



## VERMONT PRIMARY SCHOOL KINDERGARTEN COVID19 OPERATIONAL GUIDELINES AND COVID SAFE PLAN

(ADAPTED FROM DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES (DHHS) – *'PHYSICAL DISTANCING AND TRANSMISSION REDUCTION IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AND CARE SETTINGS, IN THE CONTEXT OF CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19)'*

### Introduction

There are a range of actions that early childhood education and care services can take to reduce the risk of coronavirus (COVID-19) transmission.

One way to slow the spread of coronavirus (COVID-19) is physical distancing, also called social distancing. The more space between people, the harder it is for the virus to spread.

This guidance recognises that the general advice for the Victorian public to maintain a physical distance of 1.5 metres from others will not always be practical in education settings, notably settings that work with younger children. In early childhood education and care services, regulatory space requirements have not changed.

It remains critically important that adults – both staff and parents - maintain physical distancing between themselves at early childhood services.

The following actions have been agreed by the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) and aligns with [Physical distancing and other transmission reduction measures - coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#)

#### Key messages:

- All staff and children who are unwell must remain at home.
- Hand hygiene, cough etiquette and environmental cleaning and disinfection are the most effective way to reduce transmission of coronavirus (COVID-19).
- Parents/carers of children with complex medical needs should seek medical advice from the child's medical practitioner to support risk assessment and informed decision making regarding the suitability of continuing education and care at this time.
- Staff, children and parents/carers should have the influenza vaccination, wherever possible.
- The greatest risk of transmission in the early childhood environment is between adults.

## Actions to be implemented at Vermont Primary School Kindergarten

- Display educational materials, which can be downloaded and printed from the DHHS website [www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/coronavirus](http://www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/coronavirus).
- Comply with NHMRC guidance [Staying healthy: Preventing infectious diseases in early childhood education and care services](#)
- Alert approved provider about any increases in child and staff absenteeism due to flu-like illnesses.
- Keep parents and staff informed of the actions being taken.

### *Attendance on site*

- All unwell staff and children no matter how mild will be actively encouraged to stay home and go and get tested.
- It has been recommended that all staff have had the influenza vaccination.
- Children and parents are encouraged to have the influenza vaccination, wherever possible.
- Parents/carers of children with complex medical needs (including underlying respiratory and cardiovascular conditions and those with compromised immune systems) should seek advice from the child's medical practitioner to support informed risk assessment and decision making regarding the suitability of continuing education and care at this time.
- Access will be limited to persons other than staff, educators and children to the service. All incursions, outings and parent helper program will be postponed.
- People in the high-risk category for coronavirus (COVID-19) will be excluded from entering the facilities; including:
  - The elderly and those with pre-existing medical conditions.
  - Those who have been in contact with a person known to have coronavirus (COVID-19) in the last 14 days, including in the 24 hours before the person became symptomatic.
  - Those with fever or symptoms of acute respiratory infection (e.g. cough, sore throat, runny nose, shortness of breath).

### *Hygiene*

- Alcohol-based hand sanitiser is available at the entrance of the facility and throughout. Staff and children unable to use hand sanitiser will be encouraged to wash their hands more regularly.
- Staff and children will be required to regularly perform hand hygiene, including on arrival to the service and before and after meals.
- The importance of hand hygiene will be discussed regularly with the children
- Tissues will be readily accessible with bins provided in each room and in outdoor areas for easy disposal.
- When eating, staff and children will be encouraged to keep as much distance as possible

### *Cleaning*

- The service will maintain full adherence to the NHMRC childcare cleaning guidelines, in addition:
  - Clean and disinfect high-touch surfaces at least daily (e.g. climbing frames, swings, tables, chairs, doorknobs, light switches, remotes, handles, desks, toilets, sinks, all plastic toys used in the session).
  - Floor mat, bean bags and other soft furnishings are sprayed with a disinfectant spray daily.

- Wash and launder play items and toys including washable plush toys as appropriate in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions. If possible, launder items using the warmest appropriate water setting for the items and dry items completely.
- Between the two sessions particularly on Wednesdays, resources are washed, changed over, high touch areas mentioned above wiped over.
- Wipe down kitchen bench, office benches, phones after use with disinfectant

#### *Arrival and departure procedures*

- Parents/carers will not be permitted on the school grounds, except in absolutely essential circumstances, as determined by Robin Strickland, Joy Cook or Helen Murphy.
- Drop off and pick up will occur through the side gate closest to the reserve. The reserve school gate will be the only **access** point into the school grounds for Kinder families. If you usually access kinder from Nurlendi Road you **will not be permitted to walk through the school grounds**. Please allow extra time to walk around the block to the reserve.
- Parents are reminded that they must not park in the school car park
- An educator will greet families at the Kindergarten door and children will be directed to enter the kinder through the foyer. No parents/carers will be admitted on the grounds of Vermont Primary School beyond the Kindergarten.
- Staff will sign children in and out.
- Temperature screening (with the use of a no-touch thermometer) will take place when children and staff enter the foyer (outside temperature is too low for an accurate reading to be taken outside the building). Staff or children with a temperature of 37.5 or above will not be permitted to enter the service. If a child's temperature is above 37.5, parents will be called immediately to collect their child.
- Staff will be required to wear a mask when greeting children and parents at the school/kinder gate and when taking temperatures.
- Parents/carers are strongly discouraged from gathering in groups when awaiting drop off or pick up.
- Water bottles will be left in children's bags and the water bottle trolley will not be used.
- The service will be highly diligent about all staff and children washing their hands upon arrival at the service
- Parents will be encouraged email or call for any discussions with educators as opportunities to hold discussions with parents will be extremely limited at drop-off and departure

#### *Learning and office spaces*

- An indoor / outdoor program will run whenever possible.
- Where possible, windows will be open during the day to promote air-flow.
- Soap and water or hand sanitisers and tissues will be made available in all learning and office spaces.
- The setup of the room and the placement of the activities will be considered. Children will be spaced out as much as possible.
- During group times children will be encouraged to space out. The importance of this will be discussed with the children regularly.
- Only 1 staff in office, kitchen and storeroom at any time
- All staff will maintain physical distancing as much as practical when working in the learning space together
- As per advice dated 10/06 from DET, the sandpit will be opened.

### *Mealtimes*

- Eating times will be set up to facilitate less children at each table. Staff and children will be encouraged to keep as much distance as possible while eating.

### *Outdoor play*

- Wherever possible (e.g. weather dependent) an indoor/outdoor program will run for the full session. This naturally provides for more space for the children and the setup of more activities for children to engage in.
- When it is not possible to run an indoor/outdoor program, staff will consider spending more time outdoors, consider the placement of activities and the amount of activities in the outdoor space.
- All excursions, including community walks will not be undertaken for the time being.

### *Routine care*

- Standard precautions are advised when coming into contact with someone for the purpose of providing routine care and/or assistance (e.g. the use of gloves for toileting). Guidance will also be sought from NHMRC guidance [Staying healthy: Preventing infectious diseases in early childhood education and care services](#)
- Staff must always wash hands with soap and water or use a hand sanitiser before and after performing routine care.

### *First aid*

- Standard precautions will be adopted when providing first aid, e.g. gloves and apron to use when dealing with blood or body fluids/substances.
- Staff will always wash hands with soap and water or use a hand sanitiser before and after providing first aid.
- Additional PPE (e.g. face masks) is not required to provide standard first aid on children or staff who appear to be well.

### *Management of an unwell child, or staff member*

- Staff or children experiencing compatible symptoms with coronavirus (COVID-19), such as fever, cough or sore throat, will be isolated in the kinder office with suitable supervision and will need to be collected by a parent/carer as soon as possible.
- In this situation, where staff or children are experiencing compatible symptoms with coronavirus (COVID-19), actions will be taken including hand hygiene, physical distance and where possible putting on a face mask.
- Urgent medical attention will be sought where necessary.
- Families of children with a health care plan (e.g. asthma or anaphylaxis management plan) should ensure information is up-to-date and that it provides additional advice, where required, on monitoring and identification of the unwell child in the context of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. If your child's action plan has been recently updated you **must** provide the kinder with an updated copy.
- If a staff member is unsure whether a student is unwell in the first instance, we will contact the parent/carer to discuss any concerns about the health status of the student, and we will take a

precautionary approach, requesting the parent/carer to collect their child if concerns remain. A trained staff member may take the temperature of the student, where appropriate, to support decision-making. Gloves will be worn for the purpose of taking a temperature.

- Staff or students experiencing compatible symptoms with coronavirus (COVID-19) should be encouraged to seek the advice of their healthcare professional who can advise on next steps.
- Cleaning guidance will be followed according to the situation of the case. If a child spreads droplet (e.g. by sneezing, coughing or vomiting), surfaces will be cleaned immediately with disinfectant while wearing gloves.

### ***Managing a suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19***

1. Contact the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) who will advise if the service needs to close or can remain operating.
2. The Approved Provider will inform families.  
Here are some resources to assist services with initial communication, including a template letter for families and FAQs.
  - Download [communication pack \(docx - 79.53kb\)](#).
3. Services are requested to lodge a notification through the [National Quality Agenda IT System \(NQA ITS\)](#) or call 1300 307 415.
4. Notify WorkSafe on 13 23 60 if an employee or Contractor/contractors employee has a confirmed case of COVID-19. [Report a case to worksafe online here.](#)
5. Services arrange a deep clean. Detailed advice is available about cleaning and disinfecting after a confirmed case of coronavirus (COVID-19 has been identified at a service. This advice has been developed by the DHHS. DET will provide \$1500 per kinder room to go towards payment of a deep clean if required by DHHS. The technical information in this factsheet should be provided to cleaners contracted to clean services.
  - Download the [Cleaning and disinfecting after a confirmed case of coronavirus \(COVID-19\) factsheet \(docx - 339.76kb\)](#)
6. The Approved Provider is to keep families informed.  
It is essential to continue to maintain regular contact with families, reassure them and help them to understand the process that is underway. The Department will provide additional information to support services during this process.

### **FURTHER INFORMATION AND RESOURCES**

- [DET Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) website:](#)
  - <https://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/Pages/coronavirus-advice-schools.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>
- [Talking to your child about COVID-19:](#)
  - <https://www.education.vic.gov.au/Documents/about/departments/covid-19/talking-to-your-child-during-coronavirus.docx>

- Services affected by a confirmed coronavirus (COVID-19) case will be assigned a case manager to ensure services are supported throughout the process.
- A new hotline will be open 8.00am to 8.00pm weekdays and 8.00am to 6.00pm on weekends.
- 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)

## REVIEW

This policy was last updated on 13/08/2020 and will be reviewed weekly throughout term 3.