



COVID-19 SAFE PLAN

Continuity Management Phase of the COVID-19 pandemic-Updated 03/03/22

Our Covid Safe plan has been developed in conjunction with the current health advice and announcements made from Public Health Victoria and Department of Early childhood education alongside the COVID-19 updates. This plan helps to protect educators, parents, families and visitors and helps us prepare our service in the event of a suspected or confirmed case of coronavirus (COVID-19).

SERVICES MUST CONTINUE TO WORK TOGETHER WITH EDUCATORS TO ADAPT AND PROMOTE SAFE WORK PRACTICES, CONSISTENT WITH ADVICE FROM HEALTH AUTHORITIES TO ENSURE THE WORKPLACE CAN IMPLEMENT PHYSICAL DISTANCING MEASURES FOR ADULTS AND EXEMPLARY HYGIENE MEASURES TO ENSURE THE HEALTH AND SAFETY OF ALL EDUCATORS.

Additionally, the Service must be prepared for the possibility of cases of COVID-19 in the workplace and be able to respond immediately, appropriately and efficiently, and consistently with advice from health authorities and the regulatory authority. *(SafeWork Australia)*

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RISK ASSESSMENT



We have undertaken a thorough risk assessment in consultation with educators and identified possible risks and hazards to our learning environment and practices. All our educators have also completed the Infection Control Training.

Where possible, we have eliminated or minimised all risks as is reasonably practicable. We will continue to review control measures and address those risks. We have kept all educators and families informed on the changing risks at our workplace and the control measures being implemented to minimise these risks.

We have identified children and adults with compromised immunity or complex health care needs.

EDUCATORS PRE-SCREENING

- Educators will have their temperature scanned at the doorway before entering the service using the Thermal Scanner.
- If an educator registers a temperature above **37.5°C** and this is related to an illness they are not able to remain in the workplace [Victoria Health suggest anyone with a temperature above 37.5°C should be tested for COVID-19]
- If an educator is feeling unwell and has cold or flu symptoms, (persistent cough, difficulty breathing, fever) they are not permitted to attend work
- We encourage all educators to be tested for COVID-19 if they have any cold or flu like symptoms. **Rapid AntigenTest (RAT)** is highly recommended for educators to undertake should they have any symptoms. Currently DET has provided free RAT kits to the centres so we have been providing it to educators to take a test twice weekly before starting work.

EDUCATOR ARRIVAL AND ON-SHIFT PROTOCOLS

- Educator travelling to work
 - travelling in their own car is preferable while we do understand this may not always be possible.
 - if using public transport, adhere to social distancing measures at all times and are required to wear face masks
- are requested to wash uniform/clothes frequently.
- must maintain strict personal hygiene measures- hand washing, showering, physical distancing from others in public
- must use hand sanitizers before entering the service and must wash hands thoroughly upon arriving at their rooms with soap and water

- must replace their mask upon arriving the service and collect a fresh mask from the office.
- encouraged to wear masks during drop off/pick up times.
- rosters are staggered for start, finish and break times to reduce number of adults gathered together
- clean and disinfect objects that are touched often- mobile phones, keys, wallets, etc
- use alcohol-based hand sanitisers if soap and water are not available
- limit adult groupings/interactions where possible
- as so far as reasonably practicable, ensure educators maintain a physical distance of 1.5 metres between each adult in the service
- times for educators to utilise educators only facilities are staggered - e.g.: lunchroom, kitchen area, office

PARENT PRE-SCREENING

- parents are required to inform if they have
 - been tested for Covid-19 and provide the service with the results be it PCR test results or RAT results.
 - been in close contact with a person who has a confirmed case of COVID-19 or has been directed to self-isolate
- families are **now permitted** to enter the service. They need to scan their child's temperature and their temperature on the thermal scanner on arrival.
- families need to wear a fitted mask at all times.
- Families are to do a swift drop off/pick up and a quick exchange with educators.

CHILDREN PRE-SCREENING

- families are requested to complete temperature self-checks with the thermal scanner of their child upon arrival
 - a child with a temperature higher than 37.5°C will not be permitted entry to care where this is related to an illness
 - if a child's temperature is above 37.5°C, families aren't permitted to bring them into the service.

PARENT / CHILDREN ARRIVAL AND SIGN-IN PROTOCOLS

- Not more than 2 families are encouraged to use the lift at a time
- Families need to do the check in using the centre's QR code displayed on the entrance/lift/foyer area of the service.
- Families are required to wear masks during drop-off/pick up
- families are **now permitted** to enter the service. They need to scan their child's temperature and their temperature on the thermal scanner on arrival.
- Parents are encouraged not to have long communication/interaction with other families, educators or other adults while the foyer, or when in the lift or in the carpark
- Families are encouraged to do a quick exchange of information with educators in the room during drop off/pick up.
- Families are encouraged to use alternative methods of communication such as phone, Educa app, email)
- consideration is made to avoid families queuing in car park and foyer area causing congestion
- Parents who pick/drop off the child need to use KIOSK to sign the child/ren in/out and use an antibacterial wipe to clean the screen after.
- Parents are assisted via zoom/ phone or in person if they require assistance to complete additional paperwork- e.g. enrolment paperwork, risk minimization plans, updating medication requirements for children, etc.

- families who are front line workers (doctors, nurses) are requested to have changed from their work uniform after completing their shift before collecting their child even from the doorway.
- face to face communication isn't currently recommended.

VISITOR / TRADESMAN ARRIVAL PROTOCOLS

- visitors including specialists working with children, external incursion providers is only allowed.
- tours and parents visiting for orientations is now allowed. Families are encouraged to opt in for zoom tours where possible but will now have option to do physical tours as well. Only two people per family can come in for a tour. This is excluding their child/ren.
- Orientating families are encouraged to complete their child's details on Educa on their profile and provide as much information as possible prior to their child's orientation.
- Families are requested to do a quick exchange of their child related information with their room educators during the orientation. Families are now allowed to enter the service or to stay in the room for the duration of the orientation to help support their child's transition.
- mandatory student placements are allowed based on current Department advice.
- vulnerable or high-risk people excluded where practical, including the elderly and those with pre-existing medical conditions
- deliveries are regularly reviewed, and drop-off organised at a predetermined point outside the service
- delivery drivers requested to call ahead to notify the delivery time
- delivery drivers need to do the check in using the centre's QR code displayed on the entrance/lift/foyer area of the service.
- only a minimum number of educators are designated to receive deliveries to reduce risks
- electronic paperwork/ e-invoicing used where possible
- minimise interaction and alternatives to signatures of deliveries received- contactless methods or use own pen
- alcohol-based hand sanitiser used before and after receiving any packages/deliveries
- contractors who require entry to the service adhere to hygiene procedures
- clear guidelines provided to contractors when visiting the service regarding physical distancing, hygiene protocols and child protection
- handwashing facilities are provided to contractors to ensure they wash their hands thoroughly upon arrival, wipe any equipment with disinfectant wipes

EXCLUSION GUIDELINES



Respond to COVID-19 risk

It is important that any staff member or child who becomes unwell while at an ECEC- must return home immediately and get tested using a RAT, with a designated space(s) made available on ECEC premises to support isolation where required.

The symptoms to watch out for are:

- fever
- chills or sweats
- cough
- sore throat
- shortness of breath
- runny nose
- loss or change in sense of smell or taste.

In certain circumstances headache, muscle soreness, stuffy nose, nausea, vomiting and diarrhoea may also be considered.

It is critical that any staff member or child who becomes unwell while at an early childhood service returns home and receives medical review to see if COVID-19 testing is recommended.

Managing a confirmed case of COVID-19 in early childhood education and care services

To better support ECEC providers to manage COVID-19 cases, the Department of Education and Training (DET) and the Department of Health (DH) have revised how COVID-19 cases will be managed in ECEC.

Process to follow if there's a positive case of COVID-19 at our service:

An employee and parent/carer of a child must advise the ECEC service if they have attended the service while infectious.

Reporting requirements of confirmed and probable cases:

Any person who tests positive on a rapid antigen test (RAT) will be considered a [probable case](#) and be subject to the same requirements as a person who tests positive to a PCR test – they must isolate immediately for seven days and notify their ECEC service.

Probable cases must notify the Department of Health of the positive RAT result as soon as possible via the [COVID-19 Positive Rapid Antigen Test Self-Reporting Form](#) at or call centre on 1800 675 398.

Once a probable case has reported their positive RAT result, they will be asked questions about their symptoms and directly provided critical information about their next steps, how long they must isolate and how they can get care and advice – just as they would if they tested positive on a PCR test.

Confirmed COVID-19 cases are required to notify their ECEC service that they are a positive case.

Notification

COVID-19 cases are required to notify their ECEC service that they are a positive case, the ECEC provider or nominated supervisor submits a notification through National Quality Agenda IT System (NQAITs) as soon as they become aware that a child, parent, contractor, or worker has been onsite but only in the 48 hours before the onset of symptoms consistent with COVID-19 or date of a positive test if asymptomatic (no symptoms).

If services need immediate advice, they can call the DET on 1300 307 415.

Response

The service may choose to close (noting that the duration of closure could be shorter or longer depending on service capacity) to allow for:

- identification and notification of education contacts
- service staff to be tested
- identify any high-touch areas where the case had been that will require additional cleaning. There is no need to do a deep clean.

Contact identification

Any person who has spent time with a positive case (during their infectious period) on site at an ECEC service will be referred to as an 'education contact'. This is the only contact category that an ECEC service is required to identify and communicate with when there has been a positive case on site.

A non-household education contact is someone who has had 15 minutes of face-to-face contact with or spent 2 hours in the same indoor space with someone infectious with COVID-19.

Education contacts who:

- Do not have any symptoms can attend their ECEC site. It is strongly encouraged that a rapid antigen test (RAT) is taken each day for 5 days following notification of a COVID-19 exposure in an educational setting.
- Have symptoms must undertake a RAT or a PCR test and quarantine until they receive a negative result. Contacts are to stay home if unwell. The education contact will need to provide evidence of the negative RAT or PCR result to return to the service.

Some state testing sites can provide RAT kits for staff and children who identify as an education contact.

The provider in liaison with the service is required to:

Use the [ECEC Risk Matrix](#) to identify and record all potential children, parent and staff contacts on the Contact Spreadsheet using attendance and staffing records.

Confirm vaccination status for staff contacts on [ECEC Contact Spreadsheet](#) (noting the need to be fully vaccinated after 29 November).

COVID-19 Contact Management in ECEC Services

ECEC services will continue the process for identifying contacts at a service.

For contact management, a confirmed or probable case will be referred to as a 'positive COVID-19 case'.

1. Positive COVID-19 cases will be required to notify their ECEC service
2. ECEC approved provider or nominated supervisor must submit a notification through National Quality Agenda IT System (NQAITS) as soon as they become aware that a child, parent, contractor, or worker has been onsite only during their infectious period:
 1. If symptomatic at the time of their PCR or rapid antigen test (RAT), and they were onsite 48 hours before the onset of symptoms, or
 2. If asymptomatic at the time of their PCR or RAT, and they were onsite 48 hours before the collection of their first positive test
3. A Department of Education and Training staff member will contact the service.
4. Services will be given information to support them to inform staff and parents/carers swiftly when a positive COVID-19 case has been identified.
5. The service will be required to notify individuals that they are a contact of a positive case and advise them that there are three options:
 1. If symptomatic, they are required to undertake a rapid antigen test (RAT), or
 2. If unable to access a RAT, undertake a PCR test and quarantine until they receive a negative result,
 3. If asymptomatic, they may return onsite to ECEC. Rapid antigen tests daily for 5 days following notification of exposure is strongly encouraged.
6. There is no requirement for the service to close, but it may choose to do so to enable identification of individuals, initial testing of staff or for operational reasons (e.g. unable to meet regulatory obligations under the National Law).
7. The service will be required to maintain a system to enable them to notify contacts and collect, record and store results or reasonable evidence of test results of symptomatic contacts before their return to the service.

Operations and 5-day rapid antigen testing (highly recommended)

Before resuming operations following a positive case, all necessary cleaning must have been arranged and contacts identified and contacted.

The decision to continue or resume operations after a positive case has been identified will depend on whether the service can continue to meet its regulatory obligations under the National Law. If in doubt, the service should talk to DET on 1300 307 415.

All education contacts can now return to ECEC after either:

- If they are asymptomatic or
- If they are symptomatic, provide evidence of a negative RAT or standard PCR test to their ECEC service.

Household contacts (people who live in the same household as a person with COVID-19) are still required to quarantine for 7 days. They cannot use rapid antigen tests to attend an ECEC service, even if they are asymptomatic.

Department of Health and management of COVID-19

There are circumstances where the Department of Health may step in and provide advice to a service, which a service or contact must follow.

Outbreaks

When the Department of Health identifies that a particular setting has caused a major outbreak and is at risk of becoming a super spreader event, the Department of Health will provide advice and manage the outbreak. This may include the Department of Health:

- calling an ECEC service to ask for the details of the contacts who were on site
- directing contacts to undertake further testing or quarantine.

COVID-19 Outbreak Notification Form

The Department of Health (DH) has updated its contact management guidelines to require workplaces, including education settings, to notify DH using [an online form](#) when 5 cases have attended the premises within 7 days. On completion, the online form will be directed to DH and relevant Local Public Health Unit to support outbreak management.

Exemption for Critical Workforces

From **Wednesday 19 January 2022** early childhood teachers, educators and staff working onsite at an ECEC service who are household or household-like contacts may be exempted from isolation requirements in order to attend work. This is only if it is necessary for continuity of operations and if all other options have been exhausted.

This is a voluntary, opt-in arrangement between the provider as employer and the ECEC staff member. Mutual agreement between the provider and ECEC staff member is required. Providers cannot direct a staff member to attend work using this exemption if the staff member does not wish to.

The exemption applies only to household contacts who have no symptoms and have returned a negative rapid antigen test prior to attending work that day. It allows the staff member to attend work only on the days of rostered attendance. When not at the workplace, staff must comply with all relevant isolation requirements.

It is the responsibility of the employer to provide rapid antigen tests and face masks to the exempt worker to ensure they and other workers are safe. An employer must not require or direct their employee to purchase or provide their own rapid antigen test or face mask.

Actions that exempt workers must take

Exempt workers are required to take a rapid antigen test (RAT) for 5 consecutive days before work and comply with other measures designed to keep their colleagues and the children they work with safe.

These measures include always wearing a mask (preferably a P2/N95 mask or TGA-approved P2-equivalent mask), including while teaching and in the company of others, except when they are eating or drinking.

Exempt workers must not share break areas, including staff or break rooms. Facilities should ensure that the staff member works in areas where transmission risk is lower (outside where possible or in large, well-ventilated spaces).

HYGIENE AND PREVENTATIVE PRACTICES

- all educators have completed [COVID19 infection control training](#)
- Visitors aren't currently allowed at the service as per health advice.

- families are **currently not permitted** to enter the service. They need to scan their child's temperature on the thermal scanner on arrival. They need to ring the doorbell and wait outside in the foyer and an educator will collect the child from them.
- anyone who is sick may not enter the service
- if a child or educator becomes ill whilst at the service, they will be sent home as soon as possible
- we have enhanced hygiene practices for all educators children and visitors - washing hands with soap and water or using alcohol-based hand sanitiser
- health and hygiene signs and posters are displayed to remind all educators and visitors of the measures necessary to help stop the spread of the virus- hand washing, cough and sneeze etiquette
- tissues are disposed of in closed bins and followed by washing hands
- promotion of the annual influenza vaccination for educators, children and their families
- facilitation of robust infection control and cleaning
- reminders to refrain from intentional physical contact- shaking hands, kissing on cheeks, hugging
- the service has adequate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and additional hygiene supplies including:
 - soap
 - contact less hand sanitiser dispensers
 - hand sanitiser
 - toilet paper
 - paper hand towel
 - tissues
 - disposable gloves
 - masks (if required)
 - thermometers
 - rubbish bins with lids/bin liners
 - disinfectant wipes
 - cleaning detergent/ disinfectant/ cloths

Handwashing

- we implement strict hand washing procedures for all educators, children and visitors
- all educators have read and acknowledge understanding of the *Hand Washing Policy*
- contactless hand sanitiser dispensers are provided outside the lift downstairs and on the front entry of the service and normal sanitizer dispensers are adequately placed around the workplace
- bathrooms are well stocked with soap, hand wash and paper towel
- posters with clear instructions on how to wash hands and/or use hand sanitiser are displayed
- photos of children demonstrating each step of hand washing near the sinks are displayed as visual prompts
- cough/sneeze etiquette
 - posters demonstrating correct techniques for coughing/sneezing into a flexed elbow are displayed
 - educators model correct procedures to children
 - attempts by children are positively reinforced
 - reminders to wash hands after sneeze, blowing/wiping nose is displayed
 - reminders to dispose of used tissues in the bins provided are displayed

Physical distancing

- where possible, we remain conscious of physical distancing requirements in each enclosed space and limit the number of adults in a space at any one time
- educators are reminded to maintain a physical distance of 1.5 metres between other adults
- where possible, educators are requested to use other methods of communication with colleagues rather than congregate together
- workstations, desks and tables are spread out
- changes have been made to the workplace layout to allow educators and children to enter and exit rooms minimising risk to their health and safety
- signs are displayed to remind educators and families of how many people can be in an enclosed space at any given time (for example: kitchen, resource room, bathroom, lift)
- Educators will comply to physical distancing requirements when
 - eating lunch
 - discussing children's development
 - gathering resources
 - cleaning

Children do not have to be counted in implementing physical distancing measures in an Early Childhood Education and Care service. However, it is best practice to limit the size of groups and interactions to educators implement physical distancing measures. (Safe Work Australia May 2020)

Considerations include:

- stagger play times for children
- organise small groups for indoor and outdoor learning program
- utilise the outdoor area as much as possible
- rearrange resources in rooms to provide a larger range of small group activities- books in several locations rather than one bookshelf; several stations for paint, playdough, craft
- limit number of chairs at a table
- set up activities at the end of tables
- limit number of adults sitting at tables with children during mealtimes
- maximise the space between children at mealtimes
- consider offering several mealtimes sittings to avoid all children requiring seating at one time
- clean tables and chairs thoroughly between each sitting
- ensure highchairs, cots and bedding are spaced well apart to allow for physical distancing requirements to be managed by educators

Food handling and preparation

- educators have relevant and appropriate training to support safe hygiene practices
- educators maintain physical distancing requirements in food preparation areas
- the kitchen area is only accessed by specific staff during hours of operation
- effective hygiene procedures are increased including-
 - regular handwashing when preparing foods, after going to the bathroom and after touching face or hair

- cleaning and sanitising food preparation areas and equipment
- sanitising all eating and drinking utensils and food contact surfaces
- current practices are used regarding provision of reusable utensils
- disposable gloves are used when handling food
- *option - suspend self-serve mealtimes for children- meals will be served by staff only educators only.*

Cleaning and disinfecting procedures

- a combination of cleaning and disinfection is used on a daily basis
- surfaces are cleaned with detergent and water before disinfecting
- adherence to National Health and Medical Research Council (HMRC) childcare cleaning guidelines
- high touch surfaces are cleaned and disinfected at least twice daily or more frequently if required (door handles, light switches, tables, chairs, iPads, tablets, keyboards, touch screens, nappy change tables, puzzles)
- wash and launder toys using the warmest appropriate water setting and dry items completely
- maintain a cleaning checklist
- every toy and surface cleaned every day. Toys that are mouthed by infants cleaned and disinfected before other infants have access to the toy
- cleaning contractors instructed to hygienically clean the service to ensure risk of contamination is removed as per [Environmental Cleaning and Disinfection Principles for COVID-19](#)
- educators wear appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) for cleaning as a precaution
- hands washed with soap and water before and after wearing protective equipment
- gloves disposed of in leak-proof bag
- personal belongings stored in lockers to avoid cross contamination

Washroom facilities

- all washrooms for educators and children have adequate supplies of soap, liquid handwash, paper towels and warm running water
- effective personal hygiene practices are reinforced through posters and fact sheets in prominent positions in the service
- educators model correct handwashing procedures with children
- the number of children and adults using washroom facilities is limited at any one time
- situations where children are required to queue to use bathroom or wash their hands are avoided
- all facilities are cleaned and disinfected effectively
- bins with lids operated by foot pedals are easily accessed in washrooms

PHYSICAL SPACE REQUIREMENTS

Indoor and outdoor environments

- where possible, children are separated into smaller groups than normal throughout the service to promote physical distancing for adults
- ventilation within the service is increased by opening windows and doors when weather permits
- a reduction in cross over of educators is controlled where possible

- where possible, children are seated at opposite ends of a table when playing and eating
- use small tables spaced apart rather than groups of tables positioned together for activities and eating
- spots are placed on the floor for children to sit on during group time
- *considerations during transitions between learning experiences - washing hands, collecting hats, drink bottles, resources, using the bathroom- how can these be managed to reduce queuing and the need for several adults to supervise*
- the amount of rubbish bins is increased so children don't gather in groups
- where practical consider moving some table activities outside
- *option - set up duplicate activities at tables to provide more space between children and adults*
- rotation of groups for indoor and outdoor play environments ensuring educator to child ratios are maintained
- consideration given to limiting numbers of children accessing particular equipment to ensure adequate supervision and adhering to physical distancing for adults as much as possible e.g.: sandpit, climbing equipment
- all outdoor equipment is regularly cleaned and disinfected

FAMILY ENGAGEMENT AND COMMUNICATION

- positive interactions and relationships with children and their families are maintained.
- we provide reliable sources of information to share with families during this pandemic
- we use trusted sources of information only
- we use a range of communication methods to ensure all families receive and understand key messages- emails, phone calls, newsletter, digital platform, personal notes, your service's website or Facebook page
- signage around the service for parents and families has been increased providing directions, procedures and reassurance
- phone calls to families to provide information about their child that would normally be done at the end of each day face to face has been increased
- families are kept informed about centre updates via Educa Dashboard message, emails and phone calls.
- information is provided to families about their responsibilities for updating information to Centrelink through myGov
- families who may be eligible for Additional Child Care Subsidy-Temporary Financial Hardship are encouraged to contact Centrelink
- support is provided to families to assist in their child's well-being [BeYou Emerging Minds](#)
- remain consciously aware of families and children who may be more vulnerable or at risk due to the COVID-19 environment- see [National Office for Child Safety](#), [eSafety Commissioner](#), [Kids Helpline](#)
- continue connecting with children and families who have not yet returned to early learning through online platforms such as Zoom, Educa, etc
- continue to maintain positive relationships with all families to encourage participation with our service
- information provided to children is age appropriate and sensitive to their emotional wellbeing

CONTINUITY OF EDUCATORS



- we maintain open communication with educators about continuity of employment opportunities at our workplace
- one-on-one meetings with educators to discuss rosters and availabilities is regular and ongoing
- we have returned to similar rosters and placement of educators in particular rooms to provide continuity of care for children
- staffing rosters meet or exceed educator to child ratios

COMMUNICATION AND CONSULTATION WITH EDUCATORS

- regularly consult with educators on health and safety matters relating to COVID-19 on a regular basis by revisiting our Covid-19 Management Plan.
- routinely discuss the current control measures in place to eliminate or minimise the risk of exposure and review as required
- incursions are now allowed in a covid safe setting
- routinely communicate and consult with all educators about any modifications or updates to current policies or procedures that are in place to account for the pandemic conditions – (COVID-19 Safe Management Plan, Arrival and Departure Policy, Health and Safety Policy, Control of Infectious Diseases Policy, Incident, Illness, Accident & Trauma Policy, Hand Washing Policy)
- assessment of the adequacy of resources/facilities in the workplace for the welfare of all educators is routinely applied
- we maintain regular consultation with educators about current work, health and safety measures implemented and any changes or additions that may need to be made to ensure the safety for all educators
- Educators are consulted about changes to work rosters, team meetings, training, QIP, etc.
- Important team meetings can now occur in an outdoor setting adhering to physical distancing
- non face-to-face methods of communication are encouraged such as emails, Zoom, Skype

STAFF WELLBEING

- a conscious effort to maintain strong and supportive relationships with all educators is made (including those on leave)
- up to date information from reliable sources is provided. Including:
 - employment support packages through [Department of Education, Skills and Employment](#) (DESE)
 - [Safe Work Australia](#) recommendations for Work Health and Safety
 - Department of Health- [Australian Health Protection Principal Committee \(AHPPC\)](#)
 - Support agencies including counselling services (Beyond Blue, Head Space)

- sensitivity and empathy to the feelings of individual educators is paramount, in particular educators who may be concerned about returning to the workplace
- we offer opportunities for discussions about the support that is available such as Beyond Blue to help cope with trauma and anxiety or through the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) provider our business is associated with (if applicable)
- constant reassurance is provided to staff indicating that we are always working to eliminate or minimise risks to their health and safety in the workplace to help ease their concerns
- immediate response is applied to any workplace bullying by following relevant policies and procedures
- confidentiality and privacy laws are maintained at all times
- we foster wellbeing initiatives as suggested by staff members and professionals within the Early Childhood Education and Care Sector (Mindfulness, Yoga, dance, music)
- all educators take required breaks during the day
- opportunities are provided to educators to engage in online professional development courses and workshops
- time is set aside for programming, mentoring sessions and capacity building

EDUCATORS RETURNING TO WORK

- the Approved Provider will meet with educators returning to work to cooperatively plan for transition back to work from leave- long service, sick leave or other leave entitlements
- discussions may include possible changes that have been implemented to keep the workplace safe, healthy and free of coronavirus
- educators will be required to revise any policies and procedures that have been amended due to COVID-19 such as
 - Health and Safety Policy, Arrival and Departure Policy, Hand Washing Policy, Sick Child Policy
- educators pre-screening protocols will apply (health declaration, temperature check)
- transition back to work for educators may include
 - staggering start and finish times
 - change in work hours/rosters
 - scheduling of breaks to avoid crowding

STAFF TRAINING

- options for the delivery of refresher training for First Aid and CPR through the [Australian Skills Quality Authority](#) as recommended by ACECQA is made available
- consideration given for completing theoretical aspects of training by individual staff members online
- the range of interactive and online courses offered through professional learning providers is consistently investigated (webinars, e-learning modules)
- consideration given on offering professional learning time for educators to complete modules at home
- we encourage and support educators to gain professional learning hours towards teacher accreditation requirements relevant to each state and territory requirements

VULNERABLE EDUCATORS AND CHILDREN

- children and educators with compromised immunity or complex health care needs are identified

- we request educators with underlying health conditions to seek medical advice from their health practitioner regarding additional measures required to protect themselves whilst at work (PPE, additional handwashing, less contact with infants or younger children requiring nappy changing)
- any revision to guidelines from the AHPPC are followed – ([6 July 2020 update](#))
- educators who are more vulnerable to COVID-19 may include:
 - Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples aged 50 years and older with one or more chronic medical condition
 - people aged 65 years and older with chronic medical conditions
 - people with compromised immune systems
- families have been requested to update their child’s medical management, risk minimisation and communication plans in consultation with their child’s health practitioner- including Asthma Management Plans
- all educators and children are encouraged to have the annual influenza vaccine if there are no contraindications to do so. (this is not a requirement under a Public Health Order, just a recommendation from the AHPPC)

Promoting COVID-19 vaccine access for ECEC staff and Parents

As part of the COVID-19 vaccination roll out, all Victorians aged 5 and over are now eligible to receive a COVID-19 vaccine.

Anyone who has tested positive for COVID-19 is advised to wait until they have recovered before receiving their third dose.

Book your third dose vaccine today

If you are aged 18 and over and you had your second dose 4 or more months ago, you are due for your third dose now.

Staying protected

You need your third dose to keep up your immunity against COVID-19.

Bookings at [GPs and pharmacies](#) across Victoria are available now.

You can also get vaccinated at your nearest state-run [vaccination centre](#). [Book online](#) or call the Coronavirus Hotline on [1800 675 398](#) between 8 am and 8 pm, 7 days a week.

You can get the Pfizer or Moderna COVID-19 vaccines for your third dose regardless of the vaccine you received for your first two doses.

You can also get the AstraZeneca vaccine as a third dose if you:

- received AstraZeneca for your first two doses, and there are no contraindications or precautions for use
- had a significant adverse reaction to a previous mRNA vaccine dose (for example, Pfizer or Moderna) that means you cannot have another dose of an mRNA vaccine.

If you’re not sure which vaccine you’re eligible for, talk to your GP.

Third dose vaccination requirements

Under new pandemic orders that came into effect on 12 January 2022, workers in key sectors who are already required to be fully vaccinated with two doses must get their third dose before being permitted to work on site.

This applies to healthcare, aged care, disability, emergency services, correctional facilities, quarantine accommodation and food processing and distribution workers (excluding retail).

Workplaces must sight and record proof of vaccination. This does not apply to workers who have a valid medical exemption.

ECEC worker vaccination requirements

As part of the COVID-19 vaccination roll-out, all ECEC staff and all children / students aged 5 and over are eligible to receive a COVID-19 vaccine.

Vaccination is not mandatory for children, but vaccinations are strongly encouraged as the best way to protect individuals, families and ECEC and school communities from further outbreaks and the spread of COVID-19.

Information about vaccines and eligibility can be found on the [coronavirus.vic.gov.au](https://www.coronavirus.vic.gov.au) website.

The Pandemic Orders require that, unless an employee has a valid medical exception, education workers will not be permitted to attend a ECEC service if they have not received a third dose by the relevant deadline:

- For workers who received their second dose of a COVID-19 vaccination on or before 25 October 2021, the deadline is 25 February 2022.
- For workers who received a second dose of a COVID-19 vaccination after 25 October 2021, the deadline is 15 March 2022.

Your third dose will appear on your Australian immunisation history statement. It will also appear on your COVID-19 digital certificate from late January.

You can get a third dose if you completed an initial course of vaccination overseas with a COVID-19 vaccine recognised by the Therapeutic Goods Administration.

People who are immunocompromised

People who are immunocompromised will receive three primary doses of a COVID-19 vaccine.

ATAGI also [recommends](#) people who are severely immunocompromised receive a fourth dose of vaccine 4 months after their third primary dose. This ensures people with suppressed immunity have the same level of protection against COVID-19 as the general population.

Find out how to [book your vaccine appointment](#).

How to check when you had your second dose

You can access your COVID-19 immunisation history in your COVID-19 digital certificate. Find out [how to get proof of your vaccination](#).

Evidence of COVID-19 vaccination

There are multiple options to show evidence of your COVID-19 vaccination, depending on your situation.

To find the best way to get proof of your COVID-19 vaccination for your situation, visit [How to get your COVID-19 digital certificate](#)

Evidence of vaccination can be an Immunisation History Statement, or [COVID-19 digital certificate](#), or a letter from a GP. ECEC workers can access their Immunisation History Statement online or call the Australian Immunisation Register (AIR) to have an Immunisation History Statement sent in the post. In the period before an immunisation history is updated, evidence of vaccination can include a recent booking confirmation email, or the card received at the time of vaccination.

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For more information, please visit [Information for workers required to be vaccinated](#).

Visitors to ECEC

Visitors to ECEC grounds must comply with appropriate vaccination requirements, density limits, face mask requirements, QR code check in and practise respiratory etiquette and good hand hygiene.

Density quotients for ECEC services

The density quotient of one person per four square metres should be applied to any indoor spaces and activities being attended by parent/carers and other visitors. The density limit applies to all people in the indoor space, including children aged over 12 months.

The density quotient of one person per two square metres should be applied to any outdoor spaces and activities being attended by parent/carers and other visitors. The density limit applies to all people in the outdoor space, including children aged over 12 months

Vaccination requirements for visitors performing work in ECEC services

Any visitor or volunteers performing work in ECEC (including parent helpers, SRF, allied health, NDIS, PSFO, KIS and other operators such as incursion providers, language teachers, maintenance, building, and cleaning contractors are required to be fully vaccinated by 29 November 2021 (unless a medical exemption applies) to attend on site. For more information on collection of vaccination information from visitors and volunteers working on ECEC sites refer to [COVID-19 worker vaccination requirements](#)

Parents / carers, service attendance and enrolment

Parents/carers are not required to be vaccinated for their children to attend service, and the Kindergarten Funding Guide requires services to be inclusive of children attending and enrolling in service. We do however encourage all families attending the service to be vaccinated and show their vaccination certificate to the management for sighting purposes.

SOURCE

The **COVIDSafe ECEC Settings Guide**, COVIDsafe Advice for early childhood education and care Services remain our best source of early childhood specific information. The department's dedicated COVID-19 phone advice line is also available weekdays from 8.30am to 5pm on 1800 338 663.

Thank you again to everyone who are doing their bit in not only keeping our LA community but our entire extended community and our state safe.