



Heritage COVID-19 Safe Plan

Continuity management phase of the COVID-19 Pandemic

Heritage will continue to work with staff to adapt and promote safe work practices consistent with advice from health authorities to ensure a COVID-Safe workplace with exemplary hygiene measures that ensure the health and safety of staff and the service community.

Heritage will be prepared for the possibility of cases of COVID-19 in the workplace and will have procedures in place to respond immediately, appropriately, efficiently and consistently with advice from health authorities and the regulatory authority.

(in line with Safe Work Australia requirements)

As at April 2013



Contents

Risk Assessment	3
Staff Pre-Screening.....	3
Staff Arrival and On-Shift Protocols	4
Parent Pre-Screening	4
Children Pre-Screening.....	4
Parent/Children Arrival and Sign-in Procedure	5
Visitor/Tradesperson Arrival and Sign-in Procedure.....	5
Exclusion Guidelines.....	6
Full or Partial Service Closure.....	6
Procedure for a Staff Member, Child or Visitor Tests Positive to COVID-19	7
Procedure for a Household Contact of a Confirmed Case of COVID-19 who attends Heritage	7
Table of Preventative Practices.....	7
Public Health Information Monitoring.....	7
Vaccinations	7
Rapid Antigen Tests for Staff Working with Children	7
Excursions and In-house Extra Activities.....	8
Ventilation and Mixing of Cohorts	8
Supplies Check	9
Hygiene and Infection Control	9
Hand Washing	9
Environmental Cleaning	9
Cleaning where COVID-19 Exposure is Suspected or Has Occurred.....	10
Cough and Sneeze Etiquette	11
Service of Food.....	11
Physical Distancing.....	11
Face Masks.....	13
Social Events and Meetings.....	13
Lockdown and Evacuation Arrangements.....	13
Curriculum and Program Planning	13
Supporting Wellbeing.....	14
Family Engagement and Communication	15
Continuity of Educators.....	15
Communication and Consultation with Staff	15
Staff Returning to Work	16
Staff Training	17
Vulnerable Staff Members and Children.....	17



Risk Assessment

Heritage management has undertaken a thorough COVID-19 Risk Assessment in consultation with staff and identified possible risks and hazards in our learning environment and practices.

We have minimised risks as far as is reasonably practicable. In the current context of “living with COVID”, we have acknowledged that the risk of exposure to COVID-19 cannot be eliminated, and exposures will occur at the service. We continue to review control measures and address risks and have thorough procedures in place for when cases occur at the service. We have kept all staff and families informed on the changing COVID-19 related risks at our workplace and the control measures being implemented to minimise these risks.

We have identified children and adults with compromised immunity or complex health care needs. We have identified and established a suitable area for children who are displaying symptoms of COVID-19 to await pick up by parents/carer.

Staff Pre-Screening

- Our educators are strongly encouraged to take Rapid Antigen Tests when they have COVID symptoms, and tests are available at the service for use by staff.
- Staff must inform the service and ACT Health of a positive RAT result.
- Contact staff, including students and regular volunteers, must be double vaccinated against COVID-19.
- All staff, including students and regular volunteers, are strongly encouraged to have their COVID booster vaccinations and annual influenza vaccination in line with advice from their G.P.
- Staff are directed that they must immediately declare to the Nominated Supervisor if they:
 - Are experiencing any COVID-19 symptoms.
 - Have tested positive for COVID-19.
 - Are a household contact of a positive case.
- When a staff member is unwell or has a fever or cold/flu symptoms or loss of taste/smell that may indicate COVID-19, they are immediately sent home. They are advised to utilise hand sanitiser and wear a mask on their journey home, advised to take a COVID test and not permitted to attend work until acute symptoms resolve.



Staff Arrival and On-shift Protocols

- During heightened COVID-19 risk periods, staff are advised to travel to work in their own car if possible and discouraged from using public transport. If not feasible, they are advised, where practicable, to:
 - Travel at off peak times.
 - Wash hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or sanitise hands with an alcohol-based hand sanitiser before and after travelling on public transport.
 - Maintain physical distancing measures during any trip as far as practicable and adhere to mask mandates.
 - If car-pooling, only have 2 people in the car, with the passenger in the back, wear face masks, utilise external airflow (rather than recirculation mode on air-conditioning, open windows and frequently wipe down frequently touched surfaces.
- Staff are requested to maintain strict personal hygiene at all times including frequent hand washing, showering daily and wearing clean clothing daily.
- Staff must wash their hands thoroughly on arrival at the service with soap and water or utilise the alcohol-based hand sanitiser.
- Staff are reminded not to touch their eyes, nose and mouth.
- As far as practicable, staff are required to maintain a physical distance of 1.5m between each adult at the service.
- Staff use of non-student areas such as the staff room, office and kitchen is staggered to ensure staff do not gather in groups in these areas.
- Staff are asked to bring minimum personal items to the service and reminded to regularly disinfect frequently touched personal items such as mobile phones, keys etc.

Parent and Child Pre-Screening

- Families are provided with [up-to-date information on COVID-19](#) and [testing for children](#).
- Families are informed that they must immediately declare to the Nominated Supervisor if they or their enrolled child:
 - Are experiencing any COVID-19 symptoms
 - Have received a positive COVID test.
 - Are a [household contact](#)
- When a child is unwell or has a fever or [cold/flu symptoms that may indicate COVID-19](#), they are cared for in a separate area and parents/guardians (or emergency contacts if unavailable) are contacted to collect the child within 1 hour and preferably 30 minutes. The family is advised to test for COVID-19 and seek medical advice if symptoms are concerning. They must not return to the service until acute symptoms resolve.
- Parents/carers and any adult over the age of 12 is strongly encouraged to wear a mask while inside the Heritage building.
- Families must adhere to any modifications to the arrival and departure procedures.



Parent/Child Arrival and Sign-in Protocols During Heightened Risk Periods

- Parents/carers are required to text the service on arrival, check-in using the Qikkids touch screen and to leave a contact phone number for the day.
- Social distancing between adults is maintained at drop-off and pick-up as far as practicable.
- Parents/carers must sanitise their hands, and their children's hands on arrival using the hand sanitiser provided.
- Two staff members are rostered to greet families on arrival.
- A family/staff member wipes down their child's bag with disinfectant wipes upon arrival.
- Touch screens are wiped with disinfectant wipes after each use.
- The designated area for drop-off/pick-up area is clearly indicated.
- Signage clearly indicates drop off and pick up procedures for children.
- Consideration is given to families for whom English is their second language and written information translated as required.
- Consideration is given to avoid families queuing in car park and causing traffic congestion.
- A separate area is provided for families required to complete any additional paperwork, eg. parent and child health declaration forms, updating medication requirements for children.
- Families who are front line workers (doctors, nurses) are requested to have changed from their work uniform after completing their shift before collecting their child.
- Drop off and end of the day communication with families is minimised. Other methods of communication with families are encouraged such as communication books, phone messages, emails, video calls etc.
- If families require face to face communication, it is conducted outside where possible, physical distancing measures are implemented, and the time of the interaction/discussion limited where possible.

Visitor/Deliveries/Contractors/Tradesman Arrival Protocols During Heightened Risk Periods.

- Visitors to the service are reduced to a minimum,
- Volunteers, in-house extra activities, and non-essential in-house training programs are postponed.
- Approved construction work may go ahead in line with current government guidelines.
- All visitors to the service must sign the visitors book using their own pen or a sanitized Heritage pen.
- Clear guidelines are provided to all visitors/contractors to comply with the health measures in place at Heritage including the wearing of masks, physical distancing and hand hygiene.
- Handwashing facilities and disinfecting wipes are provided to contractors to ensure they wash their hands thoroughly upon arrival and wipe equipment where practicable.
- Vulnerable or high-risk people, the elderly and those with pre-existing medical conditions are excluded where practicable.
- Deliveries are regularly reviewed, and drop-off organised at a predetermined point outside the service with minimum physical interaction.
- Delivery drivers are requested to call ahead to notify the delivery time and alcohol-based hand sanitiser is used by staff before and after receiving any packages/ deliveries.



- Electronic paperwork/e-invoicing is utilised where possible.
- Interaction is minimised and alternatives to signatures utilised where possible, eg, contactless methods or use own pen or sanitised Heritage pen.

Exclusion Guidelines

Any staff member, child or visitor to the service who presents with any of the following, will be excluded from the service until symptoms resolve and they are well.

- A temperature over 37.5° C.
- Presents as 'unwell', or has [COVID symptoms](#), for example, unexplained or persistent cough, drowsy, shortness of breath, respiratory illness, runny nose, suffering with diarrhea or vomiting, has a persistent headache, loss of taste or smell etc.

Full or Partial Service Closure

- Should COVID variants continue to emerge, state and territory governments may re-impose restrictions on local communities to slow the spread of COVID-19. This may affect ECECs.
- The Chief Health Officer in each state/territory will provide notifications about [current restrictions](#) due to a COVID-19 outbreak.
- In line with the current context of "living with COVID" full closure will only be considered as a last resort and in the context of the level of absenteeism, workforce concerns and the number of children affected.
- The AHPPC and DESE will provide advice on how ECEC services can operate with [risk-mitigation measures](#) in place (unless instructed by the Public Health Unit to close).
- The service will follow the health and operational guidance provided by CECA at the ACT Education Directorate that is in place to support ECECs. This includes [how to respond to confirmed cases](#) that occur at Heritage (next section).
- If our service is directed to close on Public Health Orders due to COVID-19, standard processes for activating a period of local emergency will be followed.
- Required notifications to CECA, WorkSafe ACT and DESE will be made.

Staff Member or Child or Visitor Tests Positive to COVID-19

- Heritage will remind the Heritage community to monitor for symptoms and test for COVID-19 if they are feeling unwell and or have [COVID-19 symptoms](#)
- If a staff member, child or visitor tests positive to COVID-19, they or their parent/carer must advise the service as soon as possible that they have tested positive to COVID-19, and **not enter the service until acute symptoms resolve.**
- Where two or more cases of COVID-19 occur in a week at the service, the exclusion period will increase to 5 days from the positive test and until acute symptoms resolve.
- The service must follow the [step-by-step process provided by CECA](#) in the current operational guidance for responding to confirmed cases that occur at ECECs.
- The service must notify CECA within 24 hours via the [NQA ITS portal](#) of confirmed cases at the service **if the confirmed case was a child and they needed urgent medical attention.**
- Other notifications will be made as required such as to Worksafe ACT and DESE.



- The service must ensure enhanced COVID-safe cleaning is undertaken and all areas that may have been infected are cleaned and disinfected in line with the Infection Control Expert Group (ICEG) COVID Cleaning and Disinfection Guidelines for Schools. Deep cleaning will only be conducted by a specialist service on a case-by-case basis on advice from CECA and/or ACT Health as it can shut down a service for up to 2 days.

Procedure for a Household Contact of a Confirmed Case of Covid-19 at Service

- Children who are household contacts of a positive COVID-19 case may attend the service and will be closely monitored for symptoms.
- Staff who are household contacts may attend work, however, are strongly advised to wear a mask and immediately test for COVID-19 if they develop symptoms, and not return to the service until acute symptoms resolve.

Table of Heritage Hygiene and Preventative Strategies	
Public Health Information Monitoring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We refer to ACT Health, CECA, Safe Work Australia and other trusted authorities for advice as required.
Vaccination (COVID-19 and Influenza)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ACT Health continues to recommend two doses of the COVID-19 vaccination and further booster shots to reduce the risk of transmission within the community. • We require double COVID-19 vaccination for all staff, including students and regular volunteers who “work directly with children or are in regular contact with children”. • All families are encouraged to be immunised against COVID-19 in line with advice from their G.P. Note: Vaccination is now recommended for all those aged 5 years and over and for at risk children aged 6 months to under 5 years. • All staff and families are encouraged to obtain the seasonal flu vaccination as appropriate and advised they may have it on the same day as their COVID vaccine. • We encourage all families to ensure their children receive their free flu vaccinations as per the National Immunisation Program.
Rapid Antigen Testing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rapid Antigen Tests (RATs) are available for use by staff working directly with children. • The tests are provided free to staff and available on an as needs basis. • The adequate supervision of children is maintained in the face of staff absences and the service exercises regulation provisions for the replacement of qualified staff and early childhood teachers wherever possible. CECA is contacted if staffing requirements cannot be met.



<p>Excursions and In-house Extra Activities</p>	<p>Excursions and in-house extra activities are restricted during heightened COVID-19 risk periods and risk assessments conducted prior to any excursion/extra activity, taking into account:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The health, safety and wellbeing risks to children, educators, parents and members of the community, including those at high risk such as those with medical conditions. • The latest advice from ACT Health and CECA including information about the use of public spaces, outdoor gatherings and excursions to indoor environments such as shopping centres and libraries. <p>Hygiene on Excursions to Parks</p> <p>Where there is no limit on outdoor gatherings in the ACT and children may attend outdoor public spaces including parks, nature reserves and playgrounds, we will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research appropriate risk management and hygiene prior to attending local parks and playgrounds, such as researching washroom facilities in the area. • Implement additional health and hygiene practices during heightened risk periods, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Increased frequency of hand washing and/or hand sanitising. ◦ Disinfecting (wiping with disinfecting wipes) touching points on equipment prior to playing, when children attend public playgrounds, as deemed necessary. • Prepare hygiene kits as required to take on excursions that include antibacterial wipes for wiping equipment, and rubbish disposal options.
<p>Ventilation and Mixing of Cohorts/ Rooms</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We maximise fresh air as much as possible. • We consult with ANU Facilities and Services to discuss the building’s ventilation systems to ensure that appropriate settings are in place to maximise ventilation capacity and reduce transmission of COVID-19. • We have portable air purifiers in each room. • We reduce the use of recirculated air conditioning, noting it may not always be reasonably practicable to avoid using the air-conditioning system, particularly in situations where higher temperatures could pose an added risk such as when children are sleeping. • The use of fans is limited if there is not adequate air exchange with the outdoors (eg through a window) and we point them away from faces. • Ventilation is promoted in kitchens and bathrooms through the use of exhaust ventilation systems. • We consider ventilation during any transportation of children, eg, open windows and do not use air-conditioning in recirculated mode.



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outdoor play is increased while ensuring the benefits are balanced against sun safety and temperature considerations. • When indoors, we ensure doors and windows are open where possible for maximum ventilation and to create a cross breeze. • Indoor time is limited, and we gather only small groups indoors where practicable. • Children are asked to bring bento box style lunches where possible to enable more picnic style lunches outdoors. • Combining of room groups is kept to a minimum.
<p>Supplies Check</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supplies of all essential PPE and general hygiene supplies are checked before opening each day. This includes, but is not limited to, facemasks, gloves, sanitiser, cleaning materials and disinfectant, thermometers, anti-bacterial cleaning products, disinfectant and detergent. • When the service has inadequate supplies, we seek advice from ACT Health and consider closing the service.
<p>Hygiene and Environmental Cleaning</p>	<p>Hand Washing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Liquid soap and running water or alcohol-based hand sanitiser (with minimum alcohol content of 70%) is available on arrival and throughout the service, including near rubbish disposal. • Families, children and visitors must wash their hands or use alcohol-based on arrival at the service. • Staff and children must wash their hands thoroughly and often during the day, for 20 seconds, or use alcohol-based hand sanitiser, including before and after consuming food and drink, after going to the bathroom, after cleaning children’s faces, after rubbish disposal, touching deliveries etc. • Hands are dried on a paper towel, if washed, and the towel placed in the bin, or, in the case of sanitiser, allowed to air-dry. • Children are supervised while washing their hands and provided with increased hand washing guidance and encouragement. <p>Environmental Cleaning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All staff, families and children must strictly follow the COVID Safe Cleaning Plan as part of the enhanced Hygiene and Infection Control Policy to maintain a clean and hygienic environment on the premises during the COVID-19 pandemic. • Amenities including the staff room, communal areas, bathrooms and showers are industrially cleaned by a professional service at least daily. • We have increased the frequency of routine environmental cleaning on high-touch surfaces such as door handles, tables, light switches, in



common areas, hard-backed chairs, remote controls, play gyms, bathroom areas.

- Staffing arrangements consider the need for enhanced cleaning and hygiene practices during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Additional staff, or staff deployed from other roles within the service, are responsible for undertaking the cleaning requirements, not those staff who are working directly with the children.
- Any surfaces which may have been mouthed or in contact with bodily fluids are immediately cleaned with detergent and disinfectant as set out in the Hygiene and Infection Control Policy.
- In the Nursery, mouthed toys are removed immediately when the child is no longer engaged with the item and cleaned and disinfected.
- Staff are provided with cleaning agents and trained to clean down and disinfect indoor equipment immediately after use. Outdoor equipment is disinfected weekly.
- Closed bins are provided for the hygienic disposal of waste and rubbish, such as used tissues, immediately after use, including in washrooms.
- Staff are encouraged to regularly clean personal items such as phones and glasses and ensure work-station equipment such as keyboards are cleaned and wiped frequently using isopropyl alcohol wipes.
- The number of touch points for staff have been reduced, eg. by removing any magazines from the staff room and keeping doors open where possible.
- We wash and launder play items and toys, including washable plush toys, as per the Hygiene and Infection Policy, ensuring they are washed on the highest temperature setting according to the manufacturer's instructions and dried completely before use.
- Staff wear gloves when cleaning and wash their hands or use alcohol-based hand sanitiser before and after wearing gloves and dispose of gloves appropriately.

Cleaning where COVID-19 Case is Suspected or Occurs at the Service

- The service undertakes **enhanced COVID safe cleaning** (25% increase on regular COVID cleaning) where a case or suspected case of COVID-19 occurs in line with [ICEG guidelines](#).
- Staff ensure all items/resources/surfaces touched by a child/person who becomes unwell at the service with a high temperature or other COVID-19 symptoms, are immediately cleaned and disinfected to avoid possible cross contamination.



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff wear disposable gloves and a face mask to avoid possible contamination while supervising a sick child/person and cleaning any touched items and surfaces. • Note: As per current CECA operational guidelines, deep cleaning will only be conducted by a specialist service on advice from CECA/ACT Health as it can shut down the service for up to 2 days. <p>Cough and Sneeze Etiquette</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All staff and children are educated to avoid touching their eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands and to avoid close contact with others. • Staff and children strictly follow our procedures for coughing and sneezing, i.e, cough or sneeze into their elbow or directly into a tissue, then throw the tissue in a bin and immediately wash their hands with soap and water or, if water is not available, use hand sanitiser. • We use disposable tissues to wipe children’s noses, eyes or mouths and dispose of them in the closed bin provided immediately after use and wash hands immediately. • If children have thick nasal discharge or a persistent runny nose that requires constant wiping from educators, they are sent home until their nasal discharge has stopped and the child has returned to health. Note: Children are not excluded where they have a letter from their G.P. regarding an on-going, non-infectious, medical condition explaining their symptoms.
<p>Service of Food</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We follow any directions from The ACT Health Communicable Disease Control Unit in relation to changes in food preparation procedures. • We follow strict food preparation and handling procedures in accordance with the Food Safety Policy. • We encourage children across all rooms to bring bento box style lunches where possible to enable more picnic style lunches outdoors. • Supervision of children’s hygiene practices at mealtimes has been increased, both indoors and outdoors, to ensure correct handwashing before and after eating and that food is not shared. • We avoid children self-serving food from a shared plate as far as practicable.
<p>Physical (Social) Distancing</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We acknowledge that physical distancing between children and those interacting with children in an ECEC environment is not always practicable, however it is important for limiting transmission of COVID-19 and unnecessary physical interaction in ECECs should be minimised.



- Adults are encouraged to undertake physical distancing when interacting with other adults at the service. This applies to both staff and parents in areas such as staff rooms and when picking up or dropping off children.
- Staff are directed to space an appropriate distance apart to perform their duties, acknowledging that staff will have to come into contact with children.
- Gatherings are limited in common social spaces and indoor communal areas such as corridors, entry and exit points, resources/staff rooms, entry/ exits from rooms.
- Office staff are encouraged, where practicable, to use separate areas or separate themselves as much as possible from one another.
- Staff and visitors are encouraged to physically distance themselves in break rooms and when using shared spaces through increased signage and information.
- The use of outdoor space is encouraged as much as possible.
- The number of staff using the staff room at any one time is limited, and we stagger work breaks.
- The number of visitors to the service is reduced by cancelling in-house extra activities and non-essential staff training etc. during heightened risk periods.
- A risk assessment for performances and social events that bring children together from different rooms is undertaken during heightened risk periods, and we follow the advice of ACT Health.
- We encourage parents not to come into the service during heightened risk periods and modify arrival and departure routines to encourage physical distancing and reduced contact with families/carers at pick up and drop off as far as practicable.
- We modify the setup of the rooms and the placement of the activities to ensure a greater range of activities that encourage children to spread out.
- We limit the number of whole group activities and encourage small group plays.
- We set up more individual activities throughout the rooms. For example, instead of all books and blocks being on one shelf, we set them up in separate areas throughout the room, where possible.
- Children are seated at opposite ends of a table when playing and eating, as far as practicable.
- We avoid or mitigate the risk of activities involving higher transmission (eg when using equipment or sharing play dough, hygiene is maximized and play dough is regularly replaced).



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High-risk behaviours for generation of aerosols, such as singing and playing wind instruments occur outdoors as far as practicable. • We avoid any situation when children are required to queue such as for bathrooms or using equipment, and staff meal and play times.
<p>Face Masks</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff, families and visitors over 12 years are strongly encouraged to wear a mask when entering the premises, unless eating or if required to be removed for effective communication. • Staff and families are informed that during heightened risk periods: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ All masks are to be worn correctly to cover the nose and mouth with as few gaps as possible to maximise their protective benefits. ○ Older children are allowed to bring their own mask to wear during the day, if they wish. ○ All children’s masks must be clearly labelled with the child’s name. ○ Fabric masks worn by staff and children must be washed regularly. ○ Disposable masks are single use and must be disposed of after using once.
<p>Social Events and Meetings</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social events and tours of the service by prospective families do not go ahead during COVID-19 heightened risk periods. • COVID-safe risk assessments are undertaken for group celebrations during heightened risk periods and the service will abide by any government restrictions for groups size, square-metre allowance and other measures, and communicated to families. • Meetings are restricted during heightened risk periods, taking into account the latest advice from health authorities regarding physical distancing and limits on indoor gatherings of people. • We utilise zoom as an option for Committee meetings to allow office holders and ordinary members to participate remotely.
<p>Lockdown and Evacuation Arrangements</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We adjust evacuation and lockdown rehearsals to accommodate social distancing where practicable during heightened risk periods. • Rehearsals may take place in smaller groups or by talking the procedure through with children as an interim measure. • Any adjustments to lockdown and evacuation rehearsals are documented.
<p>Curriculum and Educational Program</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We run our Belonging Program in rooms as required and focus on children reconnecting to their social and physical environments on returning to Heritage after periods of quarantine/closure. • We run Health and Hygiene Programs through all rooms, including how hygiene practices for children is their best defence against COVID-19.



- We emphasise preventative measures such as handwashing, use of tissues, cough and sneeze techniques and limiting touching other children’s faces.
- Information provided to children about COVID-19 is age appropriate and sensitive to their emotional wellbeing.
- Educators initiate discussions with children about the importance of hygiene throughout the day, particularly at mealtimes.
- Consideration is given to transitions between learning experiences - washing hands, collecting hats, drink bottles, resources, using the bathroom - and how can these be managed to reduce queuing and the need for several adults to supervise.
- We understand some play practices could spread germs such as play dough and clay play and ensure hygiene and risk minimisation strategies are in place, including hand washing and regularly replacing the dough.
- Children’s emotional well-being is closely monitored by educators and any concerns communicated with parents and families.
- Educators utilise a variety of resources to support children’s understanding of COVID-19. Examples include:
 - The Department of Health’s videos: [Help Stop the Spread](#) and [Social Distancing](#)
 - ABC Kids Playschool’s [Hello Friends \(COVID-19 Special\)](#) and [Little J and Big Cuz: Everybody Wash’em Now](#)

Supporting Wellbeing

- We utilise relevant COVID-19 related resources and tools to recognise and support the mental health and wellbeing of the Heritage community during the COVID-19 pandemic including:
 - [ACT Health website](#)
 - [ACT Education Directorate](#)
 - [Head to Health](#)
 - [Be You Early Learning](#)
 - Emerging Minds – Community Trauma Toolkit
 - [Talking to children about the COVID-19 Pandemic](#)
 - [Talking to children about traumatic events or worries about the future](#)
 - Beyond Blue – [Coronavirus Mental Wellbeing Support Service](#)
 - Australian Childhood Foundation – [Our Response to COVID-19](#)
- Staff working from home are supported to [take breaks regularly](#) and to [stretch](#).



Family Engagement and Communication

- Positive interactions and relationships with children and their families are maintained.
- We provide reliable sources of information to share with families during the pandemic.
- We use a range of communication methods to ensure all families receive and understand key messages - emails, phone calls, newsletter, videos, zoom calls and the website.
- Signage at the front entrance of the service and around the service for parents and families has been increased providing directions, procedures and reassurance.
- We have increased the use of phone/video calls and emails to families to provide information about their child, particularly for families that are settling into the service or transitioning rooms and while we have modified drop-off/pick up procedures.
- Families are kept informed about CCS, allowable absences and payment of fees.
- Information is provided to families about their responsibilities for updating information to Centrelink through myGov.
- Families who may be eligible for Additional Child Care Subsidy - Temporary Financial Hardship are encouraged to contact [Centrelink](#).
- We remain consciously aware of families and children who may be more vulnerable or at risk due to the COVID-19 environment.

Continuity of Educators

- We maintain open communication with staff about continuity of employment opportunities at our workplace.
- One-on-one meetings with staff to discuss rosters and availabilities are regular and ongoing.
- Where possible, we have returned to similar rosters and placement of educators in particular rooms to provide continuity of care for children.
- Staffing rosters meet or exceed educator to child ratios.
- The adequate supervision of children is prioritised in the face of COVID-related staff absences. We exercise regulation provisions for the replacement of qualified staff and early childhood teachers wherever possible.
- CECA is contacted directly on (02) 6207 1114 or email ceca@act.gov.au if staffing requirements cannot be met.

Communication and Consultation with Staff

- We regularly consult with staff on health and safety matters relating to COVID-19 by revisiting our risk assessment and updating our COVID Policy and Procedures.
- Current control measures to minimise the risk of exposure to COVID-19 are regularly discussed and are reviewed as required.
- Following full/partial closure, enrolment numbers of children may decrease or increase. Control measures are adjusted to manage the change/s. For example, how and when families may be permitted to enter the service, when our service will begin in-house extra activities etc. Staff are involved in these decisions.
- We routinely communicate and consult with all staff about any modifications or updates to current policies or procedures that are in place to account for the pandemic conditions –



(Illness and Infectious Diseases; Hygiene and Infection Control; Work, Health and Safety Policy; Delivery and Collection of Children.

- An assessment of the adequacy of resources/facilities in the workplace for the welfare of all staff is routinely undertaken.
- We maintain regular consultation with staff about current work, health and safety measures implemented and any changes or additions that may need to be made to ensure the safety of all staff.
- If required, we consult with staff about changes to work rosters, meet and greet roles, staff meetings, training, assessment and rating.
- Limitations are placed on non-essential meetings, gatherings or training during heightened risk periods.
- Face-to-face methods of communication are replaced where practicable with email, phone/video calls or through the website during heightened risk periods.
- A conscious effort to maintain strong and supportive relationships with all staff members is made (including staff on leave).
- Up to date information from reliable sources is provided. Including:
 - Employment support packages through [Department of Education, Skills and Employment \(DESE\)](#)
 - [Safe Work Australia](#) recommendations for Work Health and Safety
 - Department of Health - [Australian Health Protection Principal Committee \(AHPPC\)](#)
 - Support agencies including counselling services (Beyond Blue, Be You – see Supporting Wellbeing)
- We understand staff who may be concerned about working during the COVID-19 pandemic and offer opportunities for discussions and support such as Beyond Blue resources.
- Reassurance is provided to staff that we are always working to eliminate or minimise risks to their health and safety in the workplace to help ease their concerns.
- Confidentiality and privacy laws are maintained at all times.
- We foster wellbeing initiatives as suggested by staff members and professionals within the Early Childhood Education and Care Sector (Mindfulness, Yoga, dance, music).
- All staff take required breaks during the day.
- Opportunities are provided to staff to engage in online professional development courses and workshops.
- Time is set aside for programming, mentoring sessions and capacity building.

Staff Returning to Work

- We meet with staff members returning to work to cooperatively plan for transition back to work from leave-long service, sick leave or other leave entitlements.
- Discussions may include possible changes that have been implemented to keep the workplace safe, healthy and free of COVID-19.
- Staff are required to re-familiarise themselves with any policies and procedures that have been amended due to the COVID-19 pandemic such as the COVID-19 Policy, Illness and



Infectious Diseases Policy, Hygiene and Infection Control Policy; WHS; Delivery and Collection of Children.

- Staff pre-screening protocols apply.
- Transition back to work for staff may include staggering start and finish times, change in work hours/rosters and scheduling of breaks to avoid crowding.

Staff Training

- All staff undertake COVID-19 infection control training. This may include the online infection control training module on the Department of Health website which covers the fundamentals of infection prevention and control for COVID-19. Although tailored for the health sector, this training is applicable to education and care settings.
- We follow the Safe Work Australia advice that any face-to-face training should only be held with spacing requirements implemented and adequate ventilation during heightened risk periods.
- We cancel non-essential training during heightened COVID-19 risk periods, and research on-line options offered through professional learning providers.
- We refer to the information about renewing first-aid, anaphylaxis and asthma qualifications during the COVID-19 pandemic on the ACECQA website.
- Where it is not possible to complete a specific qualification, e.g., a work placement is affected by COVID-19 control measures, we ensure the qualification/placement is completed as soon as reasonably practicable.
- Heritage educators are supported in professional learning to help children deal with trauma related to COVID-19 through resources, webinars and online modules.
- If unable to fulfill training requirements under the National Regulations, the Director contacts the Information and Enquiries team at the Early Childhood Directorate on 1800 619 113 for advice.

Vulnerable Staff Members and Children

- Children and staff members with compromised immunity or complex health care needs are identified.
- Where reasonable adjustments cannot be made, children with complex medical needs or a disability are supported to learn from home.
- We request that staff members with underlying health conditions seek medical advice from their health practitioner regarding additional measures required to protect themselves whilst at work (PPE, additional handwashing, less contact with infants or younger children requiring nappy changing).
- Families have been requested to update their child's medical management, risk minimisation and communication plans in consultation with their child's health practitioner-including Asthma Management Plans.
- All staff and children are encouraged to have the annual influenza vaccine if there are no contraindications to do so.
- Any revisions to the guidelines from the AHPPC are followed.