



Coronavirus Policy

NQS

QA2	2.1.2	Health practices and procedures Effective illness and injury management and hygiene practices are promoted and implemented.
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National Law

Section	167	Offence relating to protection of children from harm and hazards
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National Regulations

Reg	77	Health, hygiene and safe food practices
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Aim

To ensure all employees and families implement appropriate risk management procedures to prevent the spread of coronavirus or reduce the potential for the illness to spread.

Related Policies

- Excursion Policy
- Fees Policy
- Health Hygiene and Safe Food Policy
- Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Policy
- Infectious Diseases Policy
- Relationships with Children Policy
- Work, Health and Safety Policy

Implementation

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. However, 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 Safe Food 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](#). Subscribe to email updates
- [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 Department.

What must employees and families do?

Comply with government guidance

The Approved Provider, employees and volunteers and families must:

- **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 eg arriving in Australia from overseas or close contact with someone who has the virus
 - 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 within 14 days of arriving in Australia or last contact with a confirmed case. Call ahead before visiting the doctor/hospital to advise them of your symptoms, and wear a surgical mask when visiting the medical facility
- **advise the service** if they develop symptoms of the virus or are confirmed to have the virus while in isolation. This is particularly important if they have been at the service before isolation
- **provide written clearance** from a doctor after a period of isolation or quarantine confirming they/child/family member are not contagious and may return to 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.



Implement effective hygiene process

The coronavirus is most likely to spread from person-to-person through:

- direct close contact with a person while they are infectious
- close contact with a person with a confirmed infection who coughs or sneezes
- touching objects or surfaces like door handles or tables contaminated from a cough or sneeze from a person with a confirmed infection, and then touching your mouth or face.

Employees and volunteers will ensure they continue to implement hygiene processes outlined in the Health, Hygiene and Safe Food 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
- 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 cleaning requirements are documented and completed more frequently than usual. Cleaning staff, including contracted cleaning staff, will 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 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
- disinfecting surfaces with an anti-viral disinfectant after cleaning with detergent and water.

The Approved Provider and Nominated Supervisor 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.

Information and notification requirements

The Approved Provider or Nominated Supervisor will:

- report instances of (suspected) coronavirus to the local state/territory health department
Port Macquarie Mid North Coast Area Health- 02 65 88 27 50
Tamworth Public Health Unit- Hunter New England 02 67 64 80 00
- 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 ie there was an imminent or severe risk to the health, safety or wellbeing of a person at the service
- comply with notification requirements for closures by notifying the Regulatory Authority within 24 hours if directed to close or close voluntarily because of coronavirus



- apply for waivers from ratio and qualification requirements if required where staff are required to self-isolate
- provide families with current information about the coronavirus including current Information Sheets numbered 1- 8 above.

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 Relationships 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.

Excursions

To further protect the service and local communities, the Approved Provider, Nominated Supervisor and educators will ensure excursions which may expose children, staff or vulnerable community members, including those in aged care facilities, to higher risks of contracting coronavirus do not occur while coronavirus infection control measures are in place.

Staff Entitlements in relation to coronavirus

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. Permanent employees who want to stay at home as a precaution against exposure to Coronavirus must apply for paid or unpaid leave.

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 eg long service leave, and taking unpaid leave.

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

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 service is directed to close by the Government. Under the Fair Work Act, an employee can only be stood down without pay in certain situations, including a stoppage of work for which the employer can't be held responsible.

What else should families do?

Educators will welcome advice from families about any international travel so educators are aware of the reasons why their child may be anxious and implement relevant strategies.



Fees

As outlined in our Fees Policy, fees are payable for all days that children are enrolled, including when children are sick and cannot attend. In relation to coronavirus, this means fees are payable where children are unable to travel home to Australia, are in quarantine or home isolation, or do not attend as a precautionary measure.

Fees may also be payable if the centre is directed to close or closes voluntarily to contain the spread of the virus. When determining whether to charge fees, the Approved Provider will consider all relevant issues including the likely length of the closure, whether they need to pay staff during the closure, and if they will receive any support from Government to maintain financial viability of the business.

Note if fees are charged parents are entitled to receive Child Care Subsidy for up to 42 days without providing a reason where their child is absent. Additional absences may also be entitled to the Subsidy in specific situations including illness as outlined in the [Child Care Provider Handbook](#). Additional Child Care Subsidy (temporary financial hardship) is also available to provide short term support to families experiencing significant financial difficulty paying fees, for example because they are unable to attend work. Families should discuss their financial support options with Centrelink where required.

In line with current Government guidance to services, fees will not be payable in cases where the service is directed to close or closes voluntarily to contain the spread of the virus.

Source

Education and Care Services National Law and Regulations
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

Review

The policy will be reviewed annually by the Approved Provider, Supervisors, Employees, Families and any committee members.

Last reviewed: 16th March 2020

Date for next review: As required

- **Version: 2**



- **Last Amended By:** Approved Provider
- **Date of adoption of this policy:** 12th March 2020