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8. **POLICY STATEMENT**

Our education and care service is committed to providing a safe and healthy environment that reduces the chance of being infected or spreading COVID-19. In recognition of the rapid spread of this disease and the ongoing release of information from authorities, our service needs to respond swiftly and correctly to advice from authorities.

1. **GOALS**

Our service will apply measures that prioritise health and safety measures, including:

* Implementing vigilant hygiene practices that prevent the spread of infectious diseases, including COVID-19
* Encouraging good health and sanitation
* Monitoring sources of public health information
* Implementing all measures recommended by authorities and
* Educating and informing our community with current and trusted information.

1. **STRATEGIES FOR IMPLEMENTATION**

Practices to reduce the chance of being infected or spreading COVID-19 will include:

Drop off/pick up procedures from Tuesday 6th April 2021.

**Upon Arrival during COVID-19 restrictions families are required to:**

* Sanitise their and their child’s hands before entering.
* Enter the foyer.
* Apply sunscreen to their child.
* Support child to do their jobs of putting their belongings away and hat on
* Bring child to an educator to start their day, maintaining physical distance we much as is practically possible
* Communicate with the educator anything of relevance about their child and hand them any belongings their child can’t carry.
* Say goodbye to their child.
* Aim to have the child arrive before 9.30am and stay until 3.30pm to allow for them to enjoy the full benefit of the educational program.
* Notify the centre by 9am if the child will be late or is not attending for any reason e.g. due to illness or holidays.

**Upon departure during COVID-19 restrictions families are required to:**

* Sanitise their hands before entering the centre
* \*Sanitise hands, and sign out the child as soon as you enter, then \*re-sanitise your hands. It is also possible at this time that a message may pop-up that an educator has left on the HubHello sign-in application.
* Check their communication pocket, the meal and rest-time charts and the communication board in the child’s locker room for any messages.
* Collect their child’s bag and any belongings from their locker if they are not returning the next day (or leave them there if they are returning the next day), following signage for maximum number of adults in the locker room\*.
* Take home any art and craft your child may have in their locker
* \*Maintain physical distance when talking with educators or other parents/guardians for long. Educators will provide a quick updated on your child’s day. For longer conversations please call or email to organise a time to chat over the phone, on zoom or in person in a space where we can physically distance.

*\*Please note, it is only during COVID-19 restrictions that these requirements apply.*

Physical Distancing

In support of the government’s recommendation of the importance the role of social distancing plays in reducing the spread of COVID-19 we will implement the following measures:

* Maintain physical distancing of 1.5 metres between all adults who work at or visit Styles Street in all areas of the building and playgrounds.
* Set up learning areas and group times to allow for physical distancing between adults
* Follow public health guidelines for maximum number of adults per indoor and outdoor spaces

Sickness

To reduce the spread of COVID-19, we will implement the following measures:

* All staff and children found with a fever of 37.5 C. or higher will be sent home.
* Children, staff and parents to stay home if they are sick or unwell, to prevent the spread of any sickness.
* If staff and parents are concerned they, their child, or someone they live with may have symptoms of COVID-19 please refer to the symptom checker on the health direct website (<https://www.healthdirect.gov.au/coronavirus>) or call the coronavirus hotline on 1800 020 080.
* Staff and families to let us know immediately, if you, your child or anyone living with you is being tested for COVID-19. A negative result is required in order to return to the centre.
* Children, staff or parents who have visited any current local and/or interstate hot spots in the last 14 days, or come in contact with a confirmed case of COVID-19, must follow the NSW Health COVID-19 directives regarding self-isolation and testing.
* It is also recommended that parents, children, staff and people they live with receive the seasonal influenza vaccination to reduce the impact on Public Health.

Cleaning and hygiene

To reduce the spread of COVID-19 we will implement the following measures:

* Our service will continue to maintain a clean and hygienic environment.
* As is the case during any infectious disease outbreak, increased frequency for routine environmental cleaning will occur when community transmission is present within our local or nearby communities - particularly on high-touch surfaces such as door handles, tables, light switches and bathroom areas and any toys/ surfaces which may have been mouthed or in contact with bodily fluids.
* Surfaces are cleaned to reduce any soiling, and then disinfected to remove germs.
* When community transmission is present within our local or nearby communities, cleaning of high-touch surfaces will be completed regularly with warm soapy water, wiped dry and then sprayed with alcohol spray (min 70% alcohol).
* Further advice regarding infectious cleaning will be sought from the local Public Health Unit should there be any direct concern regarding the exposure of COVID-19 at the service.

Service of food and water

* Our service follows strict food preparation and handling procedures, including properly cooking food and following good hand hygiene.
* Our service will follow any direction from the local Public Health Unit in relation to changes in food preparation procedures or water quality.
* Cakes or other food items for children’s birthdays must come from the pre-approved birthday cake list
* When children have a cake for their birthday, we will not be using candles but will sing happy birthday.

**Summary of Responsibilities of Families**

* If you are concerned you, your child, or someone you live with may have symptoms of COVID-19 please refer to the symptom checker on the health direct website (<https://www.healthdirect.gov.au/coronavirus>) or call the coronavirus hotline on 1800 020 080, and follow recommendations.
* If your child has a fever of 37.5 degrees C. or higher, you must get tested and self-isolate immediately until they have received a negative COVID-19 test result or a Doctor’s clearance, stating why they did not need a test, to return.
* Let us know immediately, if you, your child or anyone living with you is being tested for COVID-19.
* Keep your children home if they are sick or unwell, to prevent the spread of any sickness.
* Do not attend the centre if they themselves are displaying signs of COVID-19
* If a child is already attending when parents develop symptoms call the Centre and organize someone else to collect the child
* Children or parents who have visited current local and/or interstate hot spots in the last 14 days, or come in contact with a confirmed case of COVID-19 must follow the NSW Health directives regarding self-isolation and testing.
* Clean your hands with the alcohol hand gel on arrival and departure from the centre for you and your children.
* Ensure you sanitise your hands before and after touching the iPads in the foyer.
* Take your child's water bottle home to clean at the end of each day.
* Maintain physical distancing of 1.5 metres with other families and with staff.
* Avoid staying to talk with educators or other parents/guardians for more than 10 minutes.
* Follow physical distancing requirements regarding numbers of adults allowed in each locker room and foyer, as per signage.
* It is also recommended that parents, children and people they live with receive the seasonal influenza vaccination to reduce the impact on Public Health.

**Summary of Responsibilities of Staff & the Centre**

* Staff are to wash their hands with soap and water or hand sanitiser on arrival and departure from the centre, before and after toileting, dealing with bodily fluids and mealtimes and in between activities with children.
* Staff are to clean their hands with the alcohol hand gel before and after using the iPads;
* When community transmission is present in the local and nearby communities, staff are to clean door handles and high touch areas with warm soapy water followed by alcohol rub/spray regularly throughout the day, as per the cleaning schedule;
* Staff are to wash toys regularly;
* Staff are to assist with the extra cleaning duties of highly touched areas;
* Staff on the closing shifts are to wash the drink bottle holders at the end of the day, in the dishwasher.
* Staff are to serve children their morning and afternoon tea, not allowing children to serve themselves.
* Staff are to follow good respiratory hygiene, when coughing or sneezing and to support children to do so too: cover mouth and nose with bent elbow or tissue and dispose of the used tissue immediately and wash hands with soap and water or, if water is not available, with hand sanitiser.
* Update signage related to physical distancing and maximum numbers of adults in indoor areas, and provide communication to families regarding in any changes, following any changes to public health guidelines
* Staff are to stay home if they are sick or unwell, or suspected to have a communicable disease, to prevent the spread of any sickness. If they have COVID-19 symptoms, they will require a negative COVID-19 test result or doctor’s clearance to return..
* Staff who have visited current local and/or interstate hot spots in the last 14 days, or who have come into contact with a confirmed case of COVID-19 must follow the NSW Health directives regarding self-isolation and testing.
* If staff are concerned, they or someone they live with may have symptoms of COVID-19 they must stay home and seek medical advice. They should refer to the symptom checker on the health direct website (<https://www.healthdirect.gov.au/coronavirus>) or call the coronavirus hotline on 1800 020 080.
* Staff must let us know immediately, if they or anyone living with them, is being tested for COVID-19.
* All incursion performers, student teachers, therapists and service staff must sign in and pass a screening questionnaire. If they do not pass the screening questionnaire they will not be allowed to enter and told to follow the directions of the health direct Symptom checker (<https://www.healthdirect.gov.au/coronavirus>)
* Staff must maintain physical distancing of 1.5 metres with families, visitors, and other staff
* Staff will not take children on excursions during heightened risk periods. When the risk lowers and excursions are allowed they will conduct risk assessments prior in consideration of: the latest advice from the Australian Health Protection Principle Committee (AHPPC) and those at high risk such as those with medical conditions.
* Should there be any concerns regarding the health of a child at the service, families will be asked to seek medical attention. Further guidance may be sought from NSW Public Health or Health direct on **1800 022 222**.
* It is also strongly recommended that staff receive the seasonal influenza vaccination to reduce the impact on Public Health.

Keeping Informed

In recognition of the rapid and consistent release of information related to COVID-19, our service will refer to reliable authorities daily. Advice, directions and guidance will be:

* communicated to staff and families immediately and
* followed accordingly

Trusted sources of information include:

* Australian Government Department of Health: www.health.gov.au
* Coronavirus information for schools and early childhood centres, students and parents: https://education.nsw.gov.au/early-childhood-education/coronavirus/advice-for-services-and-providers#Hosting8
* Corona Health Information Line: 1800 020 080
* Public Health Unit: 1300 066 055 (NSW)
* The Regulatory Authority relevant to the service location

Notifying the Regulatory Authority

* If our service is forced to temporarily close for COVID-19 related reasons, we will report closure and re-opening in a timely manner, clearly stating the reason for the closure to the following authorities within 24 hours:
* Our [state regulatory authority](https://education.us17.list-manage.com/track/click?u=e11e7c8d748ec85b8de00986c&id=c896b8e4ac&e=7bcb148b6b)
* The NSW Department of Education, Skills and Employment ([CCSAssessmentsNSWACT@dese.gov.au](mailto:CCSAssessmentsNSWACT@dese.gov.au)) AND
* Via our third party software provider
* If a child or staff member at the service is diagnosed with COVID-19 this will be reported to the:
  + Regulatory Authority: 1800 619 113 and
  + Local Public Health Unit: 1300 066 055 (NSW)
* A confirmed case of COVID-19 is a serious incident and as such will be notified as soon as practicable within 24 hours.
* Notifications will be made through the National Quality Agenda IT System (NQA ITS) or through direct contact via phone or email.
* Our service will remain diligent in reporting responsibilities and any directions provided to the service by the Ministry of Health.

1. **ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITY**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Role** | **Authority/Responsibility For** |
| Approved Provider | Ensure the service operates in line with the Education and Care Services National Law and National Regulations 2011 including:   * Ensuring that if there is an occurrence of COVID-19 confirmed case within our centre, reporting to Regulatory Authority, the Local Health Unit, the NSW Department of Education, Skills and Employment, and via our third party software. * Ensuring that where there is an occurrence of an COVID-19 case at the service, a parent/guardian or authorised emergency contact of each child at the service is notified of the occurrence as soon as is practicable (Regulation 88(2)). * Ensuring that information from the Department of Health about the recommended minimum exclusion periods is displayed at the service, is available to all stakeholders and is adhered to in the event of an outbreak of an infectious disease (as designated by the Department of Health – refer to Definitions). * Ensuring that appropriate and current information and resources are provided to staff and parents/guardians regarding the identification and management of COVID-19. * Keeping informed about current legislation, information, research and best practice. |
| Nominated Supervisor | * Contacting the parents/guardians of a child suffering from COVID-19 symptoms and requesting the child be collected as soon as possible. * Ensuring that a minimum of one staff with current approved first aid qualifications is in attendance and immediately available at all times the service is in operation. * Establishing good hygiene and infection control procedures, and ensuring that they are adhered to by everyone at the service. * Ensuring the exclusion requirements for COVID-19 and it’s symptoms are adhered to (including documentation stating negative result/Doctor’s clearance), notifying the Approved Provider. * Advising parents/guardians on enrolment of exclusion periods related to COVID-19 symptoms, will be observed for the duration of the pandemic. * Requesting that parents/guardians notify the service if their child is displaying COVID-19 symptoms, &/or has been confirmed as having COVID-19. * Providing information and resources to families to assist in the identification of COVID-19 symptoms and recommendation to seek medical advice. * Provide relevant sourced materials to families. * Ensuring that an “Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness” record is completed as soon as practicable or no later than 24 hours of the illness occurring. * When the risk of COVID-19 in the community lowers and excursions are allowed, risk assessments will be conducted prior. Consideration made in regards to the latest advice from the Australian Health Protection Principle Committee (AHPPC) and those at high risk such as those with medical conditions. * Ensure all incursion performers, student teachers, therapists and service staff sign in and pass a screening questionnaire before being allowed into the centre. If they do not pass the screening questionnaire they will not be allowed to enter and told to follow the directions of the health direct Symptom checker (<https://www.healthdirect.gov.au/coronavirus>) |
| Early Childhood Educators | * Ensure that any children that are displaying symptoms of COVID-19 are responded to and their health and emotional needs supported at all times. * Implement appropriate health and safety procedures, when tending to ill children. * Ensure that families are aware of the need to collect their children as soon as practical to ensure the child’s comfort, and the well being of staff and other children in the centre. * Provide varied opportunities for children to engage in hygiene practices, including routine opportunities, and intentional practice. * Observing signs and symptoms of children who may appear unwell, and informing the Nominated Supervisor. * Providing access to information and resources for parents/guardians to assist in the identification of COVID-19 symptoms and recommendation to seek medical advice.. * Maintaining confidentiality at all times. * Maintain social distancing with other staff (where possible) and family member * Following room capacity (for adults) signage * Complete hand hygiene regularly, including with alcohol sanitizer before and after ipad use. * When community transmission is present in the local or nearby community. staff are to clean door handles and high touch areas with warm soapy water followed by alcohol rub/spray regularly throughout the day, as per the cleaning schedule * To clean toys regularly * When needed, to assist with the extra cleaning duties of highly. * If displaying any symptoms of COVID-19, will need to get tested & return a negative result or doctor’s clearance in order to return. * Must let us know immediately, if they or anyone living with them, is being tested for COVID-19, and provide details of negative test results. * To serve children their morning and afternoon tea * Wash the drink bottle holders when on closing shift * Must follow NSW Health directives in regards to self-isolation and testing if have visited any local or interstate hot spots, or who have been in contact with a confirmed case of COVID-19 in past 15 days * Must follow good respiratory hygiene, and support children to do so as well. * Maintain physical distance of 1.5 metres with all adults |
| Families | * Keep their children at home if they are unwell or displaying symptoms of COVID-19. Use health direct COVID-19 symptom checker <https://www.healthdirect.gov.au/coronavirus>, or call the coronavirus hotline 1800 020 080 and follow recommendations. Either provide negative test result or Doctor’s clearance in order for child to return to the centre. * Inform the service if your child, or anyone in the household is being tested for COVID-19. * Inform the service if their child has been diagnosed with COVID-19. * Ensure hand hygiene is adhered to before entering centre, and before and after using ipads. * Follow new drop off & pick up procedures * Ensure no family member goes past foyer during drop off without special permission * Maintain physical distancing of 1.5m from other adults, following room capacity signage also. * Avoid staying in centre for more than 10 minutes, keeping discussions short with other families and staff * Take water bottles home each day & wash them * Only bring in pre-approved foods from list * Must follow NSW Health directives in regards to self-isolation and testing if have visited any local or interstate hot spots, or who have been in contact with a confirmed case of COVID-19 in past 15 days * Do not attend the centre if they themselves are displaying signs of COVID-19 * If child is already attending when parents develop symptoms call the Centre and organize someone else collect the child |

1. **MONITORING, EVALUATION AND REVIEW**

This policy will be monitored to ensure compliance with legislative requirements and unless deemed necessary through the identification of practice gaps, the service will review this Policy every 6 months, or sooner if local situation changes.

Families and staff are essential stakeholders in the policy review process and will be given opportunity and encouragement to be actively involved.

In accordance with R. 172 of the Education and Care Services National Regulations, the service will ensure that families of children enrolled at the service are notified at least 14 days before making any change to a policy or procedure that may have significant impact on the provision of education and care to any child enrolled at the service; a family’s ability to utilise the service; the fees charged or the way in which fees are collected.

1. **LEGISLATION AND CONSIDERATIONS**

* Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010: Section 167
* Education and Care Services National Regulations: Regulations 78-80
* Work Health and Safety Act 2011
* Public Health Regulation 2012
* Public Health Act 2010
* Public Health Amendment (Vaccination of Children Attending Child Care Facilities) Bill 2013
* Australian New Zealand Food Standards Code (FSANZ) National Quality Standard, Quality Area 2: Children’s Health and Safety – Standards 2.1, 2.1.1, 2.1.2, 2.2
* National Quality Standard, Quality Area 6: Collaborative Partnerships with Families and Communities – Standard 6.1, 6.2

1. **SOURCES AND RELATED POLICIES**

* Community Early Learning Australia – www.cela.org.au)
* Australian Government Department of Health: www.health.gov.au
* COVID-19 Guidelines for ECEC Services: https://education.nsw.gov.au/early-childhood-education/coronavirus/advice-for-services-and-providers#Hosting8
* COVID-19 What rules Apply: https://www.nsw.gov.au/covid-19
* Corona Health Information Line: 1800 020 080
* Public Health Unit: 1300 066 055 (NSW)
* Environmental cleaning and disinfection principles for COVID-19: www.health.gov.au/ sites/default/files/documents/2020/03/environmental-cleaning-and-disinfection-principles-for-covid-19.pdf
* Spotlight on Quality Issue 5 – Unpacking reporting responsibilities: education.nsw.gov.au/ early-childhood-education/whats-happening-in-the-early-childhood-education-sector/ news-and-events/spotlight-on-quality/issue-5-unpacking-reporting-responsibilities
* World Health Organisation – Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) Outbreak: www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019
* Fairwork Australia: www.fairwork.gov.au/about-us/news-and-media-releases/website-news/coronavirus-and-australian-workplace-laws
* The Regulatory Authority
* Australian Health Protection Principle Committee (AHPPC): www.health.gov.au/ committees-and-groups/australian-health-protection-principal-committee-ahppc

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