

COVID Safe plan

Guidance on how to prepare your COVID Safe plan is available [here](#).

Our COVID Safe Plan

Business name: Sparkways
(TRY Australia Children's Services)
Site location: **Sparkways ECEC Services**
Contact person: Child Safety and Quality Manager
Contact person phone:
Date prepared: 07/08/2020 Date updated: 20/04/2023

[This COVID Safe Plan is a live document and may be subject to changes in line with Victoria Government Guidelines.](#)

[This COVID Safe Plan aligns with the **DET Covid Safe Settings Guidance** for Early Childhood Education and Care Services.](#)

Health & Hygiene	
Covid-19 Vaccination Recommended	<p><i>From Saturday 25 June 2022, staff in early childhood services are no longer required to be vaccinated against Covid-19 to attend work onsite.</i></p> <p><i>Service providers have the choice to require their staff to be vaccinated.</i></p> <p><i>Sparkways will continue to align with Government legislation, and therefore Sparkways staff – including contractors, students and volunteers – are no longer required to be vaccinated.</i></p> <p><i>Visitors – including parents, carers and other adult visitors not performing work – are not required to be vaccinated.</i></p> <p><i>However, Sparkways recognises vaccination as the best way to protect individuals, families and services from further outbreaks and the spread of Covid-19.</i></p> <p><i>Sparkways encourages all eligible individuals to be vaccinated against Covid-19 and to talk to their GP or a pharmacist if they have any concerns.</i></p> <p><i>For more information, including how to book and information about walk-in vaccination sites, staff can refer to coronavirus.vic.gov.au</i></p>

<p>Hand Hygiene practices in place</p>	<p><i>Sparkways has effective hygiene procedures and practices in place.</i></p> <p><i>Hand sanitiser is to be available at every service. Children should be supported to wash their hands upon arrival by the educator.</i></p> <p><i>Families, educators and general visitors are also encouraged to sanitise their hands on arrival.</i></p>
<p>Face masks encouraged and available</p>	<p>Wearing a face mask can help protect you and those around you. Face masks stop droplets spreading when you talk, cough, sneeze and laugh, which lowers your chance of spreading or catching the virus.</p> <p>The current Victorian Government advice (https://www.coronavirus.vic.gov.au/face-masks) recommends wearing a mask:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • for 7 days if you have COVID-19 or are a close contact and: • you need to leave home, or • you cannot maintain physical distance • if you are caring for someone at home who is sick with COVID-19 • if you have any COVID-19 symptoms • if you are with people who may be vulnerable to COVID-19 • if you are visiting or working in a sensitive setting such as hospitals and aged care facilities • if you know you are at a higher risk of falling very sick with COVID-19. <p>Masks for staff in ECEC services are not recommended in circumstances where staff are actively teaching and clear enunciation or visibility of the mouth is essential.</p> <p>Children aged 2 years or younger should not wear a mask, because it is a choking and suffocation risk.</p>
<p>Effective air flow and ventilation wherever possible – including maximizing outdoor programming.</p>	<p>Good ventilation, together with other mitigation strategies is important to reduce risk of COVID-19 infection and spread. The introduction of air purification may assist in reducing risk in areas with poor ventilation.</p> <p>Many services are already well placed to create environments that enable good ventilation, simply by keeping doors and windows open, and maximising existing outside spaces.</p> <p>Services should consider the following 3 ways that ventilation can be improved:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Natural - bringing in outside air by opening windows and doors • Mechanical - using air-conditioning/heating systems to bring outside air into the inside (air conditioning systems that do not bring in outside air, including most split systems, are not mechanical ventilation) • Augmented - using air purifiers to filter the air. <p>Services should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • maximise ventilation of indoor spaces with fresh outside air (through opening doors and windows and using mechanical ventilation systems) • implement measures for a comfortable learning environment (thermal, noise, safety) with ventilation strategies in place • minimise the use of indoor space that cannot be ventilated with fresh outside air • use air purifiers in addition to maximising ventilation, rather than as a replacement, where possible. • Maximise outside areas and programming. <p><i>Sparkways has purchased air purifiers for services, to improve air quality and to particularly assist during the colder months where there may be reduced opportunity for outdoor play and open windows. Contact the Manager, OHS, Property and Procurement if you require assistance in accessing an air purifier.</i></p>

Rapid Antigen Testing when unwell or a known contact

Rapid Antigen Tests (RATs)

Rapid Antigen Tests are intermittently provided to services by the Department of Education for distribution to staff and families.

ECEC services that have sufficient stock of RATs can opt out of future deliveries.

If you wish to opt out of deliveries, please contact the department at covid.early.childhood@education.vic.gov.au.

Services will store tests securely and at a temperature below 30 degrees Celsius.

Rapid Antigen Testing should be used by staff and children when symptomatic – and for five days if they are an identified close contact of a confirmed case.

Families and Staff should report their positive result to the service, so that other families and staff can be notified and advised to monitor for symptoms. (notice displayed and communication sent to families)

Individual Covid cases are no longer required to be reported to the Compliance Desk.

However, services should keep a record of known cases and alert the Compliance Desk if there are 5 or more cases in a 7-Day period – deemed to be a Covid Outbreak.

Link to Sparkways Covid Outbreak Notification Form:

<https://www.cognitofrms.com/TryAustralia1/CovidOutbreakNotificationForm>

The Compliance Desk will report the Covid Outbreak to the Department of Education and the DoH.

Anyone who tests positive is encouraged to isolate for 5 days.

Families and staff should also report their Positive results to the Department of Health via the COVID-19 Positive Rapid Antigen Test Self- Reporting Form online at dhvicgovau.powerappsportals.com/rapid-antigen-test/ or call centre on [1800 675 398](tel:1800675398).

Staying Home if Unwell

Adults and Children who become unwell whilst onsite

Children and Adults must not attend if they are unwell –

1. Families must NOT bring their child if unwell, even with the mildest of symptoms, they must stay at home.

If a child becomes unwell during the day, they should be collected from early childhood education and care (ECEC) as soon as possible.

2. If a child has any of the symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19) outlined below, however mild, they should get tested and remain at home until they receive their results:

- fever
- chills or sweats
- cough
- sore throat
- shortness of breath
- runny nose
- loss of sense of smell or taste.

In certain circumstances headache, muscle soreness, stuffy nose, nausea, vomiting and diarrhea may also be considered symptoms.

For further advice:

- call the 24-hour COVID-19 Hotline [1800 675 398](tel:1800675398)
- call a general practitioner
- visit [Getting tested](#) for further information on where to get tested.

3. Once a child's symptoms have resolved, they can return to ECEC.

Children with persistent symptoms due to underlying conditions such as hay fever or asthma whose symptoms are clearly typical of their condition as detailed on their medical plans, can continue to attend ECEC. They should be tested for COVID-19 if they develop symptoms that are different to or worse than their usual symptoms. They should consider getting a medical certificate from their GP to attend ECEC if they have persistent symptoms that may overlap with symptoms of COVID-19 such as cough or runny nose.

For information on the minimum periods students and children need to stay at home for other conditions, refer to the [DH school exclusion table](#).

Children or staff who test positive are recommended to isolate for 5 days.

Children or staff are not to return to the service whilst symptomatic.

Managing an unwell child or staff member on ECEC premises

Designate an appropriate space for children and staff who develop symptoms to ensure they are away from others.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children should be supervised appropriately while they await collection by a parent or carer as soon as possible. Educators should wear a mask and use sanitiser. • The symptomatic individual and attending staff member should be provided with a surgical face mask if they are not already wearing one. Face masks should not be used in situations where an individual is unable to safely or practically tolerate a mask (for example, a child with complex medical needs including existing respiratory needs, or a child under two years). • Staff may consider additional PPE (e.g. gloves) when care is to be prolonged or a child has additional health needs, in order to reduce risk to the staff member. The Department of Health has a range of infection prevention control resources available. • If a staff member is unsure whether a child is unwell, it is advisable in the first instance to contact the parent/carer to discuss any concerns about the health status of the child and, taking a precautionary approach, request the parent/carer to collect their child if concerns remain. A trained staff member could take the temperature of the child, where appropriate, to support decision making, ensuring hand hygiene is performed before and after. • Health care plans, where relevant, should be updated to provide additional advice on monitoring and identification of the unwell child in the context of coronavirus (COVID-19). • Urgent medical attention should be sought where indicated. Staff should call an ambulance as they usually would if the child needs urgent medical attention or the staff member is concerned.
<p>Covid Safe Training – including PPE and Hygiene Practices</p>	<p>COVID Safe Training on-line provided by DoH has been completed by and is available to staff:</p> <p>https://www.health.gov.au/resources/apps-and-tools/covid-19-infection-control-training</p>
<p>Cleaning</p>	
<p>Increased environmental cleaning</p>	<p>Staff to clean high traffic areas and surfaces periodically or when a child has mouthed a toy or sneezed or coughed on a surface or resource.</p> <p>Regular regular cleaning of door handles and surfaces.</p> <p>Regular washing of toys.</p>
<p>Adequate supplies of cleaning products - including detergent and disinfectant.</p>	<p>Hand sanitiser to be available at every service (60% alcohol). All Sparkways services are stocked with detergent and disinfectant as a minimum requirement. Teams are able to replenish these supplies as needed through our preferred supplier. If teams cannot access these products as required they are asked to contact their Area Manager for support.</p>

Physical distancing	
Working from Home Options	<p><i>All administration and management support staff are continuing a hybrid working model between home and their relevant Sparkways site/s to reduce contact.</i></p> <p><i>All on-site work, at an office or service, is to be conducted in a Covid-safe way.</i></p>
Reduction of staff members working across multiple settings/work sites within short timeframes where possible.	<p><i>Staff are encouraged to limit working across services/sites within short timeframes where possible.</i></p> <p><i>When working across services/sites within short timeframes, it is imperative that staff operate in a Covid-safe way.</i></p>
Reduce Mixing where possible	<p>Reducing mixing between different age or room groups to minimise risk of spread of transmission and aid containment in the event of a confirmed case of coronavirus (COVID-19) on-site.</p> <p>It is acknowledged that staff may need to move between rooms to support breaks and, in these situations, staff should be reminded of the importance of hand hygiene, physical distancing between themselves and other staff, and mask wearing when not directly caring for or teaching children.</p> <p>Implement small group play, staggered mealtimes, and indoor/outdoor play opportunities.</p> <p>Consider the setup of the room and the placement of the activities and limit the number of whole group activities. A greater range of activities will encourage children and staff to spread out more broadly.</p> <p>Rather than having group times where everyone is sitting on the mat, consider using informal opportunities to engage with the children/read books/do storytelling with small groups of children at a time.</p> <p>For younger children, particularly consider the rotation of toys more often and increase the frequency of cleaning and disinfection of toys. Sharing of toys that have been placed in mouths should be monitored and avoided.</p> <p>Where possible, stagger or group outdoor play to minimise mixing.</p>
Events	<p>Events should be conducted with Covid Safe practices in place. Covid Safety should be incorporated into risk planning for events, including incursions, excursions and regular outings.</p>
Where relevant, ensure clear and visible signage in areas that are open to the general public to encourage safe distancing	<p><i>Completed as required.</i></p>

Reporting and Record keeping

Notification re: positive cases

Families and Staff should report their positive result to the service, so that other families and staff can be notified and advised to monitor for symptoms (notice displayed and communication sent)

Communication template:

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The Compliance Desk will report the Covid Outbreak to DET and the DoH. and follow the subsequent advice.

Families and staff should also report their Positive results to the Department of Health via the COVID-19 Positive Rapid Antigen Test Self- Reporting Form online at dhvicgovau.powerappsportals.com/rapid-antigen-test/ or call centre on 1800 675 398.