



CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19) MANAGEMENT POLICY

Voluntary – Quality Area 2

PURPOSE

This policy defines a clear set of guidelines and procedures for West Hawthorn Pre-school to:

- minimise the risk of exposure of COVID-19 to staff, children and their families
- implement appropriate social distancing and good hygiene practices that will help reduce potential transmission of the virus amongst the West Hawthorn Pre-school community
- manage any child who has a suspected case of COVID-19
- ensure that staff, parents and guardians and visitors to the Service adhere to advice from the Australian and Victorian Governments regarding appropriate protective measures to deal with the COVID-19 pandemic.

POLICY STATEMENT

1. VALUES

West Hawthorn Pre-school is committed to:

- providing a safe and healthy environment for all children, staff and any other persons attending the Service
- responding to the needs of any child or adult who presents with COVID-19 symptoms while attending the Service
- complying with current guidelines set by the Australian Government, the Victorian Department of Health and Human Services and Department of Education and Training
- providing up-to-date information and resources for families and staff regarding protection of all members of the WHPS community from the risks associated with COVID- 19
- maintain a duty of care to children and users of the Service.

2. SCOPE

This policy applies to the Approved Provider; Nominated Supervisor; persons in day-to-day charge; staff; students on placement; volunteers; parents/guardians; children; and any others attending the programs and activities of West Hawthorn Pre-school.

3. BACKGROUND AND LEGISLATION

Background

COVID-19 is a new strain of coronavirus that was originally identified in Wuhan, China in December 2019. On 11th March 2020, the World Health Organization (WHO) declared the COVID-19 outbreak as a 'pandemic' - a Public Health Emergency of International Concern. This was primarily 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 Australian Department of Health, the time of exposure to the virus and when symptoms first occur is anywhere from 2-14 days. Studies suggest that COVID-19 may persist on surfaces for a few hours or up to several days. This may vary under different conditions such as the type of surface, temperature, or humidity of the environment.

Symptoms can range from a mild illness, like 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

The Australian Government is constantly updating the status of COVID-19 in Australia to provide the latest health recommendations, travel restrictions and resources and information to help people make informed decisions.

As this information is changing rapidly, our Service is constantly 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, implementing good hygiene practices and dealing with infectious diseases. 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 have resulted in the development of a specific policy to assist our Service to manage this pandemic.

Our Service 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 the Victorian Government to slow the spread of the virus. We will implement practices that help to reduce the transmission of the virus including through establishing effective hygiene practices (over and above those under our existing policies and procedures) and social distancing measures.

We will provide up-to-date information and advice on the impacts of COVID-19 on our Service to parents, families and staff that is sourced from the Australian and Victorian Governments as it becomes available. Recommendations and health measures mandated by government will always be strictly adhered to.

Legislation and standards

Relevant legislation and standards include but are not limited to:

- *Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010*
- *Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011*
- *Information Privacy Act 2000 (Vic)*
- *National Quality Standard, Quality Area 2: Children's Health and Safety*
- *National Quality Standard, Quality Area 6: Collaborative Partnerships with Families and Communities*
- *National Quality Standard, Quality Area 7: Leadership and Service Management*
- *Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004*
- *Privacy Act 1988 (Cth)*
- *Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008*
- *Public Health and Wellbeing Regulations 2019*

4. DEFINITIONS

Approved Provider: An individual or organisation that has completed an application and been approved by the Regulatory Authority as fit and proper (in accordance with Sections 12, 13 and 14 of the National Law) to operate one or more education and care services.

Close contact: The Victorian Department of Health and Human Services defines 'close contact' as someone who has either:

- had at least 15 minutes of face-to-face contact with someone with a confirmed case of coronavirus (COVID-19); or
- shared a closed space for more than two hours with someone with a confirmed case.

Casual contact: The Victorian Department of Health and Human Services defines 'casual contact' as someone who has either:

- Spending less than 15 minutes face-to-face contact with someone in any setting AND they had symptoms at the time.

Closure: The service will not be open and operating, and affected families and staff will be notified. Closures can occur:

- at the direction of DET or DHHS
- In the event that staff are ill and relief staff are unable to be sourced

COVID-19: 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. (Source: World Health Organisation)

COVID-19 symptoms: Symptoms associated with coronavirus (COVID-19) including flu like symptoms, fever, cough, sore throat, fatigue and/or shortness of breath and loss of taste or smell.

National Law: Refers to the *Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010*, the national law regulating education and care services for children.

Nominated Supervisor: A person who has been nominated by the Approved Provider of the service under Part 3 of the *Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010* and who has consented to that nomination in writing can be the Nominated Supervisor. All services must have a Nominated Supervisor with responsibility for the service in accordance with the National Regulations. The Approved Provider must take reasonable steps to ensure that the Nominated Supervisor is a fit and proper person (in accordance with Sections 12, 13 and 14 of the National Law), with suitable skills, qualifications, and experience. The Regulatory Authority must be notified if the Nominated Supervisor for the service changes or is no longer employed at the service.

Person in day-to-day charge: A person is in day-to-day charge if (a) the person is placed in day-to-day charge by the approved provider or a nominated supervisor of the education and care service after meeting the definition for a service supervisor certificate, and (b) the person consents to the placement in writing.

5. PROCEDURES

1. Procedures relating to exclusion and self-isolation

All staff, volunteers, visitors, children, and their family members attending the Service premises are responsible for:

- Complying with guidance issued by the Australian and Victorian Governments regarding COVID-19 quarantine and self-isolation requirements and procedures
- Not entering the Service premises if any of the following apply:
 - They have had a confirmed diagnosis of COVID-19 and have not obtained written clearance from a doctor

- They are displaying ANY COVID-19 symptoms
- They have returned from overseas travel within the previous 14 days
- Within the previous 14 days, they have come into close contact with any person who has had a confirmed diagnosis of COVID-19.
- Following recovery from a confirmed case of COVID-19 or completion of a period of self-isolation, obtaining written clearance from a doctor and providing it to the Nominated Supervisor or staff member who is a person in day-to-day charge
- Immediately advising the Approved Provider, Nominated Supervisor or a staff member who is a person in day-to-day charge (as appropriate) if they develop COVID-19 symptoms or receive a confirmed diagnosis of the virus while in self-isolation
- Notifying the Nominated Supervisor or a staff member who is a person in day-to-day charge if they have returned from overseas or interstate travel in the 14 days immediately prior to entering the Service premises
- Complying with any isolation period in relation to coronavirus implemented by the Approved Provider or Nominated Supervisor including periods which exceed government requirements.

The Approved Provider and/or Nominated Supervisor is responsible for:

- If appropriate, requesting any staff member to self-isolate if they suspect that they have had contact with someone who has a confirmed diagnosis of COVID-19
- If required, applying for waivers from ratio and qualification requirements where staff are required to self-isolate.

The Nominated Supervisor, persons in day-to-day charge, and all staff are responsible for:

- Undertaking a temperature check upon their arrival at the Service premises each day, and if their temperature exceeds 37.5 degrees Celsius (as per DET guidelines):
 - Notifying the Nominated Supervisor or Approved Provider (as appropriate) of their elevated temperature
 - Excluding themselves from the Service premises on that day.
- Complying with any direction issued by the Approved Provider or Nominated Supervisor to self-isolate following suspected contact with someone who has a confirmed diagnosis of COVID-19
- Ensuring that they obtain a negative test result or written clearance from a doctor prior to resuming work at the Service following any absence due to COVID-19 symptoms.

All parents and guardians are responsible for:

- Complying with social distancing practices at pick up and drop off
- Wearing a mask or face covering during pick up and drop off
- Keeping their child out of the Service if:
 - The child or any member of their household has had a confirmed diagnosis for COVID-19 in the previous 14 days
 - The child is displaying signs of ANY ILLNESS (even residual illness)
 - If they or anyone in their family are awaiting a COVID -19 test result
 - If they were a CLOSE CONTACT of a confirmed case
- Immediately notifying the kindergarten staff if you or a member of your household has received a confirmed diagnosis of COVID-19
- Signing in including printing their first and last name for tracing purposes

2. Procedures relating to the delivery and collection of children

The Nominated Supervisor, persons in day-to-day charge, and all staff are responsible for:

- Ensuring that every child has their temperature checked by a staff member upon arrival each day at the service

- Where a child's temperature is over 37.5 degrees Celsius (as per DET guidelines), advising the parent or guardian that this policy requires that the child is not admitted to the Service on that day and recommends as per the government's directions that the child get tested
- Ensuring that each child has sanitized their hands following their temperature check and prior to them entering the room

Parents and guardians are responsible for:

- Limiting the number of persons accompanying the delivery or collection of children to as few as possible
- Agreeing to having their child's temperature taken by a staff member upon arrival at the Service each day and remaining at the premises until that check has been completed
- Agreeing to exclude their child from the Service that day if their child's temperature reading is over 37.5 degrees Celsius (as per DET guidelines)
- Ensuring that they always remain outside the education rooms
- Limiting the amount of time that they remain on the Service premises to as short as possible
- Avoiding congregating with other parents or guardians on or outside the Service premises by practising appropriate social distancing measures (i.e. ensuring that they remain 1.5 metres apart from other families)
- Complying with any other directions provided by the Approved Provider or Nominated Supervisor regarding procedures put in place to ensure safe delivery and collection of children.

3. Procedures relating to suspected cases of COVID-19 at the Service

The Approved Provider and/or Nominated Supervisor is responsible for:

- Following up on the status of any child who has been sent home from the Service and ascertaining whether any further action is required to be taken. This action could include:
 - Additional cleaning and sanitising of the premises
 - Notifying families of children attending the service of a suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19 on the Service premises
 - Deciding whether to temporarily close the Service until the safety of staff, children and visitors can be assured
- Notifying the Public Health Unit or Health Information hotline via 1800 020 080 of any confirmed or suspected cases of COVID-19
- Notifying the Department of Education and Training's Quality Assessment and Regulation Division of any confirmed or suspected cases of a child or staff member with COVID-19 within 24 hours.

The Nominated Supervisor, persons in day-to-day charge, and all staff are responsible for:

- Checking the temperature of any child who is displaying COVID-19 symptoms during their attendance at the Service
- If the child's temperature is over 37.5 degrees Celsius (as per DET guidelines), immediately contacting the child's parent or guardian and requesting that the child is collected within 30 minutes
- If the child's parent or guardian cannot be reached, contacting a nominated emergency contact and requesting that they come to collect the child within 30 minutes
- Attempting to lower the child's temperature by:
 - Removing excessive clothing (shoes, socks, jumpers)
 - Encouraging the child to take small sips of water
 - Moving the child to a quiet area where they can rest whilst being supervised
- Wearing a mask and disposable gloves when caring for a child who has COVID-19 symptoms
- Keeping accurate records of the child's temperature, time taken, time parent/s or guardians were contacted, the staff member's name and time of collection

- Recording all relevant details in an *Incident, Illness, Accident and Trauma Record*
- Complying with the relevant requirements and procedures contained in the *Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Policy*.

Parents and guardians are responsible for:

- Collecting their child within 30 minutes (or as soon as reasonably practicable) if requested by a member of staff due to the child recording a temperature above 37.5 degrees Celsius (as per DET guidelines)
- Signing the *Incident, Illness, Accident and Trauma Record* upon collecting their child
- Ensuring that their contact details and emergency contact details are current and updating them if required.

4. Procedures relating to implementing effective personal hygiene measures

All staff, volunteers, visitors, children, and their family members attending the Service premises are responsible for:

- Washing their hands with soap and water or using the hand sanitiser provided upon arrival to the Service
- Using disposable tissues to wipe noses, eyes or mouths and disposing them in the bin provided immediately after use
- Washing hands following the use of tissues
- Washing hands thoroughly using soap and water before and after using the toilet
- Thoroughly drying hands after washing them, using paper towel
- Exercising appropriate cough and sneeze etiquette, including covering coughs and sneezes with a hand or elbow.

The Approved Provider and/or Nominated Supervisor is responsible for:

- Ensuring that all staff complete the online [COVID-19 Infection Control Training](#) made available by the Australian Department of Health
- Ensuring that cleaning staff, including contracted cleaning staff, implement the procedures outlined in the ['Information for employers'](#) and [Environmental Cleaning and Disinfection Principles for COVID-19](#) Information Sheets including:
 - Wearing gloves and using alcohol-based hand sanitiser before and after wearing gloves
 - Wearing surgical masks and eye protection if a 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;and
 - Disinfecting surfaces with an anti-viral disinfectant after cleaning with detergent and water.
- Placing posters and signs promoting good hand and respiratory hygiene practices in appropriate locations around the Service premises.

The Nominated Supervisor, persons in day-to-day charge, and all staff are responsible for:

- Regularly washing hands throughout the day [using the principles and techniques recommended by the World Health Organisation](#)
- Encouraging more-frequent handwashing by children
- Supervising children when they are washing their hands to ensure proper techniques are used
- Informing children about the virus in an age-appropriate manner and emphasising preventative measures such as handwashing, use of tissues, cough and sneeze techniques and limiting touching other children's faces
- Modelling and reminding children of appropriate cough and sneeze etiquette, including covering coughs and sneezes with a tissue, hand or elbow
- Actively monitoring children's emotional well-being and communicating any concerns with parents and families

- Washing their hands with soap and water or using hand sanitiser, before and after wearing gloves
- Wiping down and sanitising any surface that needs it due to sneeze, cough, etc
- Regularly cleaning and disinfecting high touch surfaces like doorknobs, bathrooms (e.g. taps, toilets), tables and chairs
- Completing the online [COVID-19 Infection Control Training](#) made available by the Australian Department of Health.

5. Procedures relating to implementing effective social distancing measures

The Nominated Supervisor, persons in day-to-day charge, and all staff are responsible for:

- Designing the kindergarten program to be predominately conducted outdoors in all weather
- Increasing ventilation within the Service where practical (e.g. opening windows)
- Ensuring children are separated by an appropriate distance when seated on the floor or at tables (e.g. through removing some chairs or marking out seating positions on the floor)
- Redesigning activities to ensure that they are undertaken with social distancing principles in mind. This may include:
 - Splitting children into groups where each group undertakes alternate activities in different parts of the Service premises
 - Changing activities to minimise use of shared resources and equipment.
- Avoiding situations when children are required to queue where possible, e.g. waiting their turn to use the bathroom for handwashing or toileting, waiting their turn to use a piece of equipment etc
- Where possible, providing children with resources rather than letting children select from communal resources
- Limiting the number of staff in office and kitchen at any one time
- Ensuring that staff always practice effective social distancing, including during staff meetings if not conducted via ZOOM as per current usual practice.

Parents and guardians are responsible for:

- Where possible, arranging for discussions with Service staff to be conducted via telephone or video call, rather than face-to-face
- Practising appropriate social distancing measures at all times while on or in the vicinity of the Service premises, including by ensuring that they remain 1.5 metres apart from other families
- Wearing a mask or face covering when in the vicinity of the service as per the State Government direction.

6. Procedures relating to closure of the service in the event of a child or staff member being diagnosed with COVID-19 or being identified by the health authorities as a close contact of a confirmed case of COVID-19

The Approved Provider is responsible for:

- Contacting the Victorian Department of Health and Human Services to seek advice via 1300 561 160
- Lodging a notification with the Quality Assessment and Regulation Division at the Victorian Department of Education and Training within 24 hours of the incident requiring closure of the Service
- Communicating circumstances of the closure to all staff, volunteers, and families as soon as reasonably practicable
- Maintaining appropriate contact with staff, volunteers, and families to provide updates on the reopening of the Service and other relevant matters.

- Reporting to WORKSAFE when any Staff Member has a positive diagnosis of COVID-19 by using the [online confirmed coronavirus \(COVID-19\) diagnosis form](#), or by calling 13 23 60.

Parents and guardians are responsible for:

- Adhering to isolation requirements as stipulated by DHHS associated with being a confirmed or suspected close contact.

7. Procedures relating staff members being absent due to any illness

The Approved Provider is responsible for:

- Sourcing relief staff where practical
- Informing families via email that a relief teacher will be present in the classroom
- Informing families as soon as practicable if the Centre will be closed due to an inability to source relief staff.

The Nominated Supervisor, persons in day-to-day charge, and all staff are responsible for:

- Getting tested as per the government's directions
- Self-isolating until they have received their test result
- Returning to work when they are fit to do so.

6. EVALUATION

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

- Regularly seek feedback from everyone affected by the policy regarding its effectiveness
- Monitor the implementation, compliance, complaints, and incidents in relation to this policy
- Keep the policy up to date with current legislation, research, policy, and advice/directions provided by government
- Revise the policy and procedures as part of the service's policy review cycle, or as required
- Notify staff and parents/guardians as soon as possible regarding any changes to this policy or its procedures.

7. SOURCES AND RELATED POLICIES

Sources

- Australian Government Coronavirus (COVID-19) - <https://www.australia.gov.au/>
- Australian Government Department of Health COVID-19 Resources <https://www.health.gov.au/resources/collections/novel-coronavirus-2019-ncov-resources>
- Australian Government Department of Health COVID-19 infection control advice - <https://www.health.gov.au/resources/apps-and-tools/covid-19-infection-control-training>
- Australian Government Fair Work Ombudsman *Coronavirus and Australian workplace laws* - <https://coronavirus.fairwork.gov.au/>
- Australian Government Department of Education, Skills and Employment - <https://www.dese.gov.au/covid-19>
- Early Learning Association of Australia *Coronavirus (COVID-19) FAQs* - <https://ela.org.au/resources/coronavirus-updates-2/>
- DHHS Self-Assessment tool COVID-19 - https://www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/202003/2001628_COVID-19%20Self%20assessment%20for%20risk.pdf
- Guide to the Education and Care Services National Law and the Education and Care Services National Regulations (2017) - <https://www.acecqa.gov.au/sites/default/files/2018-01/NQF-Resource-02-Guide-to-ECS-Law-Regs.pdf>

- Guide to the National Quality Standard (2020) - https://www.acecqa.gov.au/sites/default/files/2020-01/Guide-to-the-NQF_2.pdf
- Revised National Quality Standard (2018) - <https://www.acecqa.gov.au/nqf/national-quality-standard>
- National Health and Medical Research Council. (2012). *Staying healthy: Preventing infectious diseases in early childhood education and care services* - <https://www.nhmrc.gov.au/about-us/publications/staying-healthy-preventing-infectious-diseases-early-childhood-education-and-care-services>
- The Australian Parenting website Raising Children - <https://raisingchildren.net.au/guides/coronavirus-covid-19-guide>
- Victorian Government Department of Education and Training *Coronavirus (COVID-19) advice for early childhood services* - <https://education.vic.gov.au/childhood/Pages/coronavirus-advice-early-childhood.aspx>
- Victorian Government Department of Health and Human Services *Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) page* - <https://www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/coronavirus>
- WorkSafe Victoria (2008) - <https://www.worksafe.vic.gov.au/coronavirus-covid-19>
- World Health Organisation *Key Messages and Actions for COVID-19 Prevention and Control in Schools March 2020* - https://www.who.int/docs/default-source/coronaviruse/key-messages-and-actions-for-covid-19-prevention-and-control-in-schools-march-2020.pdf?sfvrsn=baf81d52_4

ATTACHMENTS

Nil

AUTHORISATION

The policy was adopted by the Approved Provider of West Hawthorn Pre-school on 31/08/2020.

REVIEW DATE: 31/08/2021