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Our education and care service is committed to providing a safe and healthy environment that reduces the chance of being infected with or spreading SARS-CoV-2., the virus that causes COVID-19 disease. 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 with or spreading SARS-CoV-2 will include:

During stay home orders for our Local Government Area (LGA) parents will not be permitted to enter the centre and children will be collected from the front gate. Families are expected to sanitise and sunscreen their children before saying goodbye, and an educator will walk the child to their class. Communication with educators about specific needs may be done via Storypark, or a phone call.

During COVID-19 NSW lockdown restrictions the following drop off/ pick procedure will apply. Families and staff will be advised of any changes to this procedure if restrictions are lifted:

**Upon Arrival to the centre during COVID-19 lockdown restrictions, families are required to:**

* Sanitise their and their child’s hands at the gate.
* Wait outside the service gate for an educator to greet them, socially distancing from other parents and children, ensuring adults are wearing a mask
* Say goodbye to their child
* Hand over care for their child to the educator on the drop-off duties at the door
* Communicate with the educator anything of relevance about their child and hand them any belongings their child can’t carry.
* Say a final 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. illness or holidays.

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

* Wait outside the service gate for an educator to greet them, socially distancing from other parents and children, and ensuring adults are wearing a mask If no educators/staff are visible knock on the door or ring the bell
* Collect children from outside the service gate where educators will bring all children and their belongings.
* Maintain physical distance when talking with educators or other parents/guardians. Educators may at times provide a quick update on your child’s day but this is will not always possible during lockdown. For updates and/or longer conversations please call, contact via Storypark or email to organise a time to chat over the phone, on zoom or in person in a space where we can appropriately physically distance.

**Physical Distancing and Masks**

In support of the government’s recommendation of the importance that the role of physical distancing and wearing of masks play 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
* Follow Public Health guidelines for mask wearing for staff, families and children.

**Sickness**

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

* All staff, children and families with symptoms of COVID-19 are not to attend the centre.
* All staff, children and families with symptoms of COVID-19 are to follow the COVID-19 Symptom checker for guidelines on testing and self-isolation.
* All staff and children found with any symptoms of COVID-19 will be sent home and must follow the Public Health guidelines for testing and self-isolation
* If a staff member or child is sent home with COVID-19 symptoms and have not had a COVID-19 test in the last 7 days, they must return a negative COVID-19 test to the Office Administrator or Director and be symptom free before they can return. If they have had a negative COVID test in the last 7 days with no new or worsening symptoms since the last test they do not need another COVID-19 test but will require to be symptom free to return to the service.\* The Centre Director may request an additional more recent COVID-19 tests in certain circumstances.
* 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 and follow the advice for testing and self-isolation
* Staff and families are to let the Centre know immediately, if they, their child or any household contacts are being tested for COVID-19. A negative result is required in order for them 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 who have been identified as a close or casual contact of a confirmed case of COVID-19, must follow the NSW Health COVID-19 directives regarding self-isolation and testing. Parents must advise the Centre if staff, parents or children are identified as close or casual contacts of a confirmed COVID-19 case.
* Those who are identified as close contacts of someone identified as a close contact of a confirmed case of COVID-19 must follow the NSW Health recommendations in regards to self-isolating and testing, pertaining the type of contact that has occurred.
* It is recommended that parents, children, staff and household members receive the seasonal influenza vaccination to reduce the impact on Public Health.
* Staff and contractors who live in one of the 12 LGAs of concern must have their first vaccination dose by 6th September 2021 to be able to attend the Service
* From November 8th, 2021, all staff and contractors, regardless of where they live, must have received both does of their COVID-19 vaccinations to be able to attend the Service
* It is strongly recommended that parents and household members receive their COVID-19 vaccinations as they become available to reduce the chain of transmission to children attending the centre, transmission within the local community and their risk of severe disease.

\*For children with a post viral cough (we understand that this can go on for weeks, sometimes months) or other underlying health conditions that may present as symptoms (eg allergies). In this instance, we will work with families and their doctor to work out the best way forward to have reassurance for our staff other families, and meet your and your child’s needs as best we can, while adhering to the current health advice.

**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.
* Increased frequency for routine environmental cleaning will occur when community transmission is present within local communities - particularly on high-touch surfaces such as door handles, tables, light switches, bathroom areas and any toys or surfaces which may have been mouthed or in contact with bodily fluids.
* Surfaces are cleaned to reduce any soiling, and then disinfected to remove the bulk of infectious material.
* When community transmission is present within local communities, cleaning of high-touch surfaces will be completed regularly with alcohol spray (minimum 70% ethanol) sprayed, allowed to dwell and then wiped off.
* 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 or other food for their birthday, we will not be using candles but will sing happy birthday, with the food and any food prep itemsaway from the people singing

**Summary of Responsibilities of Families**

* If you or your child has symptoms of COVID-19 they are not to attend the service.
* If you or your child has symptoms of COVID-19 you are to follow the COVID-19 Symptom checker for guidelines on testing and self-isolation. <https://www.healthdirect.gov.au/coronavirus> or call the coronavirus hotline on 1800 020 080, and follow recommendations.
* If your children are found with any symptoms of COVID-19 while at the service, parents must collect them from the service when requested to, and follow the Public Health guidelines for testing and self-isolation
* If your child is sent home with COVID-19 symptoms and they have not had a COVID-19 test in the last 7 days, you must return their negative COVID-19 test to the Office Administrator or Director and ensure your child is symptom-free before they can return to the service. If they have had a negative COVID-19 test in the last 7 days with no changed symptoms they do not need another COVID-19 test but will require to be symptom free to return to the service.\*
* Parents may talk to the Centre Director about how to manage post-viral cough or any other underlying conditions that may present as symptoms.
* Let us know immediately, if you, your child or any household contacts are being tested for COVID-19, and advise the service of the result.
* Keep your child/ren home if they are sick or unwell in any way, to prevent the spread of any transmissible infection.
* Family members are not to attend the service if they are displaying symptoms of COVID-19.
* If your child is already attending when a parent develops symptoms, call the service and organise 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.
* Follow Public Health guidelines on mask wearing, hand hygiene and check-ins while attending the centre.
* 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.
* It is recommended that parents, children and household members receive the seasonal influenza vaccination to reduce the impact on Public Health.
* It is recommended that parents and household members receive their COVID-19 vaccination/s as they become available to reduce the chance of transmission to children attending the centre, transmission within the local community and their risk of severe disease.

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

* If staff have symptoms of COVID-19 they are not to attend the service and are to follow the COVID-19 Symptom checker for guidelines on testing and self-isolation. <https://www.healthdirect.gov.au/coronavirus> or call the coronavirus hotline on 1800 020 080 and follow recommendations.
* Staff are to follow the procedure for sick leave when notifying the service about having COVID-19 symptoms.
* 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, at mealtimes and in between activities with children.
* Staff are to clean their hands with hand sanitiser before and after using the iPads.
* When community transmission is present in local communities, staff are to clean high touch areas with alcohol spray regularly throughout the day.
* 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 in the dishwasher at the end of the day.
* 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 are to support children to do so too: cover mouth and nose with bent elbow or tissue, 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 in any way, to prevent the spread of any sickness. If they have COVID-19 symptoms, they will require a negative COVID-19 test result or appropriate public health 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 that they or someone they live with may have symptoms of COVID-19 they must get tested and isolate at home until they have a negative COVID test. For further information staff can 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 the Service know immediately, if they or anyone living with them, is being tested for COVID-19.
* All Staff must check into the Centre using the Service NSW QR Code
* 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 the Centre 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 follow Public Health guidelines on mask wearing and check-ins while attending the centre.
* Staff will cancel incursions during heightened risk periods
* 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, staff will ask families to seek medical attention. Further guidance may be sought from NSW Public Health or Health direct on **1800 022 222**.
* The Director will notify parents as soon as is practicable if any confirmed cases of COVID-19 are advised for children or staff who attended the Centre, appropriate management strategies will be put in place.
* It is strongly recommended that staff receive the seasonal influenza vaccination to reduce the impact on Public Health.
* Staff and contractors who live in one of the 12 LGAs of concern must have their first vaccination dose by 6th September 2021 to be able to attend the Service
* From November 8th, 2021, all staff and contractors, regardless of where they live, must have received both does of their COVID-19 vaccinations to be able to attend the Service

**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 the 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), 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,
	+ Local Public Health Unit: 1300 066 055 (NSW), and
	+ Via our third-party software provider
* 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**

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| **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.
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| 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.
* Ensuring signage regarding capacity of indoor areas (for adults) in regards to physical distancing are accurate for current NSW Health orders
* Ensuring adherence to latest public health directives in regards to mask wearing requirements within childcare setting for indoor and outdoor areas.
* 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 incursions/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>)
* Ensure staff and contractors who live in one of the 12 LGAs of concern must have their first vaccination dose by 6th September 2021 to be able to attend the Service

 Ensure all staff and contractors who attend the service after November 8th 2021 have had both doses of their COVID-19 vaccinations. |
| 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 wellbeing 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 of 1.5metres with other staff (where possible) and family members.
* Following room capacity (for adults) signage, and encouraging adherence to for all adults within the Centre..
* Following public health and Centre directives in regards to mask wearing for indoor and outdoor areas.
* 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 high touch areas with alcohol spray regularly throughout the day.
* To clean toys regularly.
* If displaying any symptoms of COVID-19, will need to follow Public Health advice for testing and isolation
* Must let us know immediately, if they or anyone household member, 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.
* Staff and contractors who live in one of the 12 LGAs of concern must have their first vaccination dose by 6th September 2021 to be able to attend the Service
* From November 8th, 2021, all staff and contractors, regardless of where they live, must have received both does of their COVID-19 vaccinations to be able to attend the Service
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| 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 for testing and isolation.
* 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.
* Families are encouraged by the NSW government to keep their children at home, unless they need the service.
* Families should notify the service if they intend to keep children home.
* Follow drop off & pick up procedures
* Follow Public Health advice on mask wearing, hand hygiene and QR code check-in.
* Maintain physical distancing of 1.5m from other adults and follow room capacity signage.
* When entering the Centre 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.
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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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Review: January 2021