

# Support resource for education and care services to prepare for COVID-19

This resource has been developed to assist and support education and care services to prepare for a potential outbreak of COVID-19 infection.

This resource provides advice on reviewing existing service policies and procedures, and ensuring all educators and staff have a sound understanding of what arrangements are in place and how to implement these practices across your service:

## Infectious diseases - responsibilities

All services have current policies and procedures in place to respond to infectious diseases and illness that may occur at the service.

- Ensure that you review your service's policies and procedures for dealing with infectious diseases and illness (regulations 85, 88 and 168). You can seek advice from your local Public Health Unit on 1300 066 055.
- Remember to replace any out of date or used items you need to manage infectious diseases and illness, for example, additional soap, hand sanitiser and gloves.

## Vaccinations

While there is no vaccination for COVID-19, in order to reduce the impact on the public health system, it is recommended that people receive the seasonal influenza vaccination. Information about the vaccination, including people who are eligible to receive the vaccination for free, is included on the [NSW Health website](#).

- Promote with your staff and families the importance of the influenza vaccination.
- Encourage all staff to receive the influenza vaccination when this becomes available. Note, it is not compulsory for staff to receive the vaccination but it is recommended.

## Communication with families and the community

- If not already in place, establish and review communication channels for sharing information on COVID-19 with your families and communities. For example, update your service's website or Facebook page with current advice and links to information about COVID-19.
- Support educators and staff who may be responding to questions from parents and families.

## Promotion of good hygiene practices and infection control

- Review your service's policies and procedures to prevent the spread of infectious diseases at the service (regulation 88).
- Provide educators and staff with updates on your service's policies and procedures, and help them to implement these across the service.

- Promote and remind children and staff that regular [handwashing](#) with soap is the single most effective way to reduce the spread of germs that cause respiratory disease. Provide appropriate handwashing soap.
- Display health and hygiene promotional materials that show the best ways to reduce the risk of acquiring and spreading respiratory infections. [Health and hygiene support information](#), including fact sheets and posters, is available from NSW Health to help promote personal hygiene practices within education and care services. These posters and/or fact sheets can be displayed in prominent places around your service, such as the kitchen, hand wash and toilet areas, and learning spaces.

### Risk management planning

- Identify children with compromised immunity or complex health care needs and work with families to update any medical management, risk-minimisation and communications plans as required (regulations 90 and 168).
- Consider, within your learning programs and activities, having regular time for handwashing for all children and staff.
- Identify a suitable area, additional and separate to the regular sick bay, for children who may be showing cold and flu like symptoms to await pick up by their parent/carer.
- Consider canvassing casual educators and staff for availability in the event of critical educator and staff absences.

### Service operation and management

- A full update on the Health advice about self-isolation and exclusion requirements can be found on the [Department's website](#).
- NSW Health is the agency that will assist you to make decisions about whether or not you should close if staff or children have been exposed to, or diagnosed with, COVID-19. As with any other contagious disease, you should contact Health and follow their advice. Your local public health unit can be contacted on 1300 066 055.
- If you are directed to close by NSW Health, you should notify the Regulatory Authority as soon as possible via NQA ITS or by calling our information and enquiries team on 1800 619 113.
- In situations where staff members are required to self-isolate, you can apply to the Regulatory Authority for waivers for qualifications and/or ratios. Fees for waivers relating to COVID-19 will be waived or refunded and applications will be expedited to minimise disruptions to service provision. You can apply for waivers through NQA ITS. For assistance, contact our information and enquiries team on 1800 619 113.
- You are required to report any risk or incident of infectious disease to:
  - NSW Regulatory Authority (NSW Department of Education)
  - Your local Public Health Unit on 1300 066 055

The Department views a confirmed case of COVID-19 as a serious incident and as such requires notification as soon as practicable within 24 hours.