

2.43 DEALING WITH COVID-19 (CORONAVIRUS)

INTRODUCTION

Coronaviruses (CoV) are a large family of viruses that cause illness ranging from the common cold to more severe diseases. A novel coronavirus (nCoV) is a new strain that has not been previously identified in humans. COVID-19 is the infectious disease caused by the most recently discovered coronavirus. This new virus and disease were unknown before the outbreak began in Wuhan, China, in December 2019.” (World Health Organisation).

Policy Statement

Our education and care service is committed to providing a safe and healthy environment that reduces the chance of being infected or spreading COVID-19. In recognition of the rapid spread of this disease and the ongoing release of information from authorities, our service needs to respond swiftly and correctly to advice from authorities.

PURPOSE

Our service will apply measures that prioritise health and safety, including:

- Implementing vigilant hygiene practices that prevent the spread of infectious diseases, including COVID-19
- Encouraging good health and sanitation
- Monitoring sources of public health information
- Implementing all measures recommended by authorities
- Educating and informing our community with current and trusted information

STRATEGIES

Practices to reduce the chance of being infected or spreading COVID-19 will include:

- Regularly and thoroughly cleaning hands with an alcohol-based hand sanitiser or with soap and water.
- Encouraging children to avoid touching eyes, nose and mouth as much as possible.
- Following good respiratory hygiene, when coughing or sneezing:
 - covering mouth and nose with bent elbow or tissue
 - disposing of the used tissue immediately
 - washing hands with soap and water or, if water is not available, using hand sanitiser.
- Excluding children or staff who are unwell with flu like symptoms or symptoms associated with COVID-19 and reasonably suspected to have a communicable disease from the service until they are cleared by a doctor to return, with a negative COVID-19 test result.

Should there be any concerns regarding the health of a child at the service, families will be asked to seek medical attention. Further guidance may be sought from Healthdirect on: 1800 022 222.

Cleaning and hygiene

Our service maintains a clean and hygienic environment. During any infectious disease outbreak, routine environmental cleaning is increased in frequency, particularly on high-touch surfaces such as door handles, tables, light switches and bathroom areas and any toys/ surfaces which may have been mouthed or in contact with bodily fluids. Surfaces are cleaned to reduce any soil, then disinfected to remove germs.

Further advice regarding infectious cleaning will be sought from the local Public Health Unit should there be any direct concern regarding the exposure of COVID-19 at the service.

Service of food and water

Our service follows strict food preparation and handling procedures following good hand hygiene. Our service will follow any direction from the local Public Health Unit in relation to changes in food preparation procedures or water quality. No platter or buffet style service will be allowed for children, staff or visitors.

Keeping Informed

In recognition of the rapid and consistent release of information related to COVID-19, our service will refer to reliable authorities as required. Advice, directions and guidance will be communicated to staff and families immediately and followed accordingly.

Trusted sources of information include:

- Australian Government Department of Health: www.health.gov.au
- Coronavirus information for schools and early childhood centres, students and parents: www.health.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/2020/03/coronavirus-covid-19-information-for-schools-and-early-childhood-centres-students-and-parents_0.pdf
- Association of Independent Schools NSW
- Corona Health Information Line: 1800 020 080
- Public Health Unit: 1300 066 055 (NSW)
- The Regulatory Authority relevant to the service location

Notifying the Regulatory Authority

- Any incident that requires the Approved Provider to close or reduce the number of children at our service for a period will be notified to the State or Territory Regulatory Authority within 24 hours. If a child or staff member at the service is diagnosed with COVID-19 this will be reported to the: Regulatory Authority and Local Public Health Unit 1300 066 055 (NSW).

- A confirmed case of COVID-19 is a serious incident and as such will be notified as soon as practicable within 24 hours.
- Notifications will be made through the National Quality Agenda IT System (NQA ITS) or through direct contact via phone or email.
- Our service will remain diligent in reporting responsibilities and any directions provided to the service by the Ministry of Health.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Nominated Supervisor

- Follow practices to reduce the chance of being infected or spreading COVID-19 as listed above.
- Regularly check updates from reliable sources and communicate these to staff and families as required.
- Ensure that required notifications are made within the defined time frame.
- Provide hand washing facilities and make sure these are kept clean, adequately stocked and in good working order.
- Provide PPE, including gloves.
- Ask staff who are sick with respiratory illness to stay home until recovered and seek medical advice. Staff may not return to work without a Negative COVID-19 test sighted by the Nominated Supervisor if displaying COVID-19 or flu like symptoms.
- If there is a confirmed case of COVID-19, cooperate with directions from the health authorities and maintain confidentiality.
- Make appropriate arrangements so that staff who need to self-quarantine stay away from work.
- Adhere to quarantine requirements and enforce self-quarantine as directed by the Public Health Unit.
- Notify the Approved Provider immediately if you need to self-quarantine, have a confirmed case of COVID-19, have recently travelled to an overseas destination or been in close contact with a confirmed case of COVID-19.
- Make appropriate arrangements so that staff who need to self-quarantine stay away from work.
- Arrange for any maintenance or ordering of supplies to ensure there are adequate hand washing facilities.
- Ensure tissues, hand sanitiser, PPE and cleaning products are available for use.
- Promote good hygiene practices such as through posters on handwashing and respiratory hygiene.
- Keep the service clean and hygienic.
- If children become sick while at the service, follow illness procedures to ensure they are isolated, and families are contacted.

- Advise families of sick children to seek medical advice if they are very unwell.
- If there is a confirmed case of COVID-19, cooperate with directions from the health authorities and maintain confidentiality.
- Follow practices to reduce the chance of being infected or spreading COVID-19 as listed above

Staff

- Keep the service clean and hygienic.
- Assist in regularly cleaning high-touch surfaces
- Advise families of sick children to seek medical advice if they are very unwell.
- If children become sick while at the service, follow illness procedures to ensure they are isolated, and families are contacted.
- Stay home if unwell.
- If there is a confirmed case of COVID-19, cooperate with directions from the health authorities and maintain confidentiality.
- Follow practices to reduce the chance of being infected or spreading COVID-19 as listed above.
- Follow food preparation and handling procedures in conjunction with regular hand washing.
- Notify the nominated supervisor immediately if you need to self-quarantine, quarantine, have a confirmed case of COVID-19, have recently travelled to an overseas destination or been in close contact with a confirmed case of COVID-19.

Families

- Follow practices to reduce the chance of being infected or spreading COVID-19 including regularly and thoroughly cleaning hands with an alcohol-based hand or with soap and water and following good respiratory hygiene when coughing or sneezing.
- Follow directions from the Local Public Health Unit (such as the need to self-quarantine)
- Inform the Nominated Supervisor if you have recently travelled to an overseas destination, have a confirmed case of COVID-19 or been in close contact with a confirmed case of COVID-19.
- Seek medical attention for your child should they be unwell.
- Immediately collect your child from the service if requested to do so by staff due to concerns for their health.

Please note – As per our Fees Policy, ‘in the case of children’s absence due to, but not limited to; illness or holidays within term time, fees will still be payable on days the child would normally attend according to Lindfield Montessori school term date’. This will apply to all COVID related absences.

Relevant Legislation	Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010. Sec167. Education and Care Services National Regulations. Reg 78-80. Work, Health and Safety Act 2011 Public Health Regulation 2012 Public Health Act 2010 Public Health Amendment (Vaccination of Children Attending Child Care Facilities) Bill 2013 Australian New Zealand Food Standards Code (FSANZ)
Related to NQS QA	NA
Related Policies	Infectious Diseases, Illness and Injury
Sources & Further Reading	<p>Safework Australia: Early childhood education and care workers: Minimising the risk of exposure to COVID-19 - www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au/sites/default/files/2020-04/early-childhood-education-minimising-the-risk-of-exposure-to-covid-19_0.pdf</p> <p>Spotlight on Quality Issue 5 - Unpacking reporting responsibilities: https://education.nsw.gov.au/early-childhood-education/whats-happening-in-the-early-childhood-education-sector/news-and-events/spotlight-on-quality/issue-5-unpacking-reporting-responsibilities</p> <p>World Health Organisation – Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) Outbreak: www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019</p> <p>Fair Work Ombudsman: Coronavirus and Australian workplace laws: https://coronavirus.fairwork.gov.au</p> <p>Australian Government Department of Health: www.health.gov.au</p> <p>Coronavirus information for schools and early childhood centres, students and parents: www.health.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/2020/03/coronavirus-covid-19-information-for-schools-and-early-childhood-centres-students-and-parents_0.pdf</p> <p>Corona Health Information Line: 1800 020 080</p> <p>Public Health Unit: 1300 066 055 (NSW)</p> <p>The Regulatory Authority</p> <p>Australian Health Protection Principle Committee (AHPPC) - coronavirus (COVID-19) statement on 3 April 2020: www.health.gov.au/news/australian-health-protection-principal-committee-ahppc-coronavirus-covid-19-statement-on-3-april-</p>

POLICY REVIEWED	MODIFICATIONS	NEXT REVIEW DATE
January 2022		As required