**This document is intended to inform staff and families of the COVID-19 procedures of the centre.**

**CONTENTS**

1. **COVID-19 Procedures**
2. **Legislation and Considerations**
3. **Sources and Related Policies**
4. **Appendices**
5. **COVID-19 PROCEDURES**

**Pick Up and Drop Off Procedures During Lockdown**

During stay home orders impacting our Centre, and where the Centre budget allows it, parents will not be permitted to enter the centre and children will be collected from the front gate. Families must sanitise and apply sunscreen to their child/ren before saying goodbye, and an educator will walk the child to their class. Further communication with educators may be done via Storypark, or a phone call.

During lockdown restrictions the following drop off and pick up procedure will apply, when the Centre budget allows it. Families and staff will be advised if this procedure is put into place and of any changes to this procedure:

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. If no educators/staff are visible knock on the door or ring the bell
* Communicate with the educator anything of relevance about their child and hand them any belongings their child can’t carry.
* 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 (or as soon as practicable) if the child will be late or is not attending for any reason e.g., illness or holidays.
* Maintain physical distance when talking with educators or other parents/guardians. Educators may at times provide a quick update on your child’s day although this may not always be possible. 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.

**Pick up and Drop Off Procedures Outside of Lockdown**

* 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.
* Families will be advised if Play Spaces dialogue is being used based on risk assessments at the time.

**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://www.health.nsw.gov.au/Infectious/covid-19/Pages/public-health-orders.aspx) issued by [NSW Health and the Guidelines provided by the NSW Department of Education](https://education.nsw.gov.au/early-childhood-education/coronavirus/covid-19-guidelines-for-ecec-services).

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 following measures:

* All staff, children and families with symptoms of COVID-19 are not permitted to attend the centre.
* All staff, children and families with symptoms of COVID-19 are to follow the COVID-19 Symptom checker and current Public Health 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.
* If the child has had a positive case of COVID-19 in the prior 1 month, they will be exempt from providing a negative result if they have further symptoms after having returned a negative result from the confirmed case of COVID-19.
* Children with a post viral cough or other underlying health conditions that may present as symptoms (e.g., allergies) can return after to the Centre after a negative test and evidence (e.g., a doctor’s note) of their condition has been provided.
* Children, staff or parents who have been identified as a 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 children are identified as contacts of a confirmed COVID-19 case and the level of risk associated with the contact.
* Ensure staff and contractors who attend the Centre are in compliance with vaccination requirements as per health directives.
* It is strongly recommended that staff, parents, eligible children 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.

**Cleaning and hygiene**

The following measures will be implemented:

* The 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.
* 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 circumstances regarding the exposure of COVID-19 at the service.
* Displaying health and hygiene promotional materials from the NSW Government in prominent places within the Centre
* The Centre will consider ventilation in line with NSW Government recommendations, to reduce the risk of transmission

**Service of food and water**

* 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**

During periods of higher community transmission of COVID-19, the Centre will:

* Exclude non-essential visitors from attending service premises (such as official visitors and dignitaries, media and production crews, and visits by local members).
* Exclude staff, parents, carers and children and visitors with symptoms of COVID-19 from entering service premises.
* Workers supporting the infrastructure development and maintenance of services must be vaccinated. This may include contractors, general assistants, and other support staff.
* When orientation visits are unable to take place within the service, the centre will provide parents and carers with an alternative option to receive information about the service and to meet an educator using available technology.

During periods of lower community transmission of COVID-19, the Centre will:

* Continue to follow COVID-19 safe practices such as physical distancing, mask wearing and where possible gather outdoors.
* Continue taking reasonable steps to preventing parents, carers, children and visitors with symptoms of COVID-19 from entering service premises.
* Orientation visitors must adhere to social distancing and mask wearing rules, and check-in with the QR code. The Centre must hold a record of visitors’ contact details for 28 days after the event, for contact tracing purposes.

**Positive Cases**

* If a staff member, child, or household member tests positive to COVID-19, they must inform the centre as soon as possible.
* 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.
* If a positive case is identified in the Centre, notification will be provided to staff and families as per requirements. The Centre will provide guidelines to follow in relation to required testing and isolation, if applicable.
* If a child is attending the Centre when a parent or other household member receives a notification of a positive test result for COVID-19, the parents should call the service and organise someone else to collect the child as soon as possible. If the child is deemed a contact, they must follow the NSW Health COVID-19 directives regarding self-isolation and testing.

**Overseas Returning Household Members**

If a child or staff member lives with someone who has recently returned from overseas, they must follow NSW Health’s latest [guidelines](https://www.nsw.gov.au/covid-19/travel-restrictions/international-travel-rules) and requirements for isolation and testing.

**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
	+ via the [National Quality Agenda IT System](https://public.nqaits.acecqa.gov.au/Pages/Landing.aspx) (NQAITS)
* A confirmed case of COVID-19 is a serious incident and as such will be notified as soon as practicable within 24 hours.
* Our service will remain diligent in reporting responsibilities and any directions provided to the service by the Ministry of Health.

**2. 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

**3. 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
* NSW Department of Education: https://education.nsw.gov.au/early-childhood-education/coronavirus/managing-covid-cases
* Australian Health Protection Principal Committee (AHPPC): www.health.gov.au/ committees-and-groups/australian-health-protection-principal-committee-ahppc

Procedure adopted: January 2022

Procedure amended: January 2022

Review: June 2022