parents/guardians at least 14 days before making any changes to this policy or its procedures

ATTACHMENTS

Nil

AUTHORISATION

The policy was adopted by the Approved Provider, other committee members, Nominated Supervisors, educators, families of Camberwell Kindergarten and Child Care Centre Inc. on 09/04/2020

REVIEW DATE: 09/04/2021