



## **Dealing with Infectious Diseases COVID-19 (Coronavirus)** **Policy**

### **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)

Toukley Preschool Kindergarten 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.

### **Aim:**

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

- ◁ Implementing vigilant hygiene and ventilation 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 and
- ◁ Educating and informing our community with current and trusted information.

### **Strategies:**

#### **Unwell children and adults**

- ◁ Our service will exclude staff or children who are unwell and are reasonably suspected to have a communicable disease until they no longer display symptoms.
- ◁ We will encourage unwell staff to get tested for COVID-19 and encourage families to get their child tested for COVID-19. Positive cases of COVID-19 will notify the service and will not attend the service for 7 days and must be symptom-free before returning to the service.
- ◁ If a child appears unwell at drop off, the parent/ carer will be asked to take them home.
- ◁ Unwell adults are not permitted to enter the service and are encouraged to get tested for COVID-19.

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 Australia on 1800 022 222.

#### **Ventilation**

Ventilation measures will be put into place, including:

- ◁ Reducing the number of people in an indoor space at any one time by separating children into groups and encouraging them to use different areas around the service premises.
- ◁ Reducing the length of time that children spend indoors all together.

- ◁ Using outdoor settings wherever possible when providing education and care. Ensure all sun safe practices are adhered to.
- ◁ Group times (including group singing or chanting) will be scheduled for the outdoor space or in a well-ventilated, indoor area.
- ◁ Ventilating indoor space by keeping doors and windows open while considering the risk of vector-borne disease and air pollution.
- ◁ Whilst windows and doors are open, aiming fan towards ceiling to circulate fresh air.
- ◁ Avoiding directing fans towards children's faces, aiming them continuously towards the ceiling or floor.

For services that cannot modify the ventilation or choose an outdoor location:

- » Regularly inspect, maintain, and clean Heating, Ventilation and Air-conditioning Devices (HVAC).
- » Avoid using only recirculated air in HVAC systems and increase the outside air intake where possible.
- » Where relevant, disable ventilation controls with automated settings that reduce air supply based on temperature or occupancy.
- » If in place, ensure that exhaust fans are operational.
- » Support staff to take breaks and eat lunch outside if possible.
- » Switch air handling units with central recirculation to 100% outdoor air.

### **Cleaning and hygiene**

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:
  - » cover mouth and nose with bent elbow or tissue; and
  - » dispose of the used tissue immediately; and
  - » wash hands with soap and water or, if water is not available, use hand sanitiser.

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.

### **Vaccination of Staff**

The service encourages all staff and volunteers to be vaccinated against COVID-19 as per government health advice. Vaccination is one of the best ways to protect children, who are too young to be vaccinated against COVID-19.

### **Service of food and water**

Our service follows strict food preparation and handling procedures, including properly cooking food and 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.

### **Keeping Informed**

In recognition of the rapid and consistent release of information related to COVID-19, our service will refer to reliable authorities daily. 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](http://www.health.gov.au)
- ◁ State/territory specific COVID-19 health advice:  
[www.healthdirect.gov.au/coronavirus-covid-19-information-by-state-and-territory](http://www.healthdirect.gov.au/coronavirus-covid-19-information-by-state-and-territory)
- ◁ COVID-19 information for the early childhood education and care sector: [www.dese.gov.au/covid-19/childcare](http://www.dese.gov.au/covid-19/childcare)
- ◁ National coronavirus and COVID-19 vaccine helpline: 1800 020 080
- ◁ Healthdirect Australia: 1800 022 222
- ◁ The Regulatory Authority relevant to the service location

### **Notifications**

- ◁ 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.
- ◁ When notified of a positive case in the service, the requirements of the Regulatory Authority, Public Health Unit and WHS regulator, will be followed.
- ◁ Our service will remain diligent in reporting responsibilities and any directions provided by authorities.
- ◁ In relation to families, our service will:
  - » always maintain privacy and confidentiality in line with our policy and procedures;
  - » implement processes to rapidly communicate to families any instructions from authorities, including any temporary closures and contact tracing requirements.

### **Implementation:**

**Approved Provider** is responsible for:

- ◁ Develop a COVID-19 Risk Assessment and ensure control strategies are implemented accordingly.
- ◁ Develop a clear Action Plan and implement training and induction processes to ensure that all stakeholders understand their roles and responsibilities.
- ◁ Regularly check updates from reliable sources and communicate these to the Nominated Supervisor and action accordingly.
- ◁ 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 face masks and gloves.
- ◁ Ask staff who are sick with respiratory illness to stay home until recovered.
- ◁ Ensure that they are up to date with all legal requirements including Public Health Orders and are applying these in practice at all times.
- ◁ 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.
- ◁ Consult staff on health and safety matters relating to COVID-19 and provide an opportunity to express views before decisions are made.
- ◁ Ensure all details such as contact details for children and all stakeholders on the National Quality Agenda IT System, (NQA ITS), are up to date.

**Nominated Supervisor** is responsible for:

- ◁ Ensure there are plans in place for increased levels of staff absences and for those who may arrive at work unwell.
- ◁ Follow procedures identified in the Risk Assessment around whether children or educators who are close contacts can attend the service if symptom-free and testing negative.
- ◁ Work with the Approved Provider to ensure that current and reliable information is communicated to families and staff and actioned accordingly.
- ◁ Adhere to quarantine or isolation requirements and enforce these as directed by the public health unit.
- ◁ Notify the Approved Provider immediately if you need to self-quarantine/isolate.
- ◁ Make appropriate arrangements so that staff who need to self-quarantine/isolate stay away from work.
- ◁ Assist the Approved Provider to make the required notifications within the defined timeframes.
- ◁ 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.
- ◁ Ensure that they are up to date with all legal requirements including Public Health Orders and are applying these in practice at all times.
- ◁ Keep the service clean and hygienic.
- ◁ Ask staff who are unwell to get tested for COVID-19. They should receive a negative test and be symptom-free before returning to the service.
- ◁ 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, call an ambulance.
- ◁ 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.
- ◁ Implement physical distancing measures and support staff to follow these while at the service.

**Educators** are responsible for:

- ◁ 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, call an ambulance.
- ◁ If children become sick while at the service, follow illness procedures to ensure they are isolated, and families are contacted.
- ◁ Stay home if unwell and get tested for COVID-19.
- ◁ 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 develop symptoms or test positive for COVID-19.
- ◁ Notify the Nominated Supervisor immediately if someone in your household returns a positive COVID-19 result. If you are symptom free and test negative for COVID-19, your employer will decide whether you should attend work.
- ◁ Maintain compliance with all legal requirements, including Public Health Orders

**Families** are responsible for:

- ◁ 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/isolate. Notify the Nominated Supervisor if you or someone in your household has recently contracted COVID-19 and you or someone in your household has been at the service in the past 48 hours.
- ◁ Seek medical attention for your child should they be unwell and consider getting their child tested for COVID-19.
- ◁ Immediately collect your child from the service if requested to do so by staff due to concerns for their health.
- ◁ Notify the service by email or phone if their child is unwell.
- ◁ Notify the service if your child becomes unwell at the service and tests positive with COVID-19.
- ◁ Follow the services drop off and pick up requirements to minimise contact as much as possible.

### **Evaluation:**

Infection control is effectively managed at the service to ensure children remain healthy and transmission of infectious diseases are minimised.

Families and staff are essential stakeholders in the policy review process and will be given opportunity and encouragement to be actively involved.

In accordance with R. 172 of the Education and Care Services National Regulations, the service will ensure that families of children enrolled at the service are notified at least 14 days before making any change to a policy or procedure that may have significant impact on the provision of education and care to any child enrolled at the service; a family's ability to utilise the service; the fees charged or the way in which fees are collected.

**Legislative Requirements:** Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010: Sect 167  
Education and Care Services National Regulations: 78-80  
Work Health and Safety Act 2011

**Links to National Quality Standard –**

Quality Area 2: Children's Health and Safety – Standards 2.1, 2.2, Elements 2.1.1, 2.1.2

Quality Area 6: Collaborative Partnerships with Families and Communities – Standard 6.1, 6.2

**Sources:** Community Early Learning Australia

◁ 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-childhoodeducation-minimising-the-risk-of-exposure-to-covid-19\\_0.pdf](http://www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au/sites/default/files/2020-04/early-childhoodeducation-minimising-the-risk-of-exposure-to-covid-19_0.pdf)

◁ Healthdirect Australia: Childcare, school exclusions, and COVID-19 [www.healthdirect.gov.au/coronavirus-covid-19-childcare-school-exclusions-faqs](http://www.healthdirect.gov.au/coronavirus-covid-19-childcare-school-exclusions-faqs)

◁ World Health Organisation (WHO): Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) Outbreak:

[www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019](http://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019)

◁ Fair Work Ombudsman: Coronavirus and Australian workplace laws: <https://coronavirus.fairwork.gov.au>

◁ Australian Government Department of Health: [www.health.gov.au](http://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-forschools-and-early-childhood-centres-students-and-parents\\_0.pdf](http://www.health.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/2020/03/coronavirus-covid-19-information-forschools-and-early-childhood-centres-students-and-parents_0.pdf)

◁ National coronavirus and COVID-19 vaccine helpline: 1800 020 080

◁ Healthdirect Australia: 1800 022 222

◁ The relevant state/territory Regulatory Authority: [www.acecqa.gov.au/help/contact-your-regulatory-authority](http://www.acecqa.gov.au/help/contact-your-regulatory-authority)

◁ Australian Health Protection Principle Committee (AHPPC) - coronavirus (COVID-19) statement on 3 April 2020:

[www.health.gov.au/committees-and-groups/australian-health-protection-principalcommittee-ahppc](http://www.health.gov.au/committees-and-groups/australian-health-protection-principalcommittee-ahppc)

**Reviewed:** 27<sup>th</sup> April, 2022