



COVID-19 POLICY

Best Practice - Quality Area 2

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to outline how Maribyrnong Kindergarten Inc. will manage risk relating to Coronavirus (COVID-19) during key interactions between children, parents/guardians and staff during the return to kindergarten in Term 3, 2020 and onwards.

Maribyrnong Kindergarten Inc. is committed to providing a safe learning and working environment for our children and staff. We ask for the whole kindergarten community to follow this policy to enable us to provide the safest possible environment during this time. We all have a role to play in stopping the spread of COVID-19 in Victoria.

POLICY STATEMENT

- **VALUES**

Maribyrnong Kindergarten Inc. is committed to:

- providing a safe and healthy environment for all children, staff and any other persons attending the service
- responding to the needs of the child or adult who presents with symptoms of COVID-19 while attending the service
- complying with current guidelines set by DET and the Department of Health
- providing up-to-date information and resources for families and staff regarding protection of all children from COVID-19

All educators/staff at Maribyrnong Kindergarten Inc. are committed to preventing the spread of COVID-19 through simple hand hygiene practices, managing good cough etiquette (see *Definitions*), effective cleaning procedures and ensuring social distancing is maintained and practised during childrens arrivals and departures.

- **SCOPE**

This policy applies to the Approved Provider (Committee of Management), Person with Management or Control, Person in day-to-day Charge, Nominated Supervisor, Certified Supervisor, educators, staff, contractors, students on placement, volunteers, parents/guardians, children and others attending the programs and activities of Maribyrnong Kindergarten Inc.



- **BACKGROUND AND LEGISLATION**

Background

Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses that cause respiratory infections. These can range from the common cold to more serious diseases. COVID-19 is an infectious disease. Children are at a greater risk of exposure to infections in a children's service than at home due to the amount of time spent with a large number of other children. Refer to *Dealing with Infectious Diseases Policy* for further information on reporting requirements to various health and education departments.

Maribyrnong Kindergarten Inc. will take reasonable steps to prevent the spread of COVID-19 by:

- notifying families of up-to-date information on COVID-19 as it relates to the suburb, municipality or State and how it may affect the operations of the service
- creating procedures that include physical barriers to reduce and minimise unnecessary contact during arrivals and departures
- complying with relevant health and education department guidelines in relation to COVID-19
- increase education/awareness and resources as required to prevent cross-infection through physical contact with others.

Legislation and standards

Relevant legislation and standards include but are not limited to:

- *Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010*
- *Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011: Regulation 88*
- *National Quality Standard, Quality Area 2: Children's Health and Safety*
- *National Quality Standard, Quality Area 6: Collaborative Partnerships with Families and Communities*
- *Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004*
- *Privacy Act 1988 (Cth)*
- *Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008*
- *Public Health and Wellbeing Regulations 2009*

- **DEFINITIONS**

The terms defined in this section relate specifically to this policy. For commonly used terms e.g. Approved Provider, Nominated Supervisor, Regulatory Authority etc. refer to the *General Definitions (2019)* section of this manual.

COVID-19: Is a respiratory illness caused by a new strain of coronavirus. **Symptoms may include one or more of the following: fever, runny nose, chills and sweats, coughing, a sore throat, shortness of breath, a loss of sense of smell or taste.** In certain circumstances headache, muscle soreness, stuffy nose, nausea, vomiting and diarrhea may also be considered. The virus can spread from person to person. Currently there is no treatment for COVID-19. The term COVID-19 may be used interchangeably with Coronavirus.

Social distancing: Is the act of providing an acceptable physical distance, thereby a barrier between yourself and another person, in order to stop or reduce the spread of infectious diseases. It is recommended that a minimum distance of 1.5 metres is practiced whilst in a public setting.



Infectious disease: An infectious disease designated by the Communicable Disease and Prevention Control Unit (refer to *Definitions*), Victorian Department of Health and Human Services in Schedule 7 of the *Public Health and Wellbeing Regulations 2009*, the Minimum Period of Exclusion from Primary Schools and Children's Services Centres for Infectious Diseases Cases and Contacts.

Sanitising station: A set up of sanitising products including but not limited to hand gels or wipes provided for use, to sanitise before entering or touching a space that has been cleaned.

Hand hygiene: The practice of washing hands thoroughly with soap and water to kill unwanted germs. Especially if hands have been in contact with one's own face or other parts of the body that may secrete bodily fluids or high-touch surfaces. The use of sanitising products such as gels and wipes is also considered part of good hand hygiene practice.

Cough etiquette: The practice of coughing in a manner that does not directly place others at risk by; turning or moving away from other people, using disposable tissues and discarding after use, using your upper arm or sleeve when a tissue is not available, practising good hand hygiene afterwards.

- **SOURCES AND RELATED POLICIES**

Sources

- DET Coronavirus (COVID-19) advice: <https://education.vic.gov.au/about/department/Pages/coronavirus.aspx>
- DHHS Coronavirus (COVID-19) website: <https://www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/coronavirus>
- DET Infectious Diseases Policy: <https://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/health/pages/infectiousdiseases.aspx>
- DET Health Care Needs Policy: <https://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/health/pages/healthcareneeds.aspx>
- Department of Health Exclusion Periods for Primary School's and Childrens Services <https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/public-health/infectious-diseases/school-exclusion>
- Talking to your child about COVID-19: <https://www.education.vic.gov.au/parents/Pages/talkingtoyourchildaboutcoronavirus.aspx>
- Department of Education and Training COVID-19 Advice Line – 1800 338 663
- Department of Health and Human Services Coronavirus hotline – 1800 675 398 (24 hours, 7 days a week)
- Federal Health updates: health.gov.au/news/latest-information-about-novel-coronavirus
- World Health Organisation updates: who.int/westernpacific/emergencies/novel-coronavirus
- Department of Health Cover Your Cough and Sneeze Poster: <https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/about/publications/policiesandguidelines/cover-your-cough-sneeze-poster>

Service policies

- *Occupational Health and Safety Policy*
- *Dealing with Infectious Diseases Policy*
- *Code of Conduct Policy*
- *Delivery and Collection of Children Policy*
- *Occupational Health and Safety Policy*
- *Hygiene Policy*
- *Privacy and Confidentiality Policy*



PROCEDURES

Parents/guardians are responsible for:

- keeping their child/ren at home if they are unwell or have any of the symptoms of COVID-19. (See *Definitions*)
- getting their child/ren tested for Covid-19 if they have any of the symptoms (See *Definitions*) and keeping them isolated at home until the results arrive.
- keeping their child/ren at home if there is a member of the household waiting on the results of a Covid-19 test until a negative result is received.
- informing the Approved Provider, Nominated Supervisor or Persons in Day-to-Day Charge as soon as practicable if their child has tested positive for COVID-19, or has been exposed to a person who has tested positive to COVID-19.
- complying with the recommended minimum exclusion periods (refer to *Dealing with Infectious Diseases Policy*).
- observing and maintaining social distancing during delivery and collection of their child/ren.
- respecting the need for social distancing and to therefore consider using the options of either a phone call, video call or email to speak to the teachers/educators. If a face-to face meeting is needed, it must meet the physical distancing requirements of 1.5m between adults.
- using hand sanitising stations to sanitise themselves and their children prior to entering the service grounds.
- not entering the kindergarten grounds or buildings, unless staff have advised it is safe to do so, to minimise and prevent cross-infections.
- promptly departing from the kindergarten once they have settled their child/ren to allow other parents/guardians to deliver their children and to reduce the foot traffic or congregation of groups.
- seeking medical advice from their child's medical practitioner to support decision-making about whether on-site education is suitable, should their child have complex medical needs (including those with compromised immune systems).

Volunteers and students, while at the service, are responsible for following this policy and its procedures.

The Approved Provider (Committee of Management) is responsible for:

- ensuring that where there is a confirmed case of COVID-19 at the service, reasonable steps are taken to prevent the spread of the disease
- ensuring that where there is a confirmed case of COVID-19 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
- ensuring that information from the Department of Health about the recommended minimum exclusion periods (refer to *Dealing with Infectious Diseases Policy*) is displayed at the service and is available to all stakeholders including staff, parents/guardians, students and volunteers
- ensuring that the Department of Health and Human Services is contacted on 1300 651 160 if there is a confirmed case of COVID-19 or is in close contact with someone with a confirmed case
- ensuring that a child is excluded from the service in accordance with the recommended minimum exclusion periods (refer to *Dealing with Infectious Diseases Policy*)



- ensuring that staff members who present with symptoms of COVID-19 (refer to *Definitions*), advise the Nominated Supervisor and Approved Provider and follow the protocol of staying at home or leaving the kindergarten grounds immediately to reduce further potential spread of the disease
- limiting visitors to the kindergarten grounds to those delivering or supporting essential school services and operations (e.g. maintenance workers). Visitors will be encouraged to schedule a time outside of kindergarten hours to reduce exposure to children. All visitors will be signed in and out by staff
- respecting the need for social distancing and to therefore consider using the options of either a phone call, video call or email to speak to the parent/guardian or staff. If a face-to face meeting is needed, it must meet the physical distancing requirements of 1.5m between adults
- providing appropriate equipment and resources, such as sanitising products and cleaning products to ensure staff are able to carry out their duty to protect themselves and the children
- arranging the monthly Committee of Management meetings via video conferencing to maintain social distancing
- keeping informed about current legislation, information, research and best practice
- ensuring that any changes to the exclusion table are communicated to educators/staff and parents/guardians in a timely manner.

The Nominated Supervisor is responsible for:

- ensuring that where there is a confirmed case of COVID-19 at the service, reasonable steps are taken to prevent the spread of the disease
- ensuring that where there is a confirmed case of COVID-19 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
- ensuring that information from the Department of Health about the recommended minimum exclusion periods (refer to *Dealing with Infectious Diseases Policy*) is displayed at the service and is available to all stakeholders including staff, parents/guardians, students and volunteers
- requesting that parents/guardians notify the service if their child has, or is suspected of having COVID-19
- ensuring that staff members who present with symptoms of COVID-19 (refer to *Definitions*), advise the Nominated Supervisor and Approved Provider and follow the protocol of staying at home or leaving the kindergarten grounds immediately to reduce further potential spread of the disease
- ensuring that the Department of Health and Human Services is contacted on 1300 651 160 if there is a confirmed case of COVID-19 or is in close contact with someone with a confirmed case
- ensuring that a child is excluded from the service in accordance with the recommended minimum exclusion periods (refer to *Dealing with Infectious Diseases Policy*)
- ensuring signage is clear to assist with traffic flow of parents/guardians delivering and collecting their child/ren is clear and appropriately posted
- ensuring a sanitising station is set up prior to entry to the kindergarten grounds to minimise risk of infection
- measuring the temperature of each child as they enter the kindergarten grounds with a non contact thermometer. Any child with a temperature above 37.5 degrees will be asked to refrain from the session and seek further testing
- ensuring staff maintain physical distancing as much as practical when working together and with the children



- limiting visitors to the kindergarten grounds to those delivering or supporting essential school services and operations (e.g. maintenance workers). Visitors will be encouraged to schedule a time outside of kindergarten hours to reduce exposure to children. All visitors will be signed in and out by staff
- respecting the need for social distancing and to therefore consider using the options of either a phone call, video call or email to speak to the parent/guardian. If a face-to face meeting is needed, it must meet the physical distancing requirements of 1.5m between adults
- assisting with signing a child into the service and signing the child out of the service, to minimise traffic disruption to the service
- establishing good hygiene, awareness of cough etiquette, infection control procedures, and ensuring that they are adhered to by everyone at the service, including a routine of hand washing as part of the drop off routine
- monitor that food sharing is strictly not allowed and create provisions for wider spacings between children during meals times if required
- keep windows and doors open to promote fresh air flow indoors as practical
- maximise use of outdoor learning areas or environments with enhanced ventilation where possible and as practical depending on weather conditions
- ensuring a clean routine is in place for high-touch surfaces and that all touch surfaces are thoroughly cleaned thoroughly overnight, and in between each group
- cleaning droplets (for example by sneezing, coughing or vomiting) on surfaces with disinfectant wipes (and using gloves)
- ensuring that good hand hygiene is practiced before and after performing routine first aid and that standard precautions are maintained
- maintaining confidentiality at all times (refer to *Privacy and Confidentiality Policy*).

Certified Supervisors and all other educators are responsible for:

- requesting that parents/guardians notify the service if their child has, or is suspected of having symptoms of COVID-19
- observing signs and symptoms of children who may appear unwell, and informing the Nominated Supervisor or Person in day-to-day Charge
- ensuring that staff members who present with symptoms of COVID-19 (refer to *Definitions*), advise the Nominated Supervisor and Approved Provider and follow the protocol of staying at home or leaving the kindergarten grounds immediately to reduce further potential spread of the disease
- providing support at the sanitising station prior to entry to the kindergarten grounds to minimise risk of infection
- measuring the temperature of each child as they enter the kindergarten grounds with a non contact thermometer. Any child with a temperature above 37.5 degrees will be asked to refrain from the session and seek further testing
- assisting with signing a child into the service and signing the child out of the service, to minimise traffic disruption to the service
- establishing good hygiene, awareness of cough etiquette, infection control procedures, and ensuring that they are adhered to by everyone at the service, including a routine of hand washing as part of the drop off routine
- monitor that food sharing is strictly not allowed and create provisions for wider spacings between children during meals times if required
- ensuring staff maintain physical distancing as much as practical when working together and with the children



- ensuring a clean routine is in place for high-touch surfaces and that all touch surfaces are thoroughly cleaned thoroughly overnight, and in between each group
- cleaning droplets (for example by sneezing, coughing or vomiting) on surfaces with disinfectant wipes (and using gloves)
- ensuring that good hand hygiene is practiced before and after performing routine first aid and that standard precautions are maintained
- maintaining confidentiality at all times (refer to *Privacy and Confidentiality Policy*).

EVALUATION

In order to assess whether the values and purposes of the policy have been achieved, the Approved Provider (Committee of Management) will:

- regularly seek feedback from educators, staff, parents/guardians, children, management and all affected by the policy regarding its effectiveness
- monitor the implementation, compliance, complaints and incidents in relation to this policy
- ensure that all information related to COVID-19 on display and supplied to parents/guardians is current
- keep the policy up to date with current legislation, research, policy and best practice
- revise the policy and procedures as part of the service's policy review cycle, or as required
- notify parents/guardians at least 14 days before making any change to this policy or its procedures, unless a lesser period is necessary because of a risk.

AUTHORISATION

The policy was adopted by the Approved Provider (Committee of Management) of Maribyrnong Kindergarten Inc. on 9th July 2020 .

REVIEW DATE: JULY 2021