

## Coronavirus (COVID19) Policy

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, our Programs are constantly monitoring health alerts and implementing measures suggested by key health experts to minimise the transmission of COVID-19. Our Program 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 Weldon Children Service's (Weldon) manage this pandemic.

## Policy information

### Our policy in action

We will:

- Minimise our staff and children's exposure to COVID-19 by adhering to all recommended guidelines from the Australian Government- Department of Health and local Public Health Units to slow the spread of the virus
- Implement practices that help to reduce the transmission of the virus including the exclusion of any person (child, educator, staff, parent, visitor or volunteer) that is displaying symptoms or has tested positive to having COVID-19
- Implement effective hygiene practices. Recommendations and health measures mandated by the Health Department will be strictly adhered to at all times
- We will implement 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 Program

- Provide up-to-date information and advice to parents, families and educators sourced from the Australian Government, Department of Health and state Ministry of Health about COVID-19
- Be 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 program who is displaying symptoms or confirmed to have the infection, the Approved Provider will contact the Public Health Unit and implement recommended guidelines

Weldon has implemented risk management planning to identify any possible risks and hazards to our learning environment and practices. Where possible, we have eliminated or minimised these risks as is reasonably practicable

## Strategies for policy implementation

### The approved provider will:

- Ensure all information regarding COVID-19 is sourced from reputable departments - *Australian Government, Department of Health and state Ministry of Health*
- Implement recommendations given by *Australian Government, Department of Health and state Ministry of Health about COVID-19*
- Ensure that children are reasonably protected from harm by working with the nominated supervisor and educators on developing, implementing and reviewing policy and procedures that will guide health and safety procedures within the programs
- Ensure educators and staff adhere to our health and safety policies 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
- Ensure all group outings to public places (excursions to local shops, schools, libraries, aged care facilities) are modified or cancelled
- Ensure educators and staff adhere to effective food preparation and food handling procedures

### The nominated supervisor will:

- Review risk minimisation plans & communication plans every 3 months with families
- Contact parents of children who have chronic medical conditions or immunosuppression as they may be at an increased risk of disease and require additional support/care
- Ensure all employees, parents, children and visitors wash their hands with soap and water for 20 seconds or use the alcohol-based hand sanitiser provided upon arrival and prior to leaving the program
- Ensure educators wash their hands or use alcohol based sanitiser, before wearing gloves and wash their hands after wearing gloves

- Ensure staff maintain a cleaning register of all surfaces and equipment conducted
- Ensure 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 sanitiser and/or disinfectant
- Ensure washroom facilities for employees have adequate supplies of soap, toilet paper and alcohol-based sanitiser
- Ensure staff sanitise their hands at regular intervals throughout the day
- Ensure the number of visitors to the program is restricted (including students, delivery of goods)
- Ensure where possible, outdoor play will be promoted within our Program to provide children with additional personal space

**Educators will:**

- Ensure children's bathrooms are cleaned with diluted bleach daily
- Ensure coughing and sneezing etiquette is used- cough and sneeze into your elbow
- Ensure situations where children are required to queue are avoided - waiting their turn to use bathroom for handwashing or toileting, waiting their turn to use a piece of equipment etc.
- Ensure large groups of children will be monitored to provide flexible learning to ensure groups are smaller in both the indoor and outdoor environment
- Ensure increased ventilation within the Program
- Ensure children's water/milk bottles are sent home every evening to be washed thoroughly
- Ensure hands are washed thoroughly using soap and water before and after using the toilet
- Ensure antibacterial wipes are used to clean iPads after families sign their child in or out
- Ensure disposable tissues are used to wipe noses, eyes or mouths and dispose of them in the lidded bins provided immediately after use
- Ensure hands are washed following the use of tissues
- Ensure physical contact is avoided with other people who may be sick- such as older people and people with existing health conditions
- Notify management as soon as practicum if unwell
- Ensure all children's belongings and/or soft furnishings will be kept in their individual lockers at the end of the day and will be sent home at the end of the week
- Ensure all soft furnishings are washed weekly
- Ensure all high touch areas are disinfected daily

**Families will:**

- Communicate with the Nominated Supervisor any changes to their child's Medical Management Plan as soon as practical
- Ensure not to visit our program if they or another family member is unwell
- Ensure to notify Nominated Supervisor if they or a family member has been diagnosed with an infectious or contagious condition such as COVID-19
- Ensure not to send their child to our program if they are feeling unwell

Due to the limitation to adults with in our programs we will not be taking on volunteers and /or practical placements.

The following are contact numbers if assistance is required:

National Coronavirus (COVID-19) Health Information Line
<b>1800 020 080</b> Call 131 450 for translating and interpreting service
Health Direct <b>1800 022 222</b>
<a href="#">Public Health Unit- Local state and territory health departments</a>

## Procedures

The following list of procedures supports the implementation of this policy.

- Risk assessments
- Notification of complaints and incidents form
- Medical Conditions
- Administration of medication
- Weldon Fees Policy
- Enrolment and Orientation
- Work Health and Safety
- Incident, Injury, Trauma, Illness

## Links to other policies

The following policies may be linked to this policy:

- Weldon Fees Policy
- Supervision
- Infectious Diseases
- Healthy Children
- Food Safety
- Nappy Change
- Work Health & Safety
- Staffing Arrangements
- Volunteers Students and Visitors
- Interaction with Children
- Incident Injury Trauma and Illness
- Administration of medication
- Medical condition
- Child Safe Environment
- Emergency & Evacuation

- Infectious Diseases
- Transition and Transport
- Partnerships and Communication with Families

## The National Quality Framework

Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011: 77, 85, 86, 87, 88, 90, 93, 162, 168

National Quality Standard for Early Childhood Education and Care and School Age Care (Nov 2010)

QA 2- Standard 2.1: Elements 2.1.1; 2.1.2 Standard 2.2: Elements 2.2.1; 2.2.2, 2.2.3

## Sources

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 Raising children <https://raisingchildren.net.au/guides/a-z-health-reference/coronavirus-and-children-in-australia>

Revised National Quality Standard. (2018).

## Policy Details

Date for review: This policy will change as required to ensure the protective measures against COVID-19 as advised by our government are implemented