

[H3.20]

Corona Virus Policy

Applies to: Management Committee/KNC Board, KNC General Manager, OOSH Administrator/Nominated Supervisor, KNC Staff, OOSH Staff, Volunteers, Community groups, OOSH Families and anyone accessing the Kariong Neighbourhood Centre

Specific responsibility: KNC General Manger, OOSH Administrator/Nominated Supervisor, OOSH Responsible Persons

Version: 2

Date approved: 6 January 2021

Next review date: March 2021

Policy context:

Links to Regulations and Law

- Children (Education and Care Services) National Law (NSW) No 104a
 - Section 167 Offence relating to protection of children from harm and hazards
- Education and Care Services National Regulations [2011 – 653]
 - Regulation 77 Health, hygiene and safe food practices

Links to National Quality Standards

- Quality Area 2: Children’s Health and Safety
 - 2.1.2 Health Practices and Procedures: Effective illness and injury management and hygiene practices are promoted and implemented.

Linked Policies

- Managing Infectious Diseases Policy
- OOSH and Children’s Programs Fee Policy
- Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Policy
- Immunisation, Exclusion and Notifiable Diseases Policy
- Interactions with Children Policy
- Excursion Policy
- Nutrition Policy
- Medical Conditions Policy
- Transport Policy
- Work Health and Safety Policy
- Sleep and Rest Policy

Templates and forms

- Accident Injury Form

Source

- Education and Care Services National Law and Regulations

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 NSW Coronavirus Hotline
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Policy Statement

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.

Procedure

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 Managing Infectious Diseases Policy, the Approved Provider, OOSH Administrator/ 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 [Frequently Asked Questions](#) and email updates [Federal Department of Education, Skills and Employment](#)
- [Federal Department of Health](#) coronavirus Information Sheets which include:
 1. [Use of masks by the public in the community](#)
 2. [Environmental Cleaning and Disinfection Principles for COVID-19](#)
 3. [COVID-19-Frequently Asked Questions](#)
 4. [‘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 OOSH Administrator/Nominated Supervisor will contact the **Federal coronavirus hotline on 1800 020 080** or their State/Territory health Department.

The Approved Provider and OOSH Administrator/Nominated Supervisor will also implement a COVID Safe Plan to ensure the service can provide an environment that’s as safe as possible for children, staff and visitors.

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 or in quarantine for 14 days where required eg arriving in Australia from overseas or, another state which is in lockdown or having close contact with someone who has the virus ie face to face for at least 15 minutes or in the same closed space for at least 2 hours. If a child/family member is required to enter a known Hotspot Red Zone (eg Northern Beaches Northern Area), you are required to self-isolate for a minimum period of 7 days, after leaving that area. You will be required to have a coronavirus test **after** leaving the hotspot and when this test returns a negative result you may be permitted to return to the service. **At all times you are to maintain all recommended hygiene practices, including the use of facial masks when in a known hotspot area.**
- **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 OOSH Administrator/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
- **comply with all service policies including Infectious Diseases Policy** which requires ill children and adults to remain at home and comply with relevant Exclusion periods. Note employees, volunteers and families must comply with any isolation/exclusion periods in relation to coronavirus implemented by the Approved Provider or OOSH Administrator/Nominated Supervisor including periods which exceed government requirements
- **agree to have their temperature tested** before entry to the service if the OOSH Administrator/Nominated Supervisor or staff reasonably believe a child or adult may have a fever or it's one of the control measures in our COVID Safe Plan
- **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
- **complete a Health Declaration** if requested by staff declaring they are healthy and do not have any symptoms of coronavirus before entering the service.

Implement effective hygiene process

The coronavirus is most likely to spread from person-to-person through droplets of saliva produced when a person coughs or sneezes. Droplets cannot go through skin and people can only be infected if they touch their mouth, nose or eyes once their skin (ie hands) is contaminated. Droplets usually travel no further than 1 meter through the air. This means the transmission of droplets can occur when people:

- have direct close contact with a person while they are infectious
- close contact with an infected person who coughs or sneezes
- touch 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.

The Approved Provider 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 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
- 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 OOSH Administrator/ 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 door knobs, bathrooms (eg taps, toilets), tables and chairs, phones, tablets and keyboards. 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 OOSH Administrator/ 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. They will also place signs and posters about physical distancing around the service like those from [Safework Australia](#).

Social distancing

We're also implementing the following social distancing strategies where possible to limit the potential spread of the infection:

- complying with current public gathering limits and numbers of people allowed in indoor or outdoor spaces (see State Government websites eg Coronavirus and Health sites)
- maintaining physical distancing and current gathering limits during any excursions
- ensuring families maintain at least 1.5 metres between each other as far as practical, including at the start and end of the program
- ensuring activities that involve singing and wind instruments that you blow into occur outdoors, or with no more than five children at a time per space indoors
- restricting number of parents in service dropping off or picking up children eg by asking parents to remain in car and wait for advice to enter service or using mobile/contactless sign in /out
- putting marks on the floor so families and visitors stand at least 1.5 metres away from the counter and from each other

- deferring activities that lead to mixing of children and staff from different rooms/groups
- avoiding situations where children are required to queue, assemble in large groups or hold hands
- staggering lunch /snack times to reduce number of children playing outside at one time and number of staff in staff room
- staggering children's attendance where possible
- arranging for deliveries to be dropped away from main entrance or collected from vehicles by one or two staff using contactless acceptance measures
- requiring 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 Skype and Zoom to ensure children can continue to communicate with community members in a protected environment
- maintaining 1.5 metres distance when children are seated eg 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
- requiring staff to travel directly to and from work, and avoid public transport where possible

Information and notification requirements

The Approved Provider or OOSH Administrator/ Nominated Supervisor will:

- 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 ie there was an imminent or severe risk to the health, safety or wellbeing of a person at the service
- comply with 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 OOSH Administrator/ 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 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 any third party software provider or via operational details in the Provider Entry Point
 - 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 (QLD only)
 - 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 information about the coronavirus including current information and fact sheets from Federal or State Health and Education Departments

Wearing of face masks

- NSW Health have confirmed that children under 12 years old are exempt from any requirements to wear face masks.
- Children over 12 years old and educators and staff at ECE services are not required to wear face masks whilst education and care is being provided, however, they may choose to do so.
- It is strongly recommended that visitors to services wear a face mask where practical. For further information about the use of face masks, please visit: <https://www.nsw.gov.au/covid-19/face-masks>
- Where appropriate the Responsible Person who is collecting or delivering children to and from families at the service will be required to wear a mask on these occasions

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.

What else should families do?

Asthma Australia has advised doctors to ensure all patients with asthma have a current Asthma Action plan and to update it if needed via a phone consultation, with any new plan delivered electronically. If their child has an Asthma Plan, families must consult their doctor and provide the OOSH Administrator/Nominated Supervisor with an updated Plan or written confirmation from the doctor that the current Plan can continue. The OOSH Administrator/Nominated Supervisor will distribute any updated Plans to relevant educators.

Fees

The Federal Government's ECEC Relief Package ('free child care') ended on 12 July 2020. From 13 July 2020 families at services approved for Child Care Subsidy (CCS) and Additional Child Care Subsidy (ACCS) are again required to pay fees and CCS and ACCS recommenced.

Please read following in conjunction with JobKeeper Payments section below

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.

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

The Approved Provider or OOSH Administrator/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, cannot work because 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 staff and seek their views on possible changes to staffing arrangements eg reductions in work hours. Employees' written consent to any new arrangement 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 (eg 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.

During this time employees may be engaged in activities that don't involve children, for example, training, deep cleaning or administration.

JobKeeper Payments

JobKeeper payments ceased from 20 July 2020 for employees of a CCS approved provider and for sole traders operating a child care service.

Responsibilities of Parents

- **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 or in quarantine for 14 days where required eg arriving in Australia from overseas or, or another state which is in lockdown or having close contact with someone who has the virus ie face to face for at least 15 minutes or in the same closed space for at least 2 hours
- **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 OOSH Administrator/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
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Record of Review

Version Effective Date	Review Date	Lead by	People consulted	Review Approved
Version 1 17 th March 2020	March 2021	OOSH Administrator/ Nominated Supervisor: Jacqui Pearson	Management Committee Staff	Gail Ransley: Chair of Governance Sub Committee 17 th March 2020
Version 2 6 th January 2021	March 2021	OOSH Administrator/ Nominated Supervisor: Jacqui Pearson	Governance Committee, Staff	Gail Ransley: Chair of Governance Sub Committee 6 th January 2021