

CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19) POLICY

Best Practice – Quality Area 2.

This Policy is valid during the period that COVID-19 is declared a pandemic by the World Health Organisation

PURPOSE

This policy will provide guidelines for procedures to be implemented at Pinemont Pre-School to ensure:

- effective and up-to-date control of the spread of infection from Coronavirus (COVID-19)
- the provision of an environment that is safe, clean and hygienic for children, staff and families

POLICY STATEMENT

1. VALUES

Pinemont Pre-School is committed to protecting all persons from Coronavirus (COVID-19) by minimising the potential for infection through:

- consulting with health professionals to implement procedures to minimise the spread of Coronavirus (COVID-19)
- implementing and following effective hygiene and cleaning practices
- implementing infection control procedures to minimise the likelihood of cross-infection and the spread of Coronavirus (COVID-19) to children, staff and any other persons in attendance at the service
- fulfilling the service's duty of care requirement under the *Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004*, the *Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010* and the *Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011* to ensure that those involved with the service are protected from harm
- informing educators, staff, volunteers, children and families about the importance of adhering to the *Coronavirus Policy* to maintain a safe environment for all users, and communicating the shared responsibility between all involved in the operation of the service.
- communicating with families about effective management of Coronavirus (COVID-19) at the service.

2. SCOPE

This policy applies to the Approved Provider, Persons with Management or Control, Nominated Supervisor, Person in Day to Day Charge, educators, staff, students on placement, volunteers, parents/guardians, children and others attending the programs and activities of Pinemont Pre-School, including during excursions and offsite activities, during the hours of service operation and during outdoor activities.

3. BACKGROUND AND LEGISLATION

Background

As of March 11th 2020 the World Health Organisation declared the Coronavirus (COVID-19) a pandemic. The Coronavirus is a respiratory disease that spreads from person-to-person and poses a serious public health risk. While it is not possible to prevent all infections in education and care environments, services can prevent or control the spread of Coronavirus by adopting vigorous hygiene and cleaning practices.

The implementation of appropriate hygiene and infection control procedures aims to break the cycle and prevent the spread of infections at every stage. The National Health and Medical Research

Council (NHMRC) suggest that to reduce illness in education and care services, the three most effective methods of infection control are:

- effective hand washing
- exclusion of sick children, staff and visitors
- immunisation.

Other strategies to prevent infection include:

- cough etiquette
- appropriate use of gloves
- effective cleaning of the service environment

This policy will outline the processes that Pinemont Pre-School have in place to minimise risk to staff, children and families. These include:

- drop-off and pick-up procedures
- communication with families
- cleaning protocols and schedules
- hygiene procedures
- meal arrangements
- entry to the service
- processes that will occur should someone at the service be diagnosed with Coronavirus (COVID-19)

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*: Regulations 77, 106, 109, 112, 168
- Food Act 1990
- *National Quality Standard*, Quality Area 2: Children's Health and Safety
 - Standard 2.1: Each child's health is promoted
 - Element 2.1.3: Effective hygiene practices are promoted and implemented
 - Element 2.1.4: Steps are taken to control the spread of infectious diseases and to manage injuries and illness, in accordance with recognised guidelines
- *Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004*
- *Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008*

The most current amendments to listed legislation can be found at:

- Victorian Legislation – Victorian Law Today: <http://www.legislation.vic.gov.au/>
- Commonwealth Legislation – ComLaw: <http://www.comlaw.gov.au/>

4. PUBLIC HEALTH AND WELLBEING 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* section of this manual.

Cleaning: A process that removes visible contamination such as food waste, dirt and grease from a surface. This process is usually achieved by the use of water and detergent. During this process, micro-organisms will be removed but not destroyed.

Cough etiquette: The correct way to prevent the spread of infectious organisms that are carried in droplets of saliva is to cough or sneeze into the inner elbow or to use a tissue to cover the mouth and nose. Place all tissues in the rubbish bin immediately and clean hands with both soap and water or a disinfectant hand rub.

Hygiene: The principle of maintaining health and the practices put in place to achieve this.

Infectious disease: A disease that can be spread, for example, by air, water or interpersonal contact. An infectious disease is designated under Victorian Law or by a health authority (however described) as a disease that would require the infected person to be excluded from an education and care service (refer to *Dealing with Infectious Diseases Policy*).

Sanitising: A process that destroys micro-organisms. Sanitising a surface can reduce the number of micro-organisms present. The process of sanitisation usually involves ensuring a surface is thoroughly cleaned with both heat and water, followed by the use of chemicals.

Pandemic: Is a disease that is spreading in multiple countries around the world at the same time.

Coronavirus (COVID-19): An infectious disease caused by a newly discovered coronavirus that causes illness in humans and other animals.

Contact: Anyone who has been in contact with a known case (of COVID-19), including the 24 hours before the case became symptomatic

Close Contact: Having face-to-face contact for more than 15 minutes with someone who has a confirmed case of coronavirus (COVID-19) – or alternatively sharing a closed space with them for more than two hours.

5. SOURCES AND RELATED POLICIES

Sources

- Department of Health, Victoria, Food Safety: <http://www.health.vic.gov.au/foodsafety/>
- Communicable Diseases Section, Public Health Group, Victorian Department of Human Services (2011), *The Blue Book: Guidelines for the control of infectious diseases*. Available at: <https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/about/publications/researchandreports/The-blue-book>
- National Health and Medical Research Council (2013) *Staying Healthy: Preventing infectious diseases in early childhood education and care services* (5th edition): <https://www.nhmrc.gov.au/about-us/publications/staying-healthy-preventing-infectious-diseases-early-childhood-education-and-care-services>
- ELAA – Coronavirus (COVID-19) Resources: <https://elaa.org.au/account/coronavirus-resources/#1586137015832-7e6d972c-ab74>
- ELAA – Coronavirus (COVID-19) Special eNews: <https://elaa.org.au/account/coronavirus-resources/#1586137015832-7e6d972c-ab74>
- ELAA – Coronavirus (COVID-19) FAQs: <https://elaa.org.au/resources/coronavirus-updates-2/>
- Department of Health and Human Services Victoria – Coronavirus disease (COVID-19): <https://www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/coronavirus>

Service policies

This policy should be read in conjunction with:

- *Dealing with Infectious Diseases Policy*
- *Dealing with Medical Conditions Policy*
- *Occupational Health and Safety Policy*
- *Hygiene Policy*
- *Food Safety Policy*

PROCEDURES

The Approved Provider or Persons with Management and Control is responsible for:

- ensuring that all staff and volunteers are provided with a copy of this policy and have a clear understanding of the procedures and practices outlined within
- ensuring the Nominated Supervisor, educators, staff and volunteers at the service implement adequate health and hygiene practices, and safe practices for handling, preparing and storing food (Regulation 77(1))
- establishing robust induction procedures that include the provision of information regarding the implementation of the practices outlined in this policy
- developing drop-off/pick-up and sign-in/sign-out procedures to minimise contact between individuals
- communicating with families updates about the operation of the service developing adequate hygiene and cleaning procedures and posting signs about hygiene protocols at the service
- conducting a review of cleaning and hygiene procedures
- ensuring that adequate, developmental and age-appropriate toilet, washing and drying facilities are provided for use by children, and that these are safe and accessible (Regulation 109)
- reviewing staff training needs in relation to understanding and implementing effective hygiene practices in early childhood settings
- providing a copy of the NHMRC guidelines for the prevention of infectious diseases in child care for the service
- providing hand washing guidelines for display at each hand washing location
- ensuring there is an adequate supply of non-toxic cleaning and hygiene products, including gloves, at all times.
- in the situation where someone at the service is diagnosed with COVID-19 the service will:
 - contact the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) 1300 651 160 and lodge a notification with the Quality Assessment and Regulation Division (QARD)
 - follow procedures set out in their Infectious Diseases Policy
- closing the kindergarten in the event that a child or staff member are diagnosed with COVID-19 or is identified by the health authorities as a close contact of a confirmed case of COVID-19

The Nominated Supervisor or Person in Day to Day Charge is responsible for:

- implementing and ensuring that all staff members and volunteers at the service follow adequate health and hygiene practices, and safe practices for preparing, handling and storing food to minimise risks to children (Regulation 77(2))
- engaging with families and supporting learning in the home for enrolled children not attending the service
- actively encouraging parents/guardians to keep children who are unwell at home to prevent the spread of infection to other children and educators
- storing or presenting items, such as beds, bedding and sunhats, in such a way as to prevent cross-contamination
- ensuring that there is a regular and thorough cleaning and disinfecting schedule for all equipment and toys

- ensuring any chemicals and cleaning agents are non-toxic and stored out of reach of children
- maintaining the service in a clean and hygienic manner throughout the day, such as wiping benches and tables before and after eating, and cleaning up spills
- developing drop-off/pick-up and sign-in/sign-out procedures to minimise contact between individuals
- communicating with families updates about the operation of the service developing adequate hygiene and cleaning procedures and posting signs about hygiene protocols at the service
- conducting a review of cleaning and hygiene procedures
- ensuring that adequate, developmental and age-appropriate toilet, washing and drying facilities are provided for use by children, and that these are safe and accessible (Regulation 109)
- ensuring that all staff and visitors to the service maintain the social distancing protocols of 1.5m or 4 square metres per person
- ensuring that children do not share their food or drink bottle
- sending home any child or staff member who has symptoms of COVID-19 until the symptoms resolve and seek medical assistance as required. When a child is assessed as being unwell they will be isolated in an appropriate space with suitable supervision until collected by a parent/guardian as soon as possible
- contacting the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), to seek advice, if a child attends the service that is unwell or the service is informed that the child has got, or has been in close contact with, a person with coronavirus (COVID-19)
- Staying home if:
 - they have returned from overseas in the last 14 days
 - they are unwell
 - if they feel unwell, even if they have tested negative for COVID-19 previously, they should stay home until symptom free and it has been 3 days (72 hours) since they last had a fever
 - they have been in close contact with a person who is a confirmed case of COVID-19 in the last 14 days
 - they are living with a person that has been diagnosed with COVID-19
 - in cases of suspected COVID-19, follow recommendations of the Victorian Chief Health Officer in relation to quarantine and testing requirements
 - In cases of confirmed COVID-19, follow requirements of the Department of Health and Human Services in relation to isolation and return to service.

Educators and other staff are responsible for:

- actively encouraging parents/guardians to keep children who are unwell at home to prevent the spread of infection to other children and educators
- storing or presenting items, such as beds, bedding and sunhats, in such a way as to prevent cross-contamination
- ensuring that there is a regular and thorough cleaning and disinfecting schedule for all equipment and toys
- ensuring any chemicals and cleaning agents are non-toxic and stored out of reach of children
- maintaining the service in a clean and hygienic manner throughout the day, such as wiping benches and tables before and after eating, and cleaning up spills
- engaging with families and supporting learning in the home for enrolled children not attending the service
- ensuring that all staff and visitors to the service maintain the social distancing protocols of 1.5m or 4 square metres per person
- ensuring that children do not share their food or drink bottle

- Staying home if:
 - they have returned from overseas in the last 14 days
 - they are unwell
 - if they feel unwell, even if they have tested negative for COVID-19 previously, they should stay home until symptom free and it has been 3 days (72 hours) since they last had a fever
 - they have been in close contact with a person who is a confirmed case of COVID-19 in the last 14 days
 - they are living with a person that has been diagnosed with COVID-19
 - in cases of suspected COVID-19, follow recommendations of the Victorian Chief Health Officer in relation to quarantine and testing requirements
 - In cases of conformed COVID-19, follow requirements of the Department of Health and Human Services in relation to isolation and return to service.

Parents/guardians are responsible for:

- keeping their children home if:
 - they have returned from overseas in the last 14 days
 - they are unwell
 - if they feel unwell, even if they have tested negative for COVID-19 previously, they should stay home until symptom free and it has been 3 days (72 hours) since they last had a fever
 - they have been in close contact with a person who is a confirmed case of COVID-19 in the last 14 days
 - they are living with a person that has been diagnosed with COVID-19
 - in cases of suspected COVID-19, follow recommendations of the Victorian Chief Health Officer in relation to quarantine and testing requirements
 - In cases of conformed COVID-19, follow requirements of the Department of Health and Human Services in relation to isolation and return to service.

- collecting their child as soon as they are notified that they become unwell and/or have a temperature above 37.5 degrees
- informing the service if they suspect their child has COVID-19 or is being tested for COVID-19
- supporting this policy by complying with the hygiene practices and procedures set out in the Pinemont 'Dealing with Infectious Diseases Policy' and 'Hygiene Policy' when attending the service
- maintaining social distancing when dropping off and picking up their child
- encouraging their child/ren to develop and follow effective hygiene practices at all times, including hand washing on arrival at the service and throughout the day

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

EVALUATION

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

- regularly seek feedback from everyone affected by the policy regarding its effectiveness
- monitor the implementation, compliance, complaints and incidents in relation to this policy and ensure satisfactory resolutions have been achieved

- 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 as reasonable practicable of any changes to this policy or its procedures.

AUTHORISATION

The policy was adopted by the Approved Provider of Pinemont Pre-School on 18th June 2020.

REVIEW DATE: 18/10/20*

*This policy can be reviewed and changed at any time in response to advice being given by the Department of Health and Human Services or due to the needs of the service