

Policy Title:	COVID-19 Management Policy
Effective Date:	April 2020
Review Date:	As necessary under the Policy and Procedure Development Policy

POLICY STATEMENT

To ensure ICC minimises the risk of exposure to Covid-19 by adhering to all recommended guidelines from the Australian Government – NSW Health, Department of Education. ICC will implement practices that help to reduce the transmission of the virus including the exclusion of any person (child, educator, parent, visitor, student) that is unwell with cold and flu like symptoms, or is suspected or has tested positive to having Covid-19. ICC will implement effective hygiene practices as per our existing policies and procedures. ICC will provide all families and educators with up-to-date information and advice sourced from the Australian Government relevant departments. ICC Educators will adhere to all recommended practices, advice and guidelines as determined by NSW Health and NSW Department of Education Early Childhood throughout the duration of the pandemic.

BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

COVID-19 is a new strain of coronavirus that was originally identified in Wuhan, Hubei Province, China in December 2019. The World Health Organization (WHO), has declared that COVID-19 outbreak as a 'pandemic'- a Public Health Emergency of International Concern (effective 11 March 2020). This is mainly 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 Department of Health, the time of exposure to the virus and when symptoms first occur is anywhere from 2-14 days.

Symptoms can range from a mild illness, similar to 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 current status of COVID-19 including health recommendations, travel restrictions, and a vast collection of resources and information to help people make informed decisions.

As this information is changing rapidly, ICC is monitoring health alerts and implementing measures suggested by key health experts to minimise the transmission of COVID-19. ICC has a range of comprehensive policies in place to guide best practice in relation to health and safety, dealing with infectious diseases and maintaining a child safe environment. 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, has resulted in the development of a specific policy to assist our Service manage this pandemic.

SCOPE AND PURPOSE

This policy applies to children, families, educators, students, management and visitors to ICC.

POLICY DETAIL/ BUSINESS RULES

IMPLEMENTATION:

ICC is committed to minimise the spread of the COVID-19 virus by implementing recommendations provided by the [Australian Government- Department of Health and Safe work Australia](#)

ICC implements procedures as stated in the *Staying healthy: Preventing infectious diseases in early childhood education and care services* (Fifth Edition) developed by the Australian Government National Health and Medical Research Council as part of our day-to-day operation of the Service.

We are guided by explicit decisions regarding exclusion periods and notification of any infectious disease by the *Australian Government- Department of Health* and local Public Health Units in our jurisdiction under the **Public Health Act**. COVID-19 is a notifiable condition in all states and territories of Australia.

In the event of any child, educator, staff member or visitor attending our Service who is suspected or confirmed to have the infection, the Approved Provider will contact their Public Health Unit.

National Coronavirus (COVID-19) Health Information Line
1800 020 080 Call 131 450 for translating and interpreting service
Health Direct 1800 022 222
Public Health Unit- Local state and territory health departments

ICC has implemented risk management plans to identify any possible risks and hazards to our environments and practices. Effective 15th March 2020, the Australian Health Protection Principal Committee has made recommendations to the general public to help manage the spread of COVID-19. **These measures include implementing good hygiene practices, self-isolation when unwell and encouraging social distancing where ever possible.**

HYGIENE PRACTICES

- ICC will ensure [signs and posters](#) remind employees and visitors of the risks of COVID-19 and the measures that are necessary to stop its spread including hand washing and hand rub procedures and information about COVID-19.
- Alcohol-based hand sanitiser will be kept out of reach of young children and only available for adults to use. If parents decide to apply this to their child, they must supervise the child to avoid rubbing it into their eyes or a child swallowing the gel/liquid.
- ICC will supply disposable tissues and have bins available with plastic liners available in several locations for disposing used items.
- Information provided to families may include:
 - symptoms of COVID-19
 - transmission of the virus
 - self-isolation and exclusion
 - prevention strategies- including hand hygiene and self-isolation
 - contact details for health assistance

ICC Educators and the Nominated Supervisor will implement the following:

- Any person visiting our Service must sign the Visitor Register, providing contact information, show proof of at least two COVID-19 vaccinations, and will be asked to confirm that they have not come into *close contact* with anyone with a positive COVID-19 in the past 14 days or travelled interstate in the past 14 days.
- Effective 28 March 2020, any person entering Australia from any destination will be required to undertake 14-day quarantine at designated facilities (Australian Government)
- Any child, educator, parent or visitor will be excluded if they have a temperature above 38°C, a cough, sore throat or any sign or symptom similar to a cold/influenza.
- **In order to return to ICC after an exclusion, a medical clearance from a GP or a Negative Covid-19 test will be required.**
- Any person who has been in close contact with someone who has a positive diagnosis must self-isolate for 14 days.
- Household members of a person who has a confirmed case (including children) of COVID-19 must also be isolated from the Service and general public.
- The Public Health Unit will provide further information on a case-by-case basis as to the length and place of isolation. (see: [COVID-19 home isolation](#))
- Families must immediately advise ICC if they, or anyone in their family, develops any symptoms of the virus or receives a positive result of the virus whilst in isolation

The national campaign *Help Stop the Spread and Stay Healthy*, launched by the Australian Government has emphasised that effective handwashing is a vital strategy to help reduce the spread of the COVID-19 virus. Handwashing with soap and water for at least 20 seconds whenever you cough, sneeze or blow your nose, prepare food or eat, touch your face or use the toilet is recommended.

ICC will adhere to National Regulation requirements and Government guidelines to ensure all educators, children, families and visitors to the Service implement best practice.

Our Service will ensure:

- all educators, parents, children and visitors must wash their hands with soap and water or use the alcohol-based hand sanitiser provided upon arrival to the Centre.
- hands must be thoroughly dried using disposal paper and disposed of in the bin provided.
- disposable tissues must be used to wipe noses, eyes or mouths and disposed of in the bin provided immediately after use
- hands must be washed following the use of tissues
- hands must be washed thoroughly using soap and water before and after using the toilet
- cough and sneeze etiquette must be used - cover your cough and sneeze with your elbow
- educators and staff must always adhere to our Handwashing Policy
- children are supervised when washing hands
- educators and staff must adhere to effective food preparation and food handling procedures
- educators will wash their hands or use alcohol based sanitiser, before wearing gloves and wash their hands after wearing gloves
- educators and staff must adhere to our *Health and Safety Policy* for cleaning and disinfecting surfaces and equipment (such as toys, puzzles, outdoor toys, bedding, playdough etc) as per *Staying healthy: Preventing infectious diseases in early childhood education and care services* recommendations
- equipment, resources and surfaces including high-touch surfaces- taps, door handles, light switches, nappy change areas and toys will be cleaned more frequently as required using detergent and water followed by disinfectant

- washroom facilities for employees have adequate supplies of soap, toilet paper and alcohol-based sanitiser

SOCIAL DISTANCING IN CHILDCARE

Social distancing is important because COVID-19 is most likely spread from person-to-person through close contact with a person while they are infectious, close contact with a person with a confirmed infection who coughs or sneezes or from touching objects or surfaces (such as door handles or tables) contaminated from a cough or sneeze from a person with a confirmed infection and then touching your nose or mouth. (source: Australian Government Department of Health. Coronavirus disease)

Social distancing in early childhood education and care is not feasible for educators to perform their job, however we will implement measures to minimise the risk of exposure as reasonably practicable.

To reduce the spread of COVID-19 parents are reminded of the following:

- if your child is sick, do not send them to ICC.
- do not visit our Service if you or another family member is unwell
- sanitise your hands at regular intervals throughout the day
- avoid physical contact with other people who may be sick- such as older people and people with existing health conditions
- clean and disinfect high touch surfaces regularly (door handles, car seats, mobile phone, toys, dummies)
- promote strictest hygiene measures when preparing food at home and at the Service

At Inner City Care, we will:

- restrict the number of visitors to our Service (including students, delivery of goods) and visitors that do enter the Service are required to show proof of at least two doses of a COVID-19 vaccination
- where possible, install signage and markings on the floor near the front entry indicating a 1.5 metre mark for people to stand for social distancing
- reduce mixing of children by separating cohorts (including staggering meals and play times)
- where possible, outdoor play will be promoted within our Service to provide children with additional personal space
- large groups will be monitored to provide flexible learning to ensure groups are smaller in both the indoor and outdoor environment
- increase ventilation within the Service by opening up doors and being outside
- encourage the use of face masks when using public transport to travel to and from the Centre, when staff leave the Centre on breaks and as per the advice of NSW Department of Health.
- wash hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or sanitise hands with alcohol-based sanitiser before and after travelling to work
- encourage families, children and educators if using public transport, maintain physical distancing measures during any trip.

SUSPECTED CASES OF COVID-19 AT INNER CITY CARE:

As stated in our Management of Unwell Children Policy, we reserve the right to refuse a child into care if they:

- are unwell and unable to participate in normal activities or require additional attention
- have had a temperature/fever, or vomiting in the last 24 hours
- have had diarrhoea in the last 24 hours
- have been given medication for a temperature prior to arriving at the Service

- if we have reasonable grounds to believe that a child has a contagious or infectious disease (this includes COVID-19)

If your child becomes ill whilst at the Centre, educators/staff will respond to their individual symptoms of illness and provide comfort and care.

Educators will take your child's temperature if your child appears unwell. If the temperature is above **37.5°C** you will be contacted immediately and required to collect your child within 30 minutes. If you are unable to collect your child, an emergency contact person will be contacted, and they must collect your child within 30 minutes.

Educators will attempt to lower your child's temperature by:

- removing excessive clothing (shoes, socks, jumpers)
- encourage your child to take small sips of water
- move your child to a quiet area where they can rest and not be around other children whilst being supervised.
- Educators will wear disposable gloves to avoid possible contamination.
- Educators will keep accurate records of the child's temperature, time taken, time parent/s were contacted, staff member's name and time of collection.
- All information will be recorded in our *Incident, Illness, Accident and Trauma Record*.
- Parents will be required to sign this record upon collection of their child.
- Parents are reminded to ensure their contact details are current and emergency contact details are updated if required.
- Inner City Care reserves the right to prevent employees, parents, family members or visitors to enter our premises if the Approved Provider or Nominated Supervisor suspects instances of COVID-19.

NOTIFICATION

The Approved Provider is mandated by law to notify the Public Health Unit or [Health Information hotline](#) on 1800 020 080 of any confirmed or suspected cases of COVID-19. In addition, the Approved Provider must also notify the [Regulatory Authority](#) in their state or territory within 24 hours.

WHAT HAPPENS IF OUR SERVICE IS FORCED TO CLOSE DUE TO A CONFIRMED CASE?

The decision to close our Service will be made, and advised, by relevant state and territory governments or the Regulatory Authority. This may be due to a confirmed case of COVID-19 in our Service community.

Should this occur, all families will be notified immediately via email and/or phone.

The Approved Provider will notify the [Regulatory Authority](#) within 24 hours of any closure via the [NQA IT System](#)

Cleaning will be conducted and all advice from the relevant Government health and education departments will be followed.

AUTHORITIES AND ACCOUNTABILITIES

The Centre Director is responsible for ensuring all ICC staff have training in this policy. All ICC staff are accountable for the implementation of this policy.

RESOURCES

[Australian Government Department of Education Skills and Employment- Coronavirus \(COV-19\) information sheet regarding periods of local emergency and absences for child care providers and services](#)

[Australian Government Department of Education Skills and Employment Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) information for early childhood education and care providers and services from 6 April 2020](#)

[Australian Government The Treasury JobKeeper payment](#)

[Beyond Blue Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) Supporting educators, children and young people](#)

[CCS Helpdesk 1300 667 276](#)

[Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) frequently asked questions](#)

[Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) resources Australian Government](#)

[COVID-19 Infection control training](#)

[Fairwork Australia- Coronavirus and Australian workplace laws](#)

[Healthdirect Coronavirus hub](#)

[Home Isolation Information](#)

[Information for people with a suspected case](#)

[Information for employers](#)

[Information on Social distancing](#)

[Local state and territory health departments](#)

[Raising Children](#)

[Safe Work Australia](#)

[Posters and Visuals](#)

[COVID-19 coronavirus in pictures](#)

[Manuela Moina- Children's book- "Hello! I am the Coronavirus"](#)

[Recently travelled overseas Poster](#)

[Simple Steps To Help Stop The Spread Poster](#)

State and Territory specific information

[ACT Health- Latest information about COVID-19](#)

[NSW Health alert COVID 19](#)

[Northern Territory Government Department of Health](#)

[Queensland Health – Novel coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#)

[SA Health – Coronavirus disease 2019 \(COVID-19\)](#)

[Tasmanian Government Department of Health – Coronavirus](#)

[Victorian Government Department of Health and Human Services – Coronavirus disease \(COVID-19\)](#)

[Western Australian Government Department of Health – Coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#)

OTHER RELEVANT DOCUMENTATION

Australian Children's Education & Care Quality Authority. (2014).

Australian Government Department of Health *Health Topics* [Health Topics Coronavirus COVID-19](#)

Australian Government Department of Health Coronavirus (COVID-19) advice for travellers

<https://www.health.gov.au/resources/apps-and-tools/covid-19-infection-control-training>

Australian Government Department of Education, Skills and Employment *Information for child care providers and services* <https://docs-edu.govcms.gov.au/node/53362>

Guide to the Education and Care Services National Law and the Education and Care Services National Regulations. (2017).
Guide to the National Quality Standard. (2020)
National Health and Medical Research Council. (2012). *Staying healthy: Preventing infectious diseases in early childhood education and care services.*
Public Health Act 2010
Public Health Amendment Act 2017
Public Health and Wellbeing Regulations 2019 Victoria
The Australian Parenting website Raisingchildren <https://raisingchildren.net.au/guides/a-z-health-reference/coronavirus-and-children-in-australia>
Revised National Quality Standard. (2018).
Safe Work Australia (2020) *Early childhood education and care workers: Minimising the risk of exposure to COVID-19*
<https://www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au/doc/early-childhood-education-and-care-workers-minimising-risk-exposure-covid-19>