

# Infection control during the COVID-19 pandemic

## Policy Statement

The intent of this policy is to ensure best practice is implemented to protect the centre/service community during a pandemic. The policy is based on current ACT and NSW Health advice.

## Objective

The following policy aims to ensure the safety and protection of all stakeholders accessing or using an Y Canberra Region's early childhood education and care facility or a school age care service during the COVID - 19 pandemic.

The policy will address who maintains the lead in the critical situation, the key protection strategies that must be in place, communication that must be maintained, to employees and participants in relation to actions required should a case of COVID-19 infection occur.

Government planning to meet the changing circumstances posed by the COVID-19 pandemic can happen rapidly. In order to remain aware of changes and to adapt procedures to meet changes all services should check ACT and NSW Health Directorate daily. Useful links include:

[ACT Health Directorate](#)

[NSW Health Department](#)

[Australia Health Protection Principal Committee](#)

[Safe Work Australia](#)

[Australian Government Department of Health](#)

[ACT Education Directorate](#)

[Home \(nsw.gov.au\)](#)

[Australian Government Department of Education Skills and Employment](#)

[ACECQA](#)

## Policy / Procedures

- **Protecting students, children, educators, auxiliary staff, families and community members.**

The following procedures guide our set of procedures and risk assessments that will be unique to each context, covering the requirements outlined below.

**Ventilation:** adequate airflow in the service helps to ensure the safety of staff and children. While the best approach to ventilation depends on a service's specific infrastructure and ventilation system, the [World Health Organisation](#) provides advice on how to ensure a space is well ventilated. Procedures to contact and discuss the ventilation needs of the service with the owner or manager of the building should be developed. Services should also consider opportunities to utilise outdoor play areas as they are considered one of the best environments for preventing transmission. Air purifiers will be used in common areas eg: common area / foyer

### Y CANBERRA REGION – INFECTION CONTROL DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Ref #	Owner	Internal/External	Approved	Last Amended	Status
R014	Children Services Executive Manager	External	11/05/2022	-	APPROVED

**Vaccinations for staff:** It is highly encouraged for ECEC staff in the ACT and NSW to be vaccinated against COVID-19. Ensuring very high vaccinations levels for staff is the most effective way to protect both the workforce and unvaccinated children from disease. It is an expectation that employers are conducting site level monitoring of staff vaccination rates to ensure the safety all staff and children. Whilst observing the right of privacy to all employees.

**Supplies check:** Before opening each day, the service must comprehensively check supplies of all essential PPE and general hygiene supplies. This includes but is not limited to – facemasks, gloves, sanitizer, cleaning materials and disinfectant, thermometers, anti-bacterial cleaning products, disinfectant and detergent. **A service with inadequate supplies should not open.**

**Adequate cleaning:** High traffic areas of the service must be comprehensively cleaned regularly. This includes door handles, doorknobs, coded door entry pads, exit buttons and so on. Every toy and every surface will also require regular cleaning. In the case of infant areas mouthed toys should be removed immediately when the child is no longer engaged with the item and cleaned with disinfectant and detergent. **Additional staff, or staff deployed from other roles within the service, must be responsible for undertaking the cleaning requirements – not the educators who are working directly with the children<sup>1</sup>.**

**Hygiene:** Hand washing is critical and should be conducted on entry to the centre, before and after consuming food and drink, after going to the bathroom, after cleaning children’s faces. **Regular hand washing of all children and staff should occur. Respiratory Hygiene – covering mouth and nose if sneezing.**

**Social distancing:** General Health advice is to maintain physical distance from others where possible. However, this will not always be practical in an education and care setting and regulatory space requirements have not changed.

Whilst there is known transmission of COVID 19 in the ACT / NSW community services, the directors and coordinators must ensure:

- Contact with carers and family at pick up and drop off is reduced or eliminated (as far as possible).
- Facemasks are encouraged while indoors at an early childhood education and out of school care hours settings.
- Adults practice social distancing as far as reasonably practicable.

Social distancing with and between children is not practicable but activities involving a higher risk of transmission should be avoided (shared equipment, play dough, food sharing). The following additional strategies will decrease the risk of transmission.

- Small group play, staggered mealtimes and indoor / outdoor play opportunities whenever possible.
- Windows should be opened during the day to promote air flow where possible.

---

<sup>1</sup> This is to ensure adequate supervision of children at all times. If educators are also responsible for cleaning tasks at a service, they cannot be included in working directly with children ratios whilst the cleaning duties are undertaken. There is nothing preventing educators returning to their normal duties once the cleaning is complete.

## Y CANBERRA REGION – INFECTION CONTROL DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Ref #	Owner	Internal/External	Approved	Last Amended	Status
R014	Children Services Executive Manager	External	11/05/2022	-	APPROVED

- Consider operating an indoor/outdoor program for the full day/session as it provides more space for the children and the setup of more activities for children to engage in.
- If you are not able to run an indoor/outdoor program, consider spending more time outdoors and the placement of activities across the outdoor space. A greater range of activities will encourage children to spread out.
- Consider the setup of the room and the placement of the activities and limit the number of whole group activities.
- Children should be spaced out as much as possible. For table activities, set up activities only at each end of the table.
- Set up more individual activities throughout the room. Rather than having all books and blocks on one shelf, set them up in separate areas throughout the room if possible.
- Look at the spacing of cots and highchairs, keeping them well apart.
- Mixing of staff and children between rooms should be avoided where possible.

It remains critically important that adults – both staff and parents - maintain physical distancing between themselves at early childhood services. Where possible children’s start times should be staggered to allow for some measure of social distancing. Parents and guardian’s arrival and departure routines should be modified to maintain social distancing.

- **Communication**

**Emergency contact:** It is critical that after-hours emergency contact details in the NQAITS are up to date and are specific to each service. These numbers will be used by ACT / NSW Health to speak to a service representative in the event of a positive case at your service.

**Contact details:** Contact details of each child’s parent/guardian/authorised emergency person, must be recorded for **each** day a child is in attendance, to ensure that a **person will be available** to collect the child at any time across the period of care being provided. Contact details for ACT and NSW Health, the Regulatory Authority and emergency services must be kept on hand in case of a critical situation.

**Updates:** Services must ensure that staff and families are immediately informed of any changes that may be notified to them by the lead authorities. A communication plan must be developed to ensure this is possible.

- **Action in the event of a case**

If there is an exposure to COVID-19 at a service, the required response will depend on a number of factors. For information about the process for managing a confirmed case of COVID-19 please refer to:

[Managing a confirmed case of COVID-19 in education and care services - Education](https://www.education.act.gov.au/public-school-life/covid-school-arrangements)  
<https://www.education.act.gov.au/public-school-life/covid-school-arrangements>  
<https://education.nsw.gov.au/covid-19>

## Y CANBERRA REGION – INFECTION CONTROL DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Ref #	Owner	Internal/External	Approved	Last Amended	Status
R014	Children Services Executive Manager	External	11/05/2022	-	APPROVED

## Scope

The purpose of infection control during the Covid-19 pandemic is to guide employees and participants in procedures and practices to be implemented to ensure the control of infection of Covid-19.

## Monitoring, Evaluation and Review

This policy will be reviewed every year or ad-hoc in case of regulator request.

## Roles and Responsibilities

Department/Area	Role/Responsibility
<b>Parent / Guardians</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clear process to actively identify and carefully remove any participant from the ELC / OSHC in case it is unwell.</li> <li>• Children services provided with extra PPE (Personal Protective Equipment) eg: Gloves</li> <li>• Encouragement of staff and parents to self-identify any symptoms of being unwell, communicating, being tested and not attending any Y Canberra Region service until having a negative COVID-19 test result.</li> </ul>
<b>Y Canberra Region</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consistent communication to staff regarding any updated directions from Government Health Departments via mailchimp all staff email</li> <li>• Sanitizer readily available at all services.</li> <li>• Informative posters in all services about the importance of handwashing, safe distancing, avoiding touching eyes, respiratory hygiene (covering mouth and nose if sneezing) and not remaining on site in case presenting symptoms or feeling unwell.</li> <li>• Facemasks are recommended in high risk environment and if person is household contact.</li> <li>• Enhanced hygiene procedures and cleaning of touchpoints by the end of the day.</li> <li>• Deep cleaning company on standby for any need.</li> <li>• Air conditioner recommended not to be used in recirculation mode.</li> <li>• Perform annual risk assessment including COVID-19 actions</li> </ul>

## Supporting Documents (Policies, Procedures, Legislation, Forms)

Y Canberra Region Covid Safety Plan

### Y CANBERRA REGION – INFECTION CONTROL DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Ref #	Owner	Internal/External	Approved	Last Amended	Status
R014	Children Services Executive Manager	External	11/05/2022	-	APPROVED