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7. **POLICY STATEMENT**

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**

Strategies and protocols to mitigate the risk of being infected with or spreading SARS-CoV-2 are detailed in the Styles Street COVID Procedure.

**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, staff and parents will follow the most recent [Public Health Orders](https://legislation.nsw.gov.au/information/covid19-legislation) issued by NSW Health and the Guidelines provided by the NSW Department of Education.

Staff and any visitors to the centre (including parents) will:

* 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 wherever possible
* All visitors to the centre aged over 12 years old must wear a mask upon entering the centre
* Staff will wear a mask whenever physical distancing cannot be maintained between adults, including at during drop off and pick up times.

Staff will set up learning areas and group times to allow for physical distancing between adults

**Sickness**

To reduce the spread of COVID-19, we will implement the measures listed in the Styles Street COVID-19 Procedure document. At all times, staff, parents, and other visitors to the centre must follow the most recent [Public Health Orders](https://legislation.nsw.gov.au/information/covid19-legislation) and the Guidelines provided by the [Department of Education for Early Childhood Education services](https://education.nsw.gov.au/early-childhood-education/coronavirus/covid-19-guidelines-for-ecec-services).

**Cleaning and hygiene**

Styles Street is committed to reducing the risk of spread of COVID-19. The measures listed in the Styles Street Covid-19 Procedure will be implemented in line with this goal.

**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.

**Visitors to the Centre**

The centre will follow the procedures detailed in the Styles Street COVID-19 Procedure document related to visitors to the centre, as well as the latest Public Health Orders and NSW Department of Education guidelines.

**Positive Cases**

If the Centre is notified of a positive case in the service, the Centre will follow the current health advice for reporting and managing a confirmed case of COVID-19.

**Ventilation**

Open or well-ventilated spaces reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission because infectious particles are more quickly diffused in the open air than in spaces with less ventilation. Increasing outdoor air ventilation and using outdoor spaces where possible is an important strategy in reducing the risk of aerosol transmission by increasing circulation of outdoor air.

The centre will follow the most up-to-date heath advice on ventilation, for details see the COVID-19 Procedures policy.

For further information, refer to the NSW Government Guidance on Ventilation <https://www.nsw.gov.au/covid-19/business/covid-safe-business/ventilation>

**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. Our service will remain diligent in reporting responsibilities and any directions provided to the service by the trusted sources of information listed below:

* 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
* NSW Department of Education guidance documents: education.nsw.gov.au
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
* ‘COVID Safety in early childhood education and care services: Guidance (October 2021)
* 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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