



COVID-19 Policy and Procedures

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National Quality Standard	Quality Area 2: Children’s Health and Safety Quality Area 6: Collaborative Partnerships with Families and Communities Quality Area 7: Governance and Leadership

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Attachment 1: Heritage Service COVID-19 Risk Assessment

Attachment 2: Communicating with Families Checklist

Attachment 3: Factsheet for Parents: Testing Children using a Rapid Antigen Test (RAT).

**List of Trusted Authorities**

National Coronavirus Health Information Line: 1800 020 080 (24 hrs a day, 7 days a week)
Call 131 450 for translating and interpreting service

ACT Government's COVID-19 Helpline: (02) 6207 7244 (8am and 8pm daily)

CECA (at ACT Education Directorate): (02) 6207 1114 or email ceca@act.gov.au

Health Direct: 1800 022 222

Prime Minister's Office: <https://www.pm.gov.au/media/national-cabinet-statement-63> -
Essential Workers Guidance

Australian Government: Department of Education Skills and Employment

1. <https://www.dese.gov.au/covid-19/childcare>
2. <https://www.dese.gov.au/announcements/early-childhood>
3. <https://www.dese.gov.au/covid-19/resources/national-framework-managing-covid19>

Australian Health Protection Principal Committee

1. <https://www.health.gov.au/committees-and-groups/australian-health-protection-principal-committee-ahppc>
2. <https://www.health.gov.au/news/australian-health-protection-principal-committee-ahppc-statement-on-covid-19-schools-and-early-childhood-education-and-care>

ACT Government

1. <https://www.covid19.act.gov.au>
2. <https://www.covid19.act.gov.au/restrictions/current-restrictions>
3. <https://www.covid19.act.gov.au/stay-safe-and-healthy/exposed-to-covid19>
4. <https://www.covid19.act.gov.au/stay-safe-and-healthy/rapid-antigen-test-rat-positive-result-registration-form>
5. <https://www.covid19.act.gov.au/travel/entering-the-act>

ACT Health

1. <https://health.act.gov.au/>
2. https://www.education.act.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0003/1935444/January-2022-Health-Guidelines-for-Schools-and-ECEC.pdf

ACECQA - <https://www.acecqa.gov.au/covid-19>

CECA (at ACT Education Directorate) – <https://www.education.gov.au>

1. <https://www.education.act.gov.au/early-childhood/information-on-novel-coronavirus-covid-19-for-early-childhood>
2. <https://www.education.act.gov.au/early-childhood/information-on-novel-coronavirus-covid-19-for-early-childhood/managing-a-confirmed-case-of-covid-19-in-education-and-care-services>
3. <https://www.facebook.com/CECAACT/>

Safe Work Australia

<https://covid19.swa.gov.au/covid-19-information-workplaces/industry-information/early-childhood-education/cleaning>

Health Direct:

1. <https://www.healthdirect.gov.au/coronavirus-covid-19-childcare-school-exclusions-faqs>
2. <https://www.healthdirect.gov.au/symptom-checker/tool/basic-details>

World Health Organisation - <https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019>



Policy Statement

- On 11 March 2020, The World Health Organization (WHO) declared the COVID-19 virus outbreak to be a “pandemic” (a Public Health Emergency of International Concern).
- On 12 March 2020, ACT Health confirmed the first case of COVID-19 in the ACT.
- On 16 March 2020, a Public Health Emergency was declared in the ACT.

Heritage Early Childhood Centre (Heritage) recognises it has a duty of care and legal responsibility to provide a safe and healthy environment that minimises the risk of any person at the service being infected by or spreading the COVID-19 virus. All early childhood education and care services (ECECs) are required to continue to meet their obligations under the National Quality Framework during the COVID-19 pandemic including prioritising the National Quality Standard Area 2: Children’s Health and Safety and meeting the requirements under the National Law and National Regulations. This includes the requirement to protect children from harm and hazard likely to cause injury and ensuring policies and procedures in relation to health and safety, hygiene and infection control and emergency risk management in place. Heritage also recognises the need to employ additional risk mitigation strategies to meet the unique requirements of the COVID-19 pandemic in the context of the Heritage service.

In recognition of the rapid spread of the disease and its’ variants, and the ongoing release of information from government authorities to meet the evolving circumstances of the pandemic, the Heritage Director/Nominated Supervisor will monitor and respond swiftly and correctly to changing advice from ACT Health and CECA (at the ACT Education Directorate), adapt procedures accordingly and communicate effectively with the Heritage community. COVID-19 is a notifiable condition under the ACT *Public Health Act 1997* and Heritage will report confirmed cases to ACT Health’s Communicable Disease Control (CDC) unit as soon as practicable on (02) 5124 9213 or (02) 9962 4155 (after hours) and CECA at ceca@act.gov.au

Heritage understands that ACT Health and CECA have procedures in place to respond to confirmed cases or exposures to confirmed cases that occur at ECECs and will provide support to high-risk outbreaks where significant transmission or workforce impacts have occurred in line with the National Framework for Schools and ECECs (14 January 2022). Heritage understands that full closure and return to offsite learning 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.

Heritage will continue to implement prevention practices to reduce the risk of transmission of COVID-19 and new variants at the service, using a multi-layered approach. This includes increasing the outdoor program; ensuring good air quality and maximum ventilation indoors; complying with mask and vaccination mandates; excluding for the recommended time any person (child, educator, other staff member, parent, contractor, visitor or volunteer) who is suspected to have, or has tested positive for, COVID-19, or has been assessed as a high or medium risk contact of a positive case, or is restricted due to recent travel (e.g. currently overseas travellers may not enter high risk settings for 14 days); enforcing strict hand and respiratory hygiene practices; and increasing the frequency of environmental cleaning and disinfecting high-touch areas in line with Safe Work Australia recommendations.

Heritage will provide relevant up-to-date information regarding COVID-19 to parents, families and educators sourced from trusted authorities including ACT Health and CECA as it becomes available. The Heritage COVID-19 Policy and Procedures and COVID Safe Plan will be readily available on the premises and online (Members Area of website) at all times.



Definitions

Isolation. A period of time that a person who has been diagnosed with COVID-19 stays away from other people.

Quarantine. A period of time that people who have been in contact with someone with COVID-19 have to stay away from others, such as by staying at home, even if they are well.

Pandemic. A Public Health Emergency of International Concern involving a disease that has spread around an entire country or the world.

Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR) test. A highly accurate test for diagnosing COVID-19 that consists of a nose and throat swab and is taken at a testing clinic. Recommended for young children under 2 years of age.

Rapid Antigen Test (RAT). A COVID test that can be utilised at home. It is not as accurate in those with no symptoms and can produce either false negative or positive results. RATs are also not recommended for children under 2 years of age.

Up to Date Vaccination Status. In order to have a COVID vaccination status of “up to date”, people are required to have received all doses of the COVID-19 vaccine as recommended for their age and health needs. For those over 16, this means receiving a booster within six months of their primary two vaccine course, unless they are medically exempt.¹

Variant. A form of COVID-19 that is different from the original virus. It is normal for a virus to mutate and new variants to emerge over time.

Timeline of Updates for ECECs

October 2021 – Returning to face-to-face Early Learning

From October 25, 2021, the ACT Government removed restricted access to ECECs reflecting achieving critical community vaccination rates and the easing of restrictions in the community. Heritage followed the *Guidelines for Schools and Early Childhood Education and Care services (ECECs) from 25 October 2021*² and continues to adhere to the Australian Health Protection Principles Committee’s (AHPPC) advice on minimising the potential risk of COVID-19 transmission in ECECs.³

December 2021: National Opening Strategy: The “Living with COVID” Context

From the end of December 2021, Australia moved from a national strategy of suppression with a goal of no community transmission, to a ‘living with COVID-19’ context, with the aim to minimise the disruptions to society and the community. The health goals shifted to controlling transmission in order to prevent serious illness, hospitalisation and death.

Emergence of the Omicron Variant

Community transmission rapidly increased following this transition with infections spreading faster than authorities could detect them due to the emergence of the more transmissible and milder Omicron variant. In response, authorities moved to prioritising vaccinations over containing the outbreak. The definitions of close/casual contacts were updated, and members of the community asked to assess the risk they pose to others themselves, rather than relying on the government tracking the disease.⁴

14 January 2022: The National Framework for Schools and ECECs

The National Framework for Managing COVID-19 in Schools and Early Childhood Education and Care was announced 14 January 2022⁵ and included six national guiding principles:

- 1. ECECs and schools are essential and should be the first to open and the last to close wherever possible in outbreak situations, with face-to-face learning prioritised.**
2. Baseline public health measures continue to apply.
3. No vulnerable child or child of an essential worker is turned away.

¹ <https://www.health.gov.au/news/atagi-statement-on-defining-up-to-date-status-for-covid-19-vaccination>

² https://www.covid19.act.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0007/1866031/Health-Guidelines-for-Schools-and-ECEC-including-OSHC_SWD-addendum_FINAL_300921-002.pdf

³ <https://www.health.gov.au/news/australian-health-protection-principal-committee-ahppc-statement-on-covid-19-schools-and-early-childhood-education-and-care>

⁴ <https://www.health.gov.au/news/ahppc-statement-on-the-omicron-public-health-implications-and-response-options>; <https://www.covid19.act.gov.au/stay-safe-and-healthy/exposed-to-covid19>

⁵ <https://www.dese.gov.au/covid-19/resources/national-framework-managing-covid19>



4. Responses to be proportionate and health risk based.
5. Equip ECEC services and schools to respond on the basis of public health advice and with support from public health authorities where required.
6. Wellbeing of children and education staff to be supported.

21 January 2022: ACT Health Guidelines for Schools and ECECs Term 1 Plan 2022

In response to the National Framework, the ACT Government published new Health Guidelines for Schools and Early Childhood Education and Care on 21 January and updated them 4 February.⁶ The public health objective for ACT schools and ECECs services moved to support the **overall health and wellbeing of children**. This reflected the Australian Health Protection Principal Committee's (AHPPC) acknowledgement that while putting risk mitigation strategies in place, schools and ECEC services are an essential service and should open and remain open wherever possible due to the significant overall health and wellbeing benefits to on campus face to face learning for children and young people.⁷

It was acknowledged that ECECs are associated with a different risk of COVID-19 transmission than schools due to the high level of contact required with and between children. As a result, ECECs must take the lead in responding to COVID-19 exposures at their individual services, and **identify high, medium, and low exposure risks (Refer to: Figure 2: Exposure Risk Assessment Tool)** and provide advice to their communities about the actions they should follow.

On January 17, **priority booster vaccinations were made available to ECEC educators**. In addition, **rapid antigen surveillance testing** was introduced for ECEC staff to reduce transmission (28 January).

Summary of Measures for ECECs Term 1 2022:

- Provision of rapid antigen tests: Two per week provided to staff working directly with children from the end of the first week of February for four weeks. To be taken voluntarily prior to attending the service.⁸ Positive tests must be reported to employer and ACT Health.
- Compulsory use of masks indoors for all adults attending and working in ECECs.
- Cohorting of children and staff and staggered programs to allow for this.
- Maximising outdoor learning and ventilation.
- Enhanced cleaning including high touch surfaces.
- Restrictions on excursions – only essential excursions may continue as part of a core component of the program.⁹

10 February: COVID-19 Vaccination Status Definition Update

On 10 February, National Cabinet changed the definition of COVID-19 vaccine status from “fully vaccinated” to “up to date”. People will be required to have all doses of the COVID-19 Vaccine as recommended for their age and health needs. For those over 16, this means they will be required to **get a booster within six months of their primary two vaccine course** to be considered “up to date, unless they are medically exempt.”¹⁰

25 February Facemask Update

While there will be a relaxation of mandatory face mask requirements across the ACT community, the mask requirements for early childhood education and care services remain unchanged. Face masks must continue to be worn by staff and visitors in all indoor spaces at early childhood education and care settings.

⁶ https://www.education.act.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0003/1935444/January-2022-Health-Guidelines-for-Schools-and-ECEC.pdf

⁷ <https://www.health.gov.au/news/australian-health-protection-principal-committee-ahppc-statement-on-covid-19-schools-and-reopening-australia>

⁸ <https://www.education.act.gov.au/public-school-life/covid-school-arrangements/school-advice> (FAQs)

⁹ https://www.education.act.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0004/1935445/Term-1-plan-2022.pdf

¹⁰ <https://www.health.gov.au/news/atagi-statement-on-defining-up-to-date-status-for-covid-19-vaccination>



COVID-19 Background

What is COVID-19?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coronaviruses are a group of viruses that can affect humans and animals. In humans, they can cause mild illness (common cold and gastrointestinal infections) or more severe illness, such as that caused by SARS (Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome) and MERS (Middle East Respiratory Syndrome). • ‘COVID-19’ or ‘Novel Coronavirus’ is caused by a new strain of coronavirus that has not previously been detected in humans. The outbreak was detected in Hubei Province, China in late Dec 2019¹¹ and has spread to many countries outside China. • Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome Coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2) is the official name of the virus that causes COVID-19.
What are the Symptoms?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Symptoms include, but are not limited to, fever, cough, sore throat, new loss of smell or taste and shortness of breath. Other symptoms can include fatigue, runny nose, chills, body aches and headache.¹²
When and How to Test for COVID-19?	<p>The ACT Government advises individuals to test for COVID-19 if they:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have any COVID symptoms, no matter how mild, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ A fever of 37.5 degrees or higher, or recent history of fever such as chills or night sweats. ○ Symptoms of a respiratory infection, such as sore throat, cough, runny or blocked nose, or shortness of breath. ○ Loss of sense of smell or taste. • Have had a high or moderate exposure to COVID-19 as per current definitions.¹³ • Are travelling domestically to a state or territory where it is a requirement. • Are travelling overseas or have returned from overseas. <p>PCR Tests and Rapid Antigen Tests (RATs)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR) test is a very accurate test and consists of a nose and throat swab and is taken at a testing clinic. It is recommended young children get a PCR test. • A Rapid Antigen Test (RAT) can also be utilised at home to confirm if a person is positive for COVID-19. RATs are not recommended for children under 2 years of age.¹⁴ <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ A positive RAT result must be reported using the ACT Health online form and the person must immediately isolate. ACT Health will provide a notification when the isolation period is over.¹⁵ ○ A RAT is not as accurate in those who do not have symptoms and can produce either false negative or false positive results.¹⁶ ○ If a RAT test is negative despite a person having symptoms, it is recommended to take another RAT in 24 hours or take a PCR test.
How is COVID-19 Transmitted?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • COVID-19 is transmitted from someone who is infected with the virus to others in close contact through contaminated particles spread by coughing/sneezing or by contact with contaminated hands or surfaces. These particles range from larger respiratory droplets to smaller aerosols (WHO, 2021). • Evidence suggests that the virus spreads mainly between people who are in close contact, typically within 1 metre (short-range).

¹¹ World Health Organisation, 2019

¹² <https://www.covid19.act.gov.au/stay-safe-and-healthy/symptoms-and-getting-tested/symptoms-of-covid-19>

¹³ <https://www.covid19.act.gov.au/stay-safe-and-healthy/exposed-to-covid19>

¹⁴ https://www.covid19.act.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0006/1947669/Factsheet-Parents-and-kids-Rat-test.pdf

¹⁵ <https://www.covid19.act.gov.au/stay-safe-and-healthy/rapid-antigen-test-rat-positive-result-registration-form>

¹⁶ <https://www.healthdirect.gov.au/blog/what-are-covid-19-rapid-antigen-tests>



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A person can be infected when aerosols or droplets containing the virus are inhaled or come directly into contact with the eyes, nose, or mouth. • The virus can also spread in poorly ventilated and/or crowded indoor settings, where people tend to spend longer periods of time as aerosols remain suspended in the air or travel further than 1 metre (long-range). • People may also become infected by touching surfaces that have been contaminated by the virus when touching their eyes, nose or mouth. • According to the WHO, data suggests that infected people appear to be most infectious just before they develop symptoms (namely 2 days before they develop symptoms) and early in their illness. People who develop severe disease can be infectious for longer. • While asymptomatic people can pass the virus to others, it is not yet clear how frequently this occurs. • The time of exposure to the virus and when symptoms first occur is 2-14 days (Department of Health (2020). Most people (3 in 4) who develop COVID-19 will do so in the first 7 days after they are exposed.¹⁷
<p>Breaking Transmission in ECECs</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ECECs are more at risk of transmission because of the close contact with, and between, young children. • Evidence indicates the new Omicron variant is substantially more transmissible than the Delta variant and more easily evades the current vaccinations. Reports suggest it is less severe, however vulnerable populations are still at increased risk of severe disease.¹⁸ • The same principles of preventing incursion of the Omicron variant through personal, environmental, and organisational actions apply to reduce the likelihood of outbreaks of disease in ECEC settings.¹⁹ • The ACT Government is providing Rapid Antigen Tests for staff working directly with children in ECECs to help reduce transmission of COVID-19 and identify anyone who is symptomatic as soon as possible. (See Prevention Strategies).
<p>How does the Vaccination Program Help?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Breaking chains of transmission within the community and limiting onward spread is critical to help protect people who may respond poorly to immunisation or may not be able to get vaccinated themselves, (ineligible children, immunocompromised people etc). • The COVID-19 Vaccination program increases the opportunity to achieve some degree of population (herd) immunity, and a faster easing of any social restrictions. There is also evidence that COVID-19 vaccination reduces the chance of transmitting the virus to others as viral load is lower.²⁰ • Herd immunity is easier to achieve with a vaccine that provides high level of long-term protection in most people and that prevents transmission of the infection between people. Vaccines that provide short-term protection require booster doses, making herd immunity harder to achieve.²¹ • The initial recommended COVID-19 vaccine program consists of two-doses of vaccine. However, evidence suggests immunity wains after 6 months and the Omicron variant has the ability to escape the protection from infection that two vaccine doses offer (due to several mutations within its' spike protein).²²

¹⁷ <https://www.covid19.act.gov.au/stay-safe-and-healthy/exposed-to-covid19>

¹⁸ <https://www.health.gov.au/news/ahppc-statement-on-the-omicron-public-health-implications-and-response-options>

¹⁹ <https://www.health.gov.au/news/australian-health-protection-principal-committee-ahppc-statement-on-covid-19-schools-and-early-childhood-education-and-care>

²⁰ <https://www.ncirs.org.au/covid-19/covid-19-vaccines-frequently-asked-questions>

²¹ <https://www.ncirs.org.au/covid-19/covid-19-vaccines-frequently-asked-questions>

²² <https://theconversation.com/whats-the-difference-in-protection-against-omicron-between-2-doses-and-3-doses-of-vaccine-176447>



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Two doses of the vaccine remains effective at preventing severe disease, hospitalisation, and death in most people over time.²³ <p>COVID-19 Booster Program</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The booster program commenced in November 2021 with original priority groups being offered the booster first. The booster is currently available 3 months after the second dose for all those over 16 years of age. Boosters are mandatory except for the aged-care sector. Emerging evidence suggests protection from symptomatic Omicron infection is restored to 60-75% two to four weeks after a Pfizer or Moderna booster dose. However, third-dose protection also wanes, down to 30-40% against Omicron infection after 15 weeks.²⁴ <p>COVID Vaccination Status</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> People will be required to have all doses of the COVID-19 vaccine as recommended for their age and health needs. For those over 16, this receiving a booster within six months of their two vaccine course to be considered “up to date,” unless they are medically exempt.²⁵
<p>How does Mask Wearing Help?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Masks are effective in reducing the spread of COVID-19 from an infected person (source case) and, to a lesser extent, protect a person from inhaling the virus.²⁶

Policy Aims

The Heritage COVID-19 (Novel Coronavirus) Policy and Procedures aims to ensure best practice, based on current advice from ACT Health and CECA, is implemented at the service in order to protect the health and safety of all stakeholders who access the service during the COVID-19 pandemic. Specifically, the policy aims to:

- Ensure the service meets all legislative requirements.
- Ensure public health information from government authorities is closely monitored and responded to rapidly and effectively.
- Detail the key protection strategies being implemented to minimise the risk of COVID-19 entering and spreading at the service.
- Ensure the roles and responsibilities of the Director, educators and Heritage community are clearly defined.
- Detail the key communication strategies that must be implemented, and the actions required, should a case of COVID-19 infection or exposure to a confirmed case occur within the Heritage community.
- Educate the Heritage community on COVID-19 with current and trusted information.

Scope

It is understood that there is a shared responsibility and accountability between all member of the Heritage community including the Director, Management Committee, educators, students, volunteers, families and all others involved in providing the Heritage service, to implement this policy as a matter of high priority due to the potential health risks of not doing so.

²³ <https://www.health.gov.au/initiatives-and-programs/covid-19-vaccines/is-it-true/is-it-true-are-covid-19-vaccines-not-effective>

²⁴ https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1050721/Vaccine-surveillance-report-week-4.pdf

²⁵ <https://www.health.gov.au/news/atagi-statement-on-defining-up-to-date-status-for-covid-19-vaccination>

²⁶ Refer to: AHPPC Statement, November 15 2021



Rationale

Heritage recognises it has a duty of care to take all reasonable, practicable steps to provide the Heritage community with a safe and healthy work environment that protects their physical and emotional wellbeing (*Work Health and Safety Act 2011*). In addition, the Heritage COVID-19 (Coronavirus) Policy and Procedures has been developed to comply with:

- *Public Health Act 1997 (ACT)* - Notifiable Conditions section.
- *Education and Care Services National Law Act (ACT) 2010*.
- *Education and Care Services National Regulations (ACT) 2011*.
- National Quality Standard for Early Childhood Education & Care 2011.
- WorkSafe ACT requirement to report notifiable incidents, including serious illness.
- Latest federal and local government mandates and best practice recommendations.
- Safe Work Australia COVID-19 Cleaning Guidelines for ECECs

Legislative Background

COVID-19 Public Health Directive Oct 2021	
COVID-19 Vaccine Mandate for all contact staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The COVID-19 vaccination mandate in the ACT (announced October 13) applies to all staff in education and care settings who “work directly with children or are in regular contact with children”, unless they are medically exempt. • All permanent, temporary, casually employed, contracted staff, volunteers and people delivering extracurricular activities such as music programs must be fully vaccinated. (Note: The mandate does not apply to people on site with no interaction with children, eg, delivery drivers, tradespeople/construction/maintenance workers). • Proof of vaccination must be provided to the service provider.
Education and Care National Law	
Section 165	Offence to inadequately supervise children.
Section 167	Offence to fail to protect children from harm and hazard likely to cause injury.
Section 169	Offence to fail to have the number of appropriately qualified educators available for the children as prescribed under the national regulations.
Section 174(2)(c)	Offence to fail to notify regulatory authority of any circumstances at the service that pose a risk to the health, safety or wellbeing of a child attending the service.
Education and Care National Regulations	
Regulation 168(2)(h)	There must be policies and procedures in relation to health and safety including providing a child safe environment, dealing with infectious diseases, and emergency and evacuation.
Regulation 77	The service must implement adequate health and hygiene practices and safe practices for handling, preparing and storing food.
Regulation 88	Reasonable steps must be taken to prevent the spread of the infectious disease at the service. In an event of an infectious disease at a service the parent/authorised emergency contact of each child being educated must be notified of the occurrence as soon as practicable.
Regulation 100	A risk assessment must be conducted before an excursion in accordance with regulation 101 and before an authorisation is sought under regulation 102, unless the excursion is a regular outing, and a risk assessment has been conducted.
Regulation 103	The premises and all equipment and furniture used in providing the education and care service must be safe, clean and in good repair.
Regulation 109	The service must ensure adequate, developmentally and age-appropriate toilet, washing and drying facilities are provided for use by children, and the location and design of the toilet, washing and drying facilities enable safe use and convenient access by the children.



Regulation 110	The service must ensure that the indoor spaces used by children at the education and care service premises: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • are well ventilated; and • have adequate natural light; and • are maintained at a temperature that ensures the safety and wellbeing of children.
Regulation 158	The service must ensure that a record of attendance is kept including the full name of each child attending the service; the date and time each child arrives and departs; and is signed by one of the following persons at the time that the child arrives and departs: The person who delivers and collects the child from the education and care service premises or the Nominated Supervisor or an educator.
Regulation 173(2)(g)	A notice must be displayed at the service where there is an occurrence of an infectious disease at the premises.
Regulation 175(2)(b)(c)	Notice must be given of any circumstances at the service (b) requires the approved provider to close or reduce the number of children attending the service for a period. (c) that pose a risk to the health, safety or wellbeing of a child attending the service within 7 days of the event.
Regulation 264(5)6)	General qualifications for educators--centre-based services: (5) On request by the Regulatory Authority, an approved provider of a centre-based service must demonstrate that the approved provider has taken into account the best interests of children (including provision of adequate supervision) in relation to replacement of qualified educators. (6) This regulation does not apply if the qualified educator is absent from the centre-based service: (a) in case of an unexpected absence, for more than 5 consecutive days; or (b) in case of pre-arranged leave for recreation, illness or other personal leave, for any period.
National Quality Standard	
Quality Area 2: Children's Health and Safety	Standard 2.1: Each child's health and physical activity is supported and promoted. Element 2.1.2: Effective illness and injury management and hygiene practices are promoted and implemented. Standard 2.2: Each child is protected. Element 2.2.1: At all times, reasonable precautions and adequate supervision ensure children are protected from harm and hazard. Element 2.2.2: Plans to effectively manage incidents and emergencies are developed in consultation with relevant authorities, practised and implemented.
Quality Area 6: Collaborative Partnerships with Families & Communities	Standard 6.1: Respectful relationships with families are developed and maintained and families are supported in their parenting role. Element 6.1.3: Families are supported. Current information is available to families about the service and relevant community services and resources to support parenting and family wellbeing.
Quality Area 7: Governance and Leadership	Standard 7.1: Governance supports the operation of a quality service. Element 7.1.2. Systems are in place to manage risk and enable the effective management and operation of a quality service. Element 7.1.3. Roles and responsibilities are clearly defined, understood and support effective decision making and operation of the service.



Summary of Key Responsibilities

Role	Responsible for:
<p>Approved Provider (Management Committee)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensuring there is a COVID-19 Policy and Procedures in place that is easily accessible to families and educators, regularly reviewed, and meets all legislative requirements and best practice recommendations from government authorities. • Ensuring the COVID-19 policy clearly defines the roles and responsibilities of the Director, educators and Heritage community to reduce the risk of COVID-19 entering or spreading at the service and manage a positive case/outbreak at the service. • Supporting the Director to ensure hand washing and sanitising facilities are provided, hygienic, adequately stocked and in good working order. • Supporting the Director to ensure Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), including face masks and gloves is available. • Where there is a confirmed case of COVID-19 or potential exposure in the Heritage community, supporting the Director to co-operate with directions from health authorities and maintaining confidentiality.
<p>Director/ Nominated Supervisor</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensuring the COVID-19 Policy and Procedures is up to date with the latest advice from government authorities and readily accessible to the Heritage community. • Ensuring a thorough risk assessment is undertaken and continually reviewed to identify and mitigate the risks of introducing and transmitting the COVID-19 virus at the service in line with the latest advice from ACT Health and CECA. (Attachment 1). • Keeping up to date with public health information from trusted authorities and rapidly applying government mandates and advice. • Ensuring staff working directly with children provide evidence of being double-vaccinated against COVID-19, unless medically exempt, and are informed this is part of their Terms of Employment. • Strongly encouraging staff working with children to receive a COVID-19 booster shot as soon as they are eligible and to provide evidence of their COVID vaccination status being “up to date”.²⁷ • Strongly encouraging staff working with children to have the annual influenza vaccination, unless medically exempt. • Adhering to all exclusion and quarantine requirements and enforcing self-quarantine as directed by the ACT Health. • Distributing RAT tests to staff working with children as per the current ACT Health guidelines and informing staff to immediately isolate and inform the service if the test is positive. • Ensure all families, staff and visitors are aware they must report to the Director/Nominated Supervisor by email or phone and follow current testing, quarantine and isolation restrictions if they: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Are experiencing any COVID-19 symptoms. ○ Are a household/high-risk contact of a person who has been diagnosed with COVID-19.²⁸ ○ Have undertaken, or are planning to undertake, any interstate or overseas travel that has restrictions in place. Currently international travelers must take rapid antigen test (RAT) or PCR test within 24 hours of arrival in Australia, quarantine until a negative test result is received and may not enter high risk settings for 14 days²⁹

²⁷ <https://www.education.act.gov.au/early-childhood/information-on-novel-coronavirus-covid-19-for-early-childhood/vaccinations-for-staff-in-education-and-care-services>

²⁸ <https://www.covid19.act.gov.au/stay-safe-and-healthy/exposed-to-covid19>

²⁹ <https://www.covid19.act.gov.au/travel/entering-the-act> and <https://www.covid19.act.gov.au/restrictions/current-restrictions>



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If children become sick with COVID-19 symptoms while at the service, following the enhanced Illness and Infection Control Policy and Procedures to ensure they are isolated, appropriately supervised, and families are contacted immediately. Ensuring families are informed to take an appropriate COVID test (PCR tests are preferred for those under 2) and to quarantine in line with current guidelines (Figure 2). • If staff or visitors become unwell at the service with COVID-19 symptoms, following the enhanced Illness and Infection Control Policy and Procedures to ensure they are isolated until they are able to travel home safely or be picked up from the service. Ensuring they are informed to take a COVID test and quarantine in line with current guidelines. • Consulting with ANU Facilities and Services to discuss ventilation systems and maximising airflow at the service where possible. • Ensuring the service is clean and hygienic and reminding the Heritage community of the Hygiene and Infection Control Policy and Procedures such as through posters on handwashing and respiratory hygiene. • Ensuring educators strictly following enhanced hygiene and environmental cleaning procedures as set out in this policy to minimise the risk of being infected by or spreading COVID-19. • Ensuring tissues, hand sanitiser, PPE and cleaning products are in stock and available for use. • Arranging for any maintenance or ordering of supplies to ensure there are adequate hygiene and hand washing facilities. • Ensuring excursions, incursions and service events are risk assessed in line with current ACT Health guidelines such as limits on outdoor/indoor gatherings. • Modifying arrival and departure routines to support physical distancing. • Ensuring emergency contact information details are recorded for each child whenever they attend the service. • Ensuring educators consider the setup of rooms and implement small group play, staggered mealtimes and outdoor play opportunities whenever possible. • Ensuring emergency after-hours contact information for the service is kept up to date via NQAITS. • If there is a confirmed COVID-19 case or potential exposure scenario, cooperating with all directions from ACT Health and CECA and maintaining confidentiality, including thorough cleaning in line with Safe Work Australia guidelines. • Notifying the Management Committee immediately if a member of the Heritage community needs to self-isolate or quarantine due to having or confirmed case of COVID-19 or having a high-risk exposure. • Ensuring required notifications are made to all relevant authorities within the defined timeframes. • Making appropriate arrangements so that staff who need to self-isolate or quarantine are supported to stay at home. • Ensuring supervision and qualification requirements are maintained at all times in accordance with NQF requirements. • Ensuring that current and reliable information on the COVID-19 pandemic is communicated to families and staff. • Being aware of the responsibility of the service to support the continuity of learning of children during periods of quarantine. • Investing in wellbeing resources to support the Heritage community.
<p>Educators</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing evidence of being double-vaccinated against COVID-19, unless medically exempt, and understanding this is part of their Terms of Employment. • Considering their duty of care and the health and safety benefits of receiving a COVID-19 booster shot as soon as they are eligible and providing evidence of their COVID vaccination status being “up to date”.



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Considering their duty of care and the health and safety benefits of having the annual influenza vaccination, unless medically exempt. • Taking at least two RAT tests a week in line with current guidance and isolating and informing the service immediately if the test is positive. • Staying home if feeling unwell or have any COVID symptoms. • If become unwell at the service with COVID-19 symptoms, following the enhanced Illness and Infection Control Policy and Procedures and isolating until they are able to travel safely home or be picked up from the service. Ensuring they take a COVID test and quarantine in line with current guidelines. • Notifying the Director immediately they have a confirmed case of COVID-19, or have been in high-risk contact with a confirmed case of COVID-19, such as a household contact or have recently travelled overseas/interstate and restrictions are in place. • Complying with mask wearing requirements for ECECs and maintaining physical distancing while interacting with other adults at the service. • Strictly following the service’s regular and enhanced hygiene and infection control procedures and keeping the service clean and hygienic. • Assisting in regularly cleaning and disinfecting high-touch surfaces. • Following strict food preparation and handling procedures and avoiding food sharing. • Washing hands regularly throughout the day and supervising children while washing their hands. • Avoiding touching their face, handshakes or other close physical contact, cover coughs and sneezes with an elbow or tissue, and disposing of tissues appropriately. • Considering the setup of rooms and implementing small group play, staggered mealtimes and outdoor play opportunities whenever possible. • Maintaining supervision levels and sun protection requirements when the outdoor program is increased. • Ensuring high risk behaviours for generation of aerosols, eg, singing and playing wind instruments occur outdoors. • Being aware of activities and play practices that could spread germs such as play dough and clay play and ensuring children have their own portion and/or discard it after play. • Including COVID-19 related experiences in the educational program including health and hygiene, wellbeing and belonging programs, and ensuring children voices are evident through jottings/observations. • If children display COVID symptoms while at the service, following the enhanced illness procedures to ensure they are isolated, supervised, and families are contacted immediately and advised to take a COVID test (preferably a PCR test for those under 2) and follow current guidelines. • Reporting to the Director/Responsible Person if they observe another staff member displaying any symptoms. • If there is a confirmed case of COVID-19, cooperating with directions from the health authorities and maintaining confidentiality. • Bringing relevant issues and concerns to the attention of the Director.
<p>Families</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Considering their duty of care to the Heritage community and the health and safety benefits of being up to date with their COVID-19 and influenza vaccinations in line with current ACT Health guidelines and advice from their G.P. • Strictly following all regular and enhanced hygiene and infection control practices to minimise the risk of being infected or spreading COVID-19 including cleaning hands with an alcohol-based hand sanitised or with soap and water on arrival and departure and following good respiratory hygiene when coughing or sneezing.



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Following current guidelines from the ACT Health, including testing and self-quarantining as required if exposed to COVID-19;³⁰ complying with mask requirements at ECECs; and informing the service if they or their child have a confirmed case of COVID-19, or are a high-risk/household contact of a confirmed case, or have recently travelled overseas/ interstate and there are restrictions in place.³¹ • Following the enhanced Illness and Infectious Diseases Policy and keeping children home when they are unwell or experiencing COVID-19 symptoms, however mild, and immediately collecting their child from the service if requested to do so due to concerns for their health. • If they or their children have any COVID symptoms, no matter how mild, taking an appropriate COVID test (PCR tests are recommended for under 2's) and following current quarantine advice. If a RAT test is negative, taking another RAT in 24 hours, or having a PCR test to exclude COVID-19 and ensuring they remain at home until a negative result is received and their symptoms resolve. (Refer to: Figure 2). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ If children have thick nasal discharge/persistent runny nose that requires constant wiping, understand they are sent home until their nasal discharge has stopped and the child has returned to health. ○ Children will not be excluded where they have a letter from their G.P. regarding an on-going, non-infectious, medical condition explaining the symptoms (See also: Restrictions on Entry to Heritage).³² • Maintaining physical distancing while interacting with other adults at the service. • Providing emergency contact details for each day their child attends the service and complying with modified arrival and departure procedures. • Following hand washing and hygienic food preparation measures at home. • Cleaning and disinfecting high touch surfaces regularly at home (door handles, car seats, mobile phone, toys, dummies).
<p>Students and Regular Family Volunteers</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing evidence of being double vaccinated against COVID-19, unless medically exempt, and understanding this is part of their Terms of Employment. • Considering their duty of care to the Heritage community and the health and safety benefits of receiving a COVID-19 booster vaccination as soon as eligible to do so and providing evidence of their COVID vaccination status being “up to date”. • Considering their duty of care to the Heritage community and the health and safety benefits of having the annual influenza vaccination, unless medically exempt. • Following all regular and enhanced hygiene and infection control practices to minimise the risk of being infected by or spreading COVID-19 including cleaning hands with an alcohol-based hand sanitiser or with soap and water on arrival and departure and following good respiratory hygiene. • Staying home if feeling unwell. • If they have any COVID symptoms, no matter how mild, taking a RAT or PCR test and following current quarantine advice. If the RAT test is negative, taking another RAT in 24 hours, or having a PCR test to exclude COVID-19 and ensuring they remain at home until the negative result is received and their symptoms resolve. • Following current directions from ACT Health and informing the service if they have a confirmed case of COVID-19 or been in high-risk/household contact with a confirmed case of COVID-19 or have recently travelled overseas/interstate and there are restrictions in place. • Bringing relevant issues and concerns to the attention of the Director.

³⁰ <https://www.covid19.act.gov.au/stay-safe-and-healthy/exposed-to-covid19>

³¹ <https://www.covid19.act.gov.au/travel/entering-the-act>

³² <https://www.healthdirect.gov.au/coronavirus-covid-19-childcare-school-exclusions-faqs>



Strategies and Practices

Risk Assessment

The Director/Nominated Supervisor will ensure there is an effective and **systematic risk management process** in place regarding the COVID-19 virus. The risk assessment will identify possible risks and hazards in the service environment and mitigate those risks as far as reasonably practicable, as required under National Law 167 (**refer to:** Heritage Risk Assessment: Appendix 1).

When undertaking the risk assessment, the Director/Nominated Supervisor will:

- **Consider the hierarchy of control measures** for infection control that are relevant to mitigate the risks in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic and the Heritage service.
 1. Elimination: eg: instigating remote learning in some scenarios. **Note: In the context of community transmission risk cannot be eliminated and exposures will occur.**
 2. Substitution: eg: excluding all persons displaying COVID-19 symptoms.
 3. Engineering: eg: enhancing ventilation, cleaning and physical distancing.
 4. Administrative: eg: altering routines and groupings to be more COVID safe.
 5. PPE: eg: implementing mask mandates.
- **Apply the three principles** for minimising disease in ECECs.
 1. Reduce opportunities for introduction of the virus.
 2. Reduce transmission of the virus if it is introduced.
 3. Early use of containment measures if spread occurs.
- **Focus on minimising the risk of exposure to COVID-19** as far as is reasonably practicable, recognising that most centre-based early childhood education and care workers are unable to perform their job from home.
- **Incorporate the latest COVID-19 risk mitigation recommendations** from The Australian Health Protection Principal Committee and CECA where relevant to Heritage.^{33 34}
- **Consider each child's health, safety and wellbeing** when considering effective and practicable control measures and strategies, taking into account:
 - Ventilation requirements.
 - Health and safety of children, including adequate supervision and ratios.
 - Children's social-emotional needs.
 - Outcomes for children, eg, ensuring quality interactions with each child are not limited.
- **Ensure control measures are evaluated** for effect, cost-effectiveness, feasibility, sustainability, and adverse consequences.
- Recognise that due to the constant changes in managing the Heritage service during the pandemic, the approach to risk management must be **ongoing and fluid**.
- **Constantly re-evaluate priorities** in relation to COVID-19 and strictly and consistently enforce the practices in this policy to minimise the risk of spreading COVID-19.
- **Review control measures in consultation with staff members.**

Scenario Planning and Procedures

- The Heritage service including the Management Committee, Director, Nominated Supervisors, Room Leaders and educators must be prepared for various COVID-related scenarios including the possible event where a child or staff member, family member or visitor has a confirmed case of COVID-19 or is a high-risk contact of a confirmed case.
- With the current significant number of COVID-19 cases in the ACT, Heritage recognises it is highly likely that positive cases and outbreaks will be seen at the service.
- It is acknowledged that ECECs are associated with a different risk of COVID-19 transmission than schools due to the high level of contact required with and between children, and must take the lead in assessing high, medium and low exposure risks to confirmed or potential cases at the service.
- Heritage must work in collaboration with CECA as required and provide advice to the Heritage community about the actions they should follow for each scenario.

³³ <https://www.health.gov.au/news/australian-health-protection-principal-committee-ahppc-statement-on-covid-19-schools-and-reopening-australia>

³⁴ <https://www.education.act.gov.au/early-childhood/information-on-novel-coronavirus-covid-19-for-early-childhood> - Section on Risk Management.



Scenario 1: Person is Diagnosed with or Exposed to a Confirmed Case at Heritage

- **Where a staff member/child/visitor is diagnosed with COVID-19** and may have attended Heritage during their infectious period (2 days before they started having symptoms or tested positive - whichever came first), they or their parent/carer must notify the service as soon as possible.
- **Where a staff member/child/visitor is exposed to a confirmed case at the service or through a household contact**, they or their parent/carer must notify the service as soon as possible.

Note: CECA will directly contact Heritage in the event that a confirmed case of COVID-19 has occurred at Heritage and CECA becomes aware of it prior to Heritage.

Procedure

The Director/Nominated Supervisor will follow the process summarised in Figures 1, 2 and 3. Specifically:

- **Contact CECA** for advice via email ceca@act.gov.au or call 6207 1114 during office hours.
- **Complete an exposure risk assessment** for contacts of the positive case utilising the ACT Health Exposure Risk Assessment Tool (Figure 2). Examples of exposure scenarios include:
 - **High Risk:** Staff member/child is a household contact of a confirmed case or a child has been in the same room and had close contact with the positive case over a prolonged period.
 - **Moderate Risk:** Staff member of child has interacted closely with the positive case in an outdoor environment.
 - **Low Risk:** Staff member of child has interacted with a positive case briefly or while socially distanced at drop off or pick up.
- **Ensure all contacts of the positive case and exposure risks are recorded.** This may be done utilising the Risk Assessment Spreadsheet available on the CECA website³⁵ and must include but is not limited to:
 - The name of the case, whether they are a child/staff/visitor and the date of their test.
 - Their period of attendance whilst infectious (2 days prior to symptoms or the test, whichever is earlier).
 - Where they were located in the service during this time and how long for.
 - Any high-risk factors or activities.
 - The children, staff and any visitors who came into contact with the positive case in line with information requirements in Figure 3. This may be done utilising software reports on child attendance, staff rosters, visitor registers, the Check In CBR app etc;
 - The exposure risk level of the contacts (high, medium, low).
- **Under the guidance of CECA, undertake required communication** with the Heritage community and other stakeholders (visitors/contractors, allied health staff etc).
 - Directly contact people in the Heritage community determined to be high-risk or moderate contact and inform them of the actions to be taken (Figure 2).
 - Utilise communication templates from ACT Health for distribution to families and staff who are low risk/not contacts and inform them of the actions to be taken (Figure 2).
- **Discuss with CECA the risks and operational viability of the service**/parts of the service remaining open. ACT Health will assist in complex cases.
- Where CECA issues an administrative action and determines that the service must fully or partially close, follow the action and **ensure cleaning is undertaken in line with ACT Health/Safe Work Australia** COVID cleaning guidelines **Refer to:** The Decision to Close.
- Ensure that all high and moderate risk contacts comply with ACT Health's testing and quarantine requirements before returning to the service.
- Ensure those identified as having had a high or moderate risk of exposure **follow current ACT Health testing and quarantine requirements. Refer to: Figure 2.**
- **Ensure all notification requirements have been made. Refer to:** Notification Requirements.

³⁵ <https://www.education.act.gov.au/early-childhood/information-on-novel-coronavirus-covid-19-for-early-childhood/managing-a-confirmed-case-of-covid-19-in-education-and-care-services>



Figure 1: Flowchart for Managing Exposure to a Confirmed Case of COVID-19

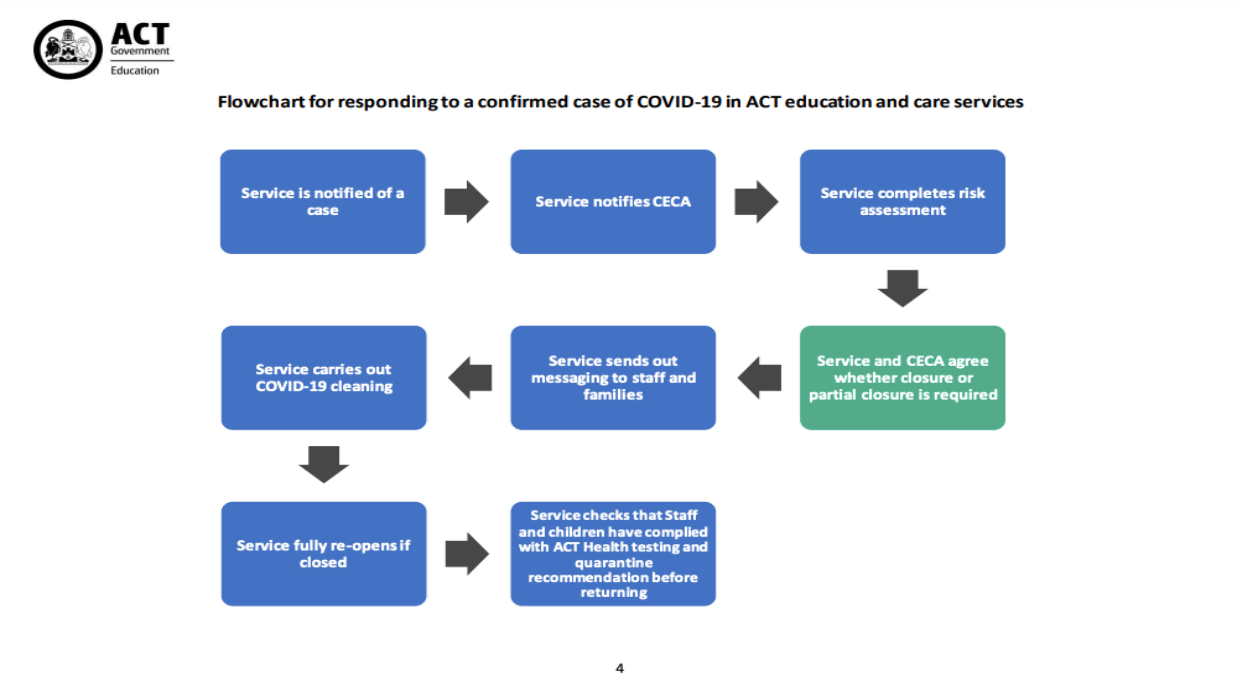


Figure 2: COVID-19 Exposure Risk Assessment Tool

ECEC COVID-19 Exposure Risk Assessment Tool		
CONTACT TYPE		
Low Risk Scenario	Moderate Risk Scenario	High Risk Scenario
Brief or distanced physical contact that is: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Outdoors OR Direct physical contact (<1.5m) for less than 15 minutes with masks worn¹ OR Brief/passing contact (e.g. in a corridor, use of same toilet facilities) but no other contact OR Physical distancing (>1.5m) was maintained in a large, well ventilated, indoor space (e.g. >100m²) with mask worn 	Direct physical contact (<1.5m) with mask worn ¹ <ul style="list-style-type: none"> AND For more than 15 minutes OR Physical distancing (>1.5m) was maintained in an enclosed indoor space for up to 1 hour without masks worn OR Physical distancing (>1.5m) was maintained in an enclosed indoor space for up to 4 hours with mask worn OR Ate one meal together indoors 	Direct Physical contact (<1.5m) without mask worn ¹ (e.g. shaking hands, hugging, playing directly with case) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> OR Extended (>15 minutes) contact in the same enclosed space without mask worn² (e.g. small office, staff room, medical room) OR Prolonged contact in an enclosed space (>4hrs cumulative time during the exposure window provided) regardless of mask use (e.g. classroom, large staff room/office space) OR Interactions through other high-risk activities (e.g. unmasked indoor sport, indoor choir, indoor group instrument playing) OR Ate several meals together indoors
LOW RISK CONTACT	MODERATE RISK CONTACT	HIGH RISK CONTACT
ACTIONS		
ECEC Service Actions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify the date/s and time/s, and locations (e.g. classroom, office space) of exposure. Develop list of affected people at the service and inform these people of their potential exposure and actions to take (refer to low risk template letter). Actions for people exposed <p>Follow the advice on the COVID-19 website: Information for people exposed to COVID-19 - COVID-19 (act.gov.au).</p> ACT Health guidance for low risk contacts: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitor closely for symptoms of COVID-19. Get a test if any symptoms develop, no matter how mild, and isolate until a negative result is received and symptoms resolve. 	ECEC Service Actions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify the date/s and time/s, and locations (e.g. classroom, office space) of exposure. Develop list of affected people at the service and inform these people of their potential exposure and actions to take (refer to moderate risk template letter). Actions for people exposed <p>Follow the advice on the COVID-19 website: Information for people exposed to COVID-19 - COVID-19 (act.gov.au).</p> ACT Health guidance for moderate risk contacts: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have a COVID-19 test (RAT or PCR) as soon as possible and quarantine until a negative result is received. Monitor closely for COVID-19 symptoms for the 14 days following the exposure. Get a test if they develop any symptoms and isolate until receive a negative result and symptoms resolve. 	ECEC Service Actions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify the date/s and time/s, and locations (e.g. classroom, office space) of exposure. Develop list of affected people at the service and inform these people of their potential exposure and actions to take (refer to high risk template letter). Actions for people exposed <p>Follow the advice on the COVID-19 website: Information for people exposed to COVID-19 - COVID-19 (act.gov.au).</p> ACT Health guidance for high risk contacts: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quarantine for seven days (date of last exposure is day zero). COVID-19 tests (RAT or PCR test): Initial (as soon as aware a close contact) and on or after day six. May return after completion of seven days quarantine² AND have a negative day six test result. Monitor closely for COVID-19 symptoms for the 14 days following the exposure. Get a test if they develop any symptoms and isolate until receive a negative result and symptoms resolve.

¹ Mask wearing refers to the contact wearing a mask appropriately (ie over the nose and mouth, with a good fit)

² Follow the guidance on the [COVID-19 website](#) from days 8 to 14 post exposure, including not attending high risk settings and avoiding mass gatherings

³ This ECEC COVID-19 Risk Assessment Tool is only applicable for the "infectious period"



Figure 3: Summary of Actions Required by Heritage in Response to a COVID-19 Exposure

<p>On confirmation of a child, staff member or visitor with COVID-19 was at Heritage during their infectious period.</p>
<p>The Heritage Director/Nominated Supervisor must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Record the date of the positive test for the child, staff member or visitor and confirm whether they attended Heritage during their infectious period. Note: The infectious period is two days before someone started having symptoms or tested positive (whichever came first). If the person was not at the service during their infectious period, no assessment is required. • Identify date(s) and locations (eg room, office, other) of potential exposure. • Use the Risk Assessment Tool (Figure 2) to identify who may have been exposed. • Inform relevant people who attend Heritage (families, staff other stakeholders) that there has been a potential exposure on relevant dates. • For those identified as having had moderate or high-risk exposure, notify family and/or staff members. • Provide information to all to monitor closely for symptoms, reiterate not to attend if have symptoms (via template letter provided by Education Directorate/CECA). • Regular reporting to Education Directorate through CECA on exposures as per process outlined in the Guide to Managing Confirmed Cases of COVID-19 in ACT Early Childhood Education and Care Services.³⁶ • Weekly reporting from Education Directorate to ACT Health as per agreed template.
<p>People Exposed to COVID-19 must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Follow the advice on the COVID-19 website: Information for People Exposed to COVID-19.³⁷ • If identified as having had a high-risk exposure, follow the guidance for quarantine for 7 days from the last date of exposure (day of exposure is day zero). May return to Heritage after completion of seven days quarantine AND have a negative day 6 test (PCR or RAT) result. Note: For household contacts: Day zero is the day the first person in the household received a positive test. • Monitor closely for symptoms of COVID-19. • If not required to quarantine, continue to attend at Heritage as long as do not have any COVID-19 symptoms. • Get a test if any COVID-19 symptoms develop, no matter how mild, and isolate until a negative result is received and symptoms resolve. <p><i>If they have symptoms and test negative on a RAT, they should take another RAT in 24 hours, or have a PCR test to exclude COVID-19 and should remain in at home until this result is received and their symptoms resolve.</i></p>

Source: ACT Health COVID-19 Risk Assessment Tool for ECECs (22 February 2022).

³⁶ <https://www.education.act.gov.au/early-childhood/information-on-novel-coronavirus-covid-19-for-early-childhood/managing-a-confirmed-case-of-covid-19-in-education-and-care-services>

³⁷ <https://www.covid19.act.gov.au/stay-safe-and-healthy/exposed-to-covid19>



Scenario 2: Child/Staff member/Visitor has a high temperature/COVID-19 symptoms before entering Heritage.

Procedure

The Director/Nominated Supervisor will:

- Ensure families and staff are aware of the procedure to notify the service if they have any COVID-19 symptoms by email or phone before entering the service.
- Ensure any visitor, child or staff member who has a fever or symptoms of COVID-19/acute respiratory infection (cough, sore throat, runny nose, shortness of breath, sudden loss of smell/taste), is not permitted to enter the service.
- Advise the person to take a COVID test and quarantine in line with current guidelines, and to seek immediate medical attention if symptoms are serious.
- Refer to ACT Health and CECA for guidance and prepare for a full or partial closure of the service.
- Undertake thorough cleaning of the premises in line with current ACT Health advice and Safe Work Guidelines (**refer to:** References).
- If the person tests negative on a RAT, advising them to take another RAT in 24 hours or have a PCR test to exclude COVID-19 and to remain at home until a negative result is received **and** their symptoms resolve. **Note:** PCR tests are preferred for children under 2. (**Refer to:** Appendix 3).

Scenario 3: Child/staff member/Visitor has a high temperature or COVID-19 symptoms while at the service.

Overarching Procedure

The Director/Nominated Supervisor will:

- Ensure all families and staff are aware they must report to the Director/Responsible Person if they:
 - Are experiencing any COVID-19 symptoms.
 - Have been, or have potentially been, exposed (high or moderate risk) to a person who has been diagnosed with COVID-19 or is suspected to have COVID-19 (even if have not yet been tested),
 - Have undertaken, or are planning to undertake, any travel interstate or overseas and there are restrictions in place.³⁸
- Ensure all staff are aware they must report to the Director/Responsible Person if they observe another staff member displaying any symptoms.
- Ensure that when a visitor, child or staff member presents with COVID-19 symptoms while at the service, the policies and procedures relating to illness and infectious disease are followed. **Refer to:** next section.
- Ensure educators follow the current guidance from ACT Health and Safe Work Australia for thorough cleaning of venues with a confirmed or potential case of COVID-19.

Procedure for Children

The Director/Nominated Supervisor/Educators will:

- Where a child presents with COVID-19 symptoms while at the service, ensure the child's family is contacted and asked to collect them as soon as possible.
- Advise the family to test and quarantine in line with current requirements (Figure 2), and to call a General Practitioner or Healthdirect on 1800 022 222 for immediate medical advice if symptoms are concerning.
- Ensure the child is cared for in an area of the service that been identified as appropriate to isolate staff/children who may become sick and is separate from other children.
- Ensure the child is supervised by a staff member wearing a mask and gloves. **Note:** There is no need for the supervising staff member to quarantine unless they have symptoms themselves or the child is confirmed to have COVID-19.

³⁸ <https://www.covid19.act.gov.au/travel/entering-the-act>



- If the child tests negative on a RAT, advising them to take another RAT in 24 hours or have a PCR test to exclude COVID-19 and to remain at home until the negative result is received **and** their symptoms resolve. **Note:** PCR tests are preferred for children under 2. (**Refer to:** Attachment 3).

Procedure for Staff and Visitors/Volunteers

The Director/Nominated Supervisor will:

- Ensure visitors or staff with symptoms are asked to stop work and sent home immediately, advised to travel directly home.
- Ensure the staff member, visitor or volunteer is advised to test and quarantine in line with current guidelines (Figure 2) and to call a General Practitioner or call Healthdirect on 1800 022 222 for medical advice if symptoms are concerning.
- Ensure sick staff and volunteers isolate in an appropriate space away from others, sanitise their hands and wear a mask while waiting to return home.
- If the person tests negative on a RAT, advising them to take another RAT in 24 hours or have a PCR test to exclude COVID-19 and to remain at home until a negative result is received **and** their symptoms resolve.

Note: Where staff or children have other medical reasons for recurrent symptoms that are similar to COVID-19, a letter from the GP is sufficient to allow return to Heritage without returning a negative COVID test.³⁹

Scenario 4: Child/Staff member/Visitor has returned from travel in the last 14 days.

The Director/Nominated Supervisor will:

- Inform all families and staff they must report to the Director/Responsible Person if they have undertaken, or are planning to undertake, any travel interstate or overseas where there are restrictions in place.
- Ensure anyone returning from overseas/interstate/restricted areas is not permitted to enter the service until they have completed current testing and quarantine requirements and returned a negative test if required.⁴⁰ **Note:** Currently international travelers must take a rapid antigen test (RAT) or PCR test within 24 hours of arrival in Australia, quarantine until a negative test result is received and may not enter high risk settings for 14.⁴¹
- If returned travellers develop any COVID-19 symptoms, advise them to test and quarantine in line with current ACT Health guidelines and seek medical attention if symptoms are concerning.

Scenario 5: Visitor/child/staff member is incubating COVID-19 and not symptomatic.

The Director/Nominated Supervisor will:

- Ensure all protection strategies are strictly implemented at the service to minimise the spread of COVID-19 including surveillance rapid antigen testing. **Refer to:** Table of Protection Strategies.

³⁹ <https://www.healthdirect.gov.au/coronavirus-covid-19-childcare-school-exclusions-faqs>

⁴⁰ <https://www.covid19.act.gov.au/travel/entering-the-act> and <https://www.covid19.act.gov.au/travel/overseas-travel>

⁴¹



Notification Requirements

Where a child or staff member is diagnosed with COVID-19 and the family or staff member notifies the service:

The Director/Nominated Supervisor must notify:

- **ACT Health's Communicable Disease Control Unit** as soon as practicable and within 24 hours on phone: 02 5124 9213 (business hours) (or by paging (02) 9962 4155 (after hours).
- **CECA at the Education Directorate** as soon as practicable, and **preferably within 24 hours**, using the [National Quality Agenda IT System \(NQAITS\)](#) or through direct contact via phone: 02 6207 1114 or email: ceca@act.gov.au.
 - A confirmed case of COVID-19 is deemed to be a circumstance that poses a risk to the health, safety or wellbeing of a child under Regulation 175(c) and is required to be notified to the Regulatory Authority within 7 days.⁴² **Note:** In the portal, select: Risk: health, safety and wellbeing, then select Reason: health emergency COVID-19.
- **WorkSafe ACT** as soon as practicable and within 24 hours via phone: 6207 3000 or email: worksafe@act.gov.au

Where Heritage is required to close (full or partially) under an Emergency Action Notice (EAN) from CECA:

The Director/Nominated Supervisor must notify:

- **CECA at the Education Directorate** by submitting a Notification of Incident under Reg 175(b) indicating closure using the [National Quality Agenda IT System \(NQAITS\)](#). Ensure the notification is made within 7 days and **preferably within 24 hours**.
- Ensure the information entered clearly identifies the closure is due to a case of COVID-19. **Note:** Once this option has been ticked the system will open up section to confirm closure is due to Covid positive or suspected case.
- **WorkSafe ACT** as soon as practicable and within 24 hours via phone: 6207 3000 or email: worksafe@act.gov.au
- **The ACT Department of Education, Skills and Employment (DESE).**
- **Services Australia** via the Provider Entry Point (PEP).
https://proda.humanservices.gov.au/prodalogin/pages/public/login.jsf?TAM_OP=login&ERROR_CODE=0x00000000&URL=%2F&OLDSESSION=

Where the Director and Management Committee elects to close/partially close Heritage as a precaution (eg suspected cases or potential exposures):

The Director/Nominated Supervisor must notify:

- **CECA at the Education Directorate** immediately for advice and cleaning guidelines, and ensure the required notifications are made as above and National Regulation 88 adhered to which requires education and care providers and services to:
 - Ensure that reasonable steps are taken to prevent the spread of the infectious disease at the service.
 - Ensure that a parent or an authorised emergency contact of each child being educated and cared for is notified of the occurrence as soon as practicable.

Notifying Stakeholders.

In line with advice from CECA, the Director/Nominated Supervisor must notify all stakeholders of confirmed cases and their exposure risk assessment status, and any closures or re-opening of the service. Stakeholders include:

- Staff and Families
- Workplace Unions
- Contractors
- External agencies / Community services / allied health workers.

⁴² <https://www.acecqa.gov.au/resources/applications/notification-types-and-timeframes>



The Decision to Close

- In line with The National Framework for Schools and ECECs, closure and return to offsite learning will only be considered as a last resort and in the context of the level of absenteeism, workforce concerns and the number of vulnerable students affected.
- The Director/Nominated Supervisor, in consultation with the Heritage Management Committee, may make the decision to fully or partially close the service, or they may be directed by CECA via an Emergency Action Notice (EAN) to do so, for example there is significant transmission of COVID-19 in the Heritage community or workforce impacts have occurred.
- CECA will determine full or partial closures on a case-by-case basis, including assessing any risks to the health, and welfare of staff and children.
- The Director/Nominated Supervisor may apply for a Community Child Care Fund (CCCF) Special Circumstances grant if the service has had to close, or partially close, due to COVID-19, including in the absence of stay-at-home orders.

Fees, Child Care Subsidy (CCS) and Allowable Absences

- The Director/Nominated Supervisor will ensure all contact details are up to date in the Child Care Subsidy System in order to stay up to date with important announcements via the Provider Entry Point (PEP).⁴³
- If the Heritage service or a room is advised/directed to close on public health advice as a result of COVID-19, the service will waive the Gap fee for families.
- If a child is required to quarantine due to being exposed to or diagnosed with COVID-19, normal fees will be charged.

Addition Absences following Activation of Standard Local Emergency Procedures

- From 13 July 2020, should the service be directed to close due to COVID-19 (or a fire, flood or other local emergency), standard local emergency procedures will be followed.
- Activating a period of local emergency allows families access to additional absences if the initial allowable absence days per child per financial year have been used.⁴⁴
- Additional absence days claimed due to COVID-19 related reasons, do not require a medical certificate.
- **Note:** An extra 10 allowable absences are being provided during the 2021-22 financial year, bringing the total of allowable absences from 42 to 52.⁴⁵

Unlimited Allowable Absences for January and February 2022

- Unlimited allowable absences are being provided throughout January and February 2022, in response to the Omicron wave.
- Families will not have to use their 52 allowable absences for the 2021-22 financial year during this period.
- These absences will be automatically applied in the Child Care Subsidy system.

Absences at the Start or End of Enrolment

- From 1 January to 28 February 2022, the Department of Education, Skills and Employment (DESE) will pay Child Care Subsidy for any absences prior to a child's first day, or after their last day for enrolments that begin or end during this period. The absences can be taken for any reason.
- From 1 to 31 December 2021 and 1 March to 30 June 2022, DESE will also pay CCS for any absences in the 7 days prior to a child's first, or after their last day, if the child or a member of their immediate household must isolate due to COVID-19.

⁴³ <https://www.dese.gov.au/early-childhood/announcements/more-covid19-support-early-childhood-sector>

⁴⁴ <https://www.dese.gov.au/child-care-package/ccp-resources-providers/help-emergency>

⁴⁵ <https://www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/child-care-subsidy-if-your-child-absent-from-child-care?context=41186>



Re-opening Procedures for the Service or Rooms

The service will re-open only after approval from the ACT Government has been given. If closed due to an Emergency Action Notice from CECA, this will be when the Director/Nominated Supervisor has met the following conditions and there are no other risks preventing reopening:

- Provided evidence of meeting thorough cleaning requirements of the service premises in line with the requirements identified by ACT Health.
- Provided advice to staff that they cannot return to the service until they have provided evidence that they have finished quarantines and/or been cleared to work via negative Covid-19 test results.
- Sighted or collected evidence that all children/families that were required to test have received a negative COVID-19 test result and have finished quarantine before they return to the service. (**Refer to:** COVID Test Declaration Form).
- Adhered to all internal policy and procedures in relation to Covid-19 including communication with families.
- Prepared communication to advise stakeholders of re-opening of the service and guidelines to follow.
- Demonstrated that adequate staffing arrangements and reasonable precautions have been taken to mitigate risks associated with COVID-19 transmission/spread.
- The Director/Nominated Supervisor, in consultation with the Management Committee, has made a notification of reopening on the NQAITS portal.

Protection Strategies

Heritage will utilise the following protection/mitigation strategies to minimise the risk of any person at the Heritage service being infected by or spreading the COVID-19 virus.

Table of Heritage Protection Strategies	
Public Health Information Monitoring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In recognition of the rapid and consistent release of information related to COVID-19, the Director will refer to ACT Health, CECA, Safe Work Australia and other trusted authorities for advice as required.
Vaccination (COVID-19 and Influenza)	<p>COVID-19 Vaccine Mandate for Staff Working with Children The Director/Nominated Supervisor will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enforce the COVID-19 vaccination directive in the ACT (October 2021) that applies to all staff in education and care settings who “work directly with children or are in regular contact with children”. Refer to: Legislative Background. • Ensure existing or new educators, support staff or volunteers provide proof of being double vaccinated in the form of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ An online Immunisation History Statement, or ○ A COVID-19 digital certificate from the Australian Immunisations Register. • Ensure that, if unable to meet the vaccination mandate, educators provide a certificate from a medical practitioner, in the form approved by the ACT Chief Health Officer, certifying that, because of specific and detailed medical contraindication, they cannot have a COVID-19 vaccination. • Where educators do not comply with the requirements listed above, terminate their employment according to the Employment and Recruitment Policy. <p>COVID Booster Vaccination Program The Director/Nominated Supervisor will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage all families to be “up to date” with their COVID-19 immunisation status as soon as they are eligible, and in line with advice from their G.P.⁴⁶ Note: COVID-19 vaccines are free for all

⁴⁶ <https://www.covid19.act.gov.au/stay-safe-and-healthy/vaccine>



	<p>regardless of their Medicare or visa status.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage all staff to receive their COVID-19 booster vaccination in line with ACT Health guidelines. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Note: On 17 January 2022, the ACT Government announced that priority COVID-19 booster vaccinations will be available to early childhood educators working directly with children. From 24 January, educators are able to get their booster dose if they are over the age of 18, have had two doses of COVID-19 vaccine and their second dose of COVID-19 vaccine was at least 3 months ago. Priority appointments are available from the Canberra Airport vaccination clinic. Assist staff in the process by enabling them, where practicable, to attend vaccination appointments during paid time. Note: Transport Canberra provides free transport on bus/light rail for anyone travelling to any ACT Government COVID-19 vaccination clinic.⁴⁷ <p>Influenza Vaccination Program The Director/Nominated Supervisor will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage all staff and families to obtain the seasonal flu vaccination as appropriate and advise them they may do it on the same day as their COVID vaccine. https://www.health.gov.au/initiatives-and-programs/covid-19-vaccines/is-it-true/is-it-true-do-i-have-to-wait-between-getting-the-influenza-flu-and-covid-19-vaccine.⁴⁸ Encourage all children to receive free flu vaccinations as per the National Immunisation Program. (Refer to: Immunisation Policy).
<p>Rapid Antigen Testing</p>	<p>The Director/Responsible Person in Charge will ensure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> At least two Rapid Antigen Tests (RATs) are available per week for use by staff working directly with children prior to attending the service and for a period of 4 weeks. Note: The tests are voluntarily and available to Heritage from the end of the first week of February 2022. Staff are aware that positive tests must be reported to Heritage and ACT Health.⁴⁹ The impact of timing when using RATs is considered. For example, timing must enable rosters to be amended to reduce unnecessary staffing shortages. Testing just prior to attending a shift may not allow for this planning to take place. The adequate supervision of children in the face of staff absences and exercise regulation provisions for the replacement of qualified staff and early childhood teachers wherever possible (Refer to: Rationale and Legislative Background). CECA is contacted directly on (02) 6207 1114 or email ceca@act.gov.au if staffing requirements cannot be met.
<p>Restrictions on Entry into Heritage</p>	<p>The Director/Nominated Supervisor will encourage staff and families to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Follow any travel, testing and quarantine restrictions imposed by the Commonwealth and ACT Governments in response to COVID-19.⁵⁰ <p>The following persons will not be permitted to enter the Heritage premises until they are cleared to do so after meeting current testing and quarantine requirements:</p>

⁴⁷ <https://www.covid19.act.gov.au/stay-safe-and-healthy/vaccine/book-a-vaccination-appointment#Free-public-transport-to-ACT-Government-COVID-19-vaccination-clinics>

⁴⁸ <https://www.health.gov.au/initiatives-and-programs/covid-19-vaccines/is-it-true/is-it-true-do-i-have-to-wait-between-getting-the-influenza-flu-and-covid-19-vaccine>

⁴⁹ <https://www.covid19.act.gov.au/stay-safe-and-healthy/symptoms-and-getting-tested/when-to-get-tested>

⁵⁰ <https://www.covid19.act.gov.au/restrictions/current-restrictions>



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Those who have returned from interstate or overseas until they have completed the current testing and quarantine requirements and returned a negative test if required.⁵¹ Note: Currently international travelers must take rapid antigen test (RAT) or PCR test within 24 hours of arrival in Australia, quarantine until a negative test result is received and may not enter high risk settings for 14 days.⁵² • Those who have been in close contact with a confirmed case of COVID-19 in the last 14 days and have a moderate to high risk of becoming infected.⁵³ • Those with a fever or other COVID-19 symptoms. Note: Exclusion applies regardless of COVID-19 vaccination status. • High risk people, including the elderly, during heightened COVID-19 risk periods. <p>Exclusion of Children, Staff and Visitors who are Unwell</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As per the Illness and Infectious Diseases Policy, children, staff, family members and visitors who are unwell and are reasonably suspected to have a communicable disease will be excluded from the service until they are cleared by a doctor to return. • If children, staff or visitors have any COVID symptoms, no matter how mild. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ They must take a COVID test and follow current quarantine advice (Figure 2). Note: If they test negative on a RAT test, they will be advised to take another RAT test in 24 hours or have a PCR test to exclude COVID-19 and ensure they remain at home until the negative result is received AND their symptoms resolve. ○ Note: Children will not be excluded where they have a letter from their G.P. regarding an on-going, non-infectious, medical condition explaining the symptoms. • Families must also not bring their child to Heritage if: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Have had a temperature/fever in the last 24 hours. (48 hours if there is more than one case at the service). ○ Have had vomiting or diarrhoea in the last 36 hours (48 hours if there is more than one case at the service). ○ Started a course of antibiotics in the last 24 hours. ○ They have been given medication for a fever prior to arriving at Heritage. ○ They appear unwell and unable to participate in normal activities or require additional attention.⁵⁴ <p>The Director/Nominated Supervisor reserves the right to refuse entry to staff, parents, family members or visitors if an instance of COVID-19 is suspected due to the symptoms being displayed.</p>
<p>Visitors, Deliveries and Contractors</p>	<p>The Director/Nominated Supervisor will ensure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • During heightened COVID-19 risk periods, non-essential visits to Heritage will be risk-assessed and cancelled or postponed if deemed necessary during heightened COVID-19 risk periods. This includes non-essential staff training, incursions etc. but does not include approved construction work that is required during the day. • Contractors and delivery services to use electronic paperwork where possible and minimise physical interaction.

⁵¹ <https://www.covid19.act.gov.au/travel/entering-the-act> and <https://www.covid19.act.gov.au/travel/overseas-travel>

⁵² <https://www.covid19.act.gov.au/restrictions/current-restrictions>

⁵³ <https://www.covid19.act.gov.au/stay-safe-and-healthy/exposed-to-covid19>

⁵⁴ Refer to: Illness and Infection Control Policy



	<p>Educators must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wash their hands or utilise hand sanitiser after touching deliveries. <p>Visitors must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Comply with the public health measures in place at Heritage including wearing of masks, physical distancing, hand hygiene and use of the CBR Check in app.
<p>Excursions and Incursions</p>	<p>Excursions and incursions will be restricted during heightened COVID-19 risk periods and risk assessments will be conducted prior to any excursion/incursion, 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.⁵⁵ <p>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, educators will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement additional health and hygiene practices including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased frequency of hand washing and/or hand sanitising. Disinfecting (wiping) touching points on equipment prior to playing, when children attend public playgrounds, as deemed necessary. Prepare hygiene kits to take on excursions that include antibacterial wipes for wiping equipment, and rubbish disposal options. Reflect on intentional teaching opportunities and ways that can support children to talk about appropriate risk management and hygiene prior to attending local parks and playgrounds, such as researching washroom facilities in the area.
<p>Staffing Arrangements and Working from Home</p>	<p>The Director/Nominated Supervisor will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Where possible, encourage to work from home during heightened risk periods of COVID-19, eg. bookkeeper, and organise appropriate working from home arrangements.⁵⁶ Ensure adequate supervision of children is maintained at all times as per legislative requirements and quality standards.⁵⁷ Ensure arrangements are in place to manage increased staff absences and for replacing those who may arrive at work sick or receive a positive result on a RAT test. Apply for a temporary staffing waiver if unable to meet the legislated qualification requirements due to COVID-19. Contact the CECA by phone on (02) 6207 1114 or email ceca@act.gov.au for advice as required. Note: Existing regulations have provisions in place for the replacement of qualified staff and early childhood teachers if they are absent or not working directly with children (Regulations 264 and 265).⁵⁸
<p>Ventilation and Mixing of Cohorts/Rooms</p>	<p>The Director/Nominated Supervisor will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Include ventilation in the service's COVID-19 Risk Assessment. Assess the service's current ventilation capacity and maximise fresh air as much as possible.

⁵⁵ <https://www.covid19.act.gov.au/restrictions/current-restrictions>

⁵⁶ Refer to: Staffing Arrangements Checklist

⁵⁷ Refer to: Rationale

⁵⁸ Refer to: Employment and Recruitment Policy



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contact ANU Facilities and Services to discuss the building’s ventilation systems and ensure that appropriate settings are in place to reduce transmission of COVID-19. • Ensure air purifiers are utilised where possible in each room. • Limit or reduce the use of recirculated air conditioning. Note: 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.⁵⁹ • Limit the use of fans if there is not adequate air exchange with the outdoors (such as through a window) and point them away from faces. • Promote ventilation of kitchens and bathrooms through the continued use of exhaust ventilation systems and where possible have them on for two hours after children have left for the day.⁶⁰ • Consider ventilation during any transportation of children, eg, open windows and do not use air-conditioning in recirculated mode. • Consider the effect on supervision levels and sun protection requirements when the outdoor program is increased. <p>Educators will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase the use of outdoor play areas while ensuring the benefits are balanced against sun safety and temperature considerations. • When indoors, ensure doors and windows are open where possible for maximum ventilation and to create a cross breeze. • Limit indoor time and gather only small groups indoors. • Ask children across all rooms to bring bento box style lunches where possible to enable more picnic style lunches outdoors. • Keep the combining of room groups to a minimum. (See also: Physical Distancing). • Ensure high-risk behaviours for generation of aerosols, such as singing and playing wind instruments occur outdoors. (See also: Curriculum and Program Planning).
<p>Supplies Check</p>	<p>The Director/Nominated Supervisor will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comprehensively check supplies of all essential PPE and general hygiene supplies before opening each day. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ 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, seek advice from ACT Health and consider closing the service.
<p>Attendance Records</p>	<p>The Director/Nominated Supervisor will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure attendance records are maintained for all children, parents, staff, students, volunteers and visitors at all times, including a contact phone number. • Ensure contact details of each child’s parent/guardian/authorised emergency person, are recorded for every day a child is in attendance, to ensure that a person will be available to collect the child at any time across the period of care being provided. • Ensure all visitors to the premises sign the Visitors Book using their own pen or a sanitised pen provided by Heritage and check in on the CBR check-in app. each time they arrive on the premises.

⁵⁹ Refer to: Sleep, Rest and Relaxation Policy

⁶⁰ <https://www.education.act.gov.au/early-childhood/information-on-novel-coronavirus-covid-19-for-early-childhood>



Hygiene and
Environmental
Cleaning

Hand Washing

Heritage recognises that enhanced personal hygiene for children, staff and parents, including regular hand washing is critical to protecting the health of the Heritage community.

The Director/Nominated Supervisor will:

- Ensure 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.
- **Ensure their 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.⁶¹

Educators must:

- Ensure children are supervised while washing their hands.
- Provide children with increased hand washing guidance.
- Store alcohol-based hand gel safely around children.

Environmental Cleaning

The Director/Nominated Supervisor will:

- Ensure all staff, families and children strictly follow the Hygiene and Infection Control Policy to maintain a clean and hygienic environment on the premises.
- Ensure amenities including staff room, communal areas, bathrooms and showers are industrially cleaned by a professional service at least daily.
- Ensure staff are provided with cleaning agents and trained to clean down and disinfect equipment immediately after use.
- Staffing arrangements consider the need for increased cleaning and hygiene practices.
- Additional staff, or staff deployed from other roles within the service, are responsible for undertaking the cleaning requirements, not those educators who are working directly with the children.
- Ensure staff are reminded to shower daily, wash their clothes daily, avoid touching their face, handshakes or other close physical contact, to dispose of tissues appropriately in a closed bin, and cover coughs and sneezes with an elbow or tissue.
- Ensure closed bins are provided for the hygienic disposal of waste and rubbish, such as used tissues, immediately after use.
- Ensure 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.
- Reduce the number of touch points for staff. For example, by removing any magazines from the centre staff room and keeping doors open where possible.
- Continue to reflect with educators on ways that resources and equipment can be stored, cleaned and provided to children to reduce the risk of cross contamination.

⁶¹ Refer to: Procedures in Hygiene and Infection Control Policy



Educators must:

- Adhere to the NHMRC cleaning guidelines including cleaning and disinfecting high touch surfaces at least twice daily, and regularly washing and laundering play items and toys.
- 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.
- **Increase 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.⁶²
- Wear gloves when cleaning and wash their hands or use alcohol-based hand sanitiser before and after wearing gloves.
- **Ensure any surfaces which may have been mouthed or in contact with bodily fluids are cleaned immediately** with disinfectant and detergent as set out in the Hygiene and Infection Control Policy.
- **In the Nursery, ensure mouthed toys are removed immediately when the child is no longer engaged with the item** and cleaned with disinfectant and detergent.

Cleaning where COVID-19 exposure is possible

The Director/Nominated Supervisor must:

- Ensure the service undertakes thorough cleaning in line with ACT Health and Safe Work Australia guidelines.⁶³

Educators will:

- Ensure all items/resources/surfaces touched by a child who becomes unwell at the service with a high temperature or other COVID-19 symptoms, are immediately and thoroughly cleaned and disinfected to avoid possible cross contamination.
- Wear disposable gloves and a face mask to avoid possible contamination while supervising the sick child and cleaning any touched items and surfaces.

Service of Food and Water

The Director/Nominated Supervisor will:

- Follow any directions from The ACT Health Communicable Disease Control Unit in relation to changes in food preparation procedures.

Educators will:

- Follow strict food preparation and handling procedures in accordance with the Food Safety Policy.
- Encourage children across all rooms to bring bento box style lunches where possible to enable more picnic style lunches outdoors.
- Increase supervision of children's hygiene practices at mealtimes, both indoors and outdoors, to ensure correct handwashing before and after eating and that food is not shared.
- Avoid children self-serving food from a shared plate.

⁶² <https://www.health.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/2020/03/environmental-cleaning-and-disinfection-principles-for-covid-19.pdf?fbclid=IwAR0odzMVRTQju6pET5BT81mkUEHXKK0nVxNBOz33-xZsFDa-5hXe1siWgf>

⁶³ <https://covid19.swa.gov.au/covid-19-information-workplaces/industry-information/early-childhood-education/cleaning>



	<p>Cough and Sneeze Etiquette The Director/Nominated Supervisor will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure all staff and children are educated to avoid touching their eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands and to avoid close contact with others. • Ensure all staff and children strictly follow the 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. • 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 their hands immediately. • If children have thick nasal discharge or a persistent runny nose that requires constant wiping from educators, ensure they are sent home until their nasal discharge has stopped and the child has returned to health. Note: Children will not be excluded where they have a letter from their G.P. regarding an on-going, non-infectious, medical condition explaining the symptoms (See also: Restrictions on Entry to Heritage).
<p>Physical (Social) Distancing</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Heritage acknowledges that physical distancing between children and those interacting with children in the ECEC environment is not always practicable,⁶⁴ however it is important for limiting transmission of COVID-19 and unnecessary physical interaction in ECECs, should be minimised.⁶⁵ • It is critically important that adults 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.⁶⁶ • The density quotients of 1 person per 4 square metres still applies in non-student areas, such as the staff room. <p>Procedures for Staff and Visitors Heritage will ensure physical distancing is employed where reasonably practicable in relation to staff. The Director/Nominated Supervisor will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Direct staff to space an appropriate distance apart to perform their duties, acknowledging that staff will have to come into contact with children. • Limit gatherings in common social spaces and indoor communal areas such as corridors, entry and exit points, resources/staff rooms, entry/exits from rooms. • Encourage office staff, where reasonably practical, to use separate areas or separate themselves as much as possible from one another. • Encourage staff and visitors to physically distance themselves in break rooms and when using shared spaces through increased signage and information. • Require all staff to wear face masks in accordance with latest ACT Health advice (See: Face Masks). • Encourage the use of outdoor space as much as possible. (See: Ventilation). • Restrict the number of educators using the staff room at any one time and stagger work breaks.

⁶⁴ The ‘venue density rule’ of no more than 1 person per 4 square metres is not appropriate or practical in ECECs, nor is maintaining 1.5m between children. This extends to rooms, corridors and outdoor play areas. (AHPPC May 2020).

⁶⁵ https://www.covid19.act.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0007/1866031/Health-Guidelines-for-Schools-and-ECEC-including-OSHC_SWD-addendum_FINAL_300921-002.pdf

⁶⁶ Refer to: AHPPC Statement (October 2021)



- Limit the number of visitors to the service by cancelling incursions and non-essential staff training etc. during heightened risk periods. (See: Visitors, Deliveries and Contractors; Excursions and Incursions).
- Discourage the use of public transport by staff if possible, or if not feasible, recommending that staff:
 - 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.

Procedures for Families

Heritage will ensure physical distancing is employed where reasonably practicable in relation to families. The Director/Nominated Supervisor will:

- Encourage parents not to come into the service.
- Modify arrival and departure routines to encourage physical distancing and reduce contact with families/carers at pick up and drop off as far as practicable. (See: Term 1 2022 procedures below).

Procedures for Children

Heritage will encourage physical distancing where reasonably practicable in relation to children. Educators will:

- Spend more time outdoors or operate an indoor/outdoor program where practicable (See also: Ventilation).
- 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. (See also: Curriculum and Program Planning)
- Limit the number of whole group activities and encourage small group plays.
- Ensure cots, mats, cushions etc for rest and sleep are positioned well apart (at least 1.5 metres).
- Seat children at opposite ends of a table when playing and eating.
- Set up more individual activities throughout the rooms. For example, all books and blocks being on one shelf, setting them up in separate areas throughout the room, where possible.
- Avoid or mitigate the risk of activities involving higher transmission (eg using equipment, sharing play dough).
- Ensure high-risk behaviours for generation of aerosols, such as singing and playing wind instruments occur outdoors.
- Avoid any situation when children are required to queue such as for bathrooms or using equipment.
- Undertake risk assessments for performances and social events that bring children together from different rooms and follow the advice of ACT Health. (See: Social Events and Meetings).

Mixing of Cohorts/Rooms

Where practicable, the Room Leaders will:

- Reduce the mixing of staff and children from different rooms.
 - This does not include siblings).⁶⁷
 - It is acknowledged some staff are required to provide services/teaching across the rooms, but this will be minimised where possible.
- Stagger meal and play times.

⁶⁷ ACT Government, Term 4 Guide



	<p>Drop off and Pick-up Procedures for Term 1 2022:</p> <p>Families must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not enter the premises to drop off or collect children, except in the case of an emergency or to provide necessary supports for a child with additional needs, and in negotiation with the Director. • Text the service on arrival using the Heritage mobile 0434435101. • Drop children at the front entrance door or into the nursery garden area. • Sanitise their hands, and their children’s hands on arrival using the hand sanitiser provided. • Check in on arrival and pick up using the CBR check in app and wear face masks (see below). • Utilise the computer at the front entrance to sign in and out. • Complete a COVID test declaration form on arrival if asked to do so. <p>Educators must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meet families on arrival/pick up while maintaining physical distancing.
<p>Face Masks</p>	<p>Heritage recognises that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • From 15 February 2022, face mask restrictions are easing in the general community however face masks must continue to be worn by staff and visitors in all indoor spaces in ECEC settings. • Wearing face masks can be difficult in ECECs where connection and relationships with children is vital to learning outcomes.⁶⁸ • ACT Health does not require very young children to wear masks at ECECs as they are likely to be worn incorrectly, may represent a choking hazard, and may not be appropriate for children with additional needs. <p>The Director/Nominated Supervisor will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure face masks are worn by all persons at Heritage over the age of 12, including staff and parents/carers in accordance with the current requirements for ECECs, unless when eating or required to be removed for effective communication (of particular importance to learning in an educational setting).⁶⁹ • Staff and families are informed that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ All masks must be worn correctly to cover the nose and mouth with as few gaps as possible to maximise their protective benefits. ○ Fabric masks worn by staff and children must be washed regularly. ○ Disposable masks are single use and must be disposed of after using once. ○ Older children are allowed to bring their own mask to wear during the day, however this is a choice and not a requirement. ○ All children’s masks must be clearly labelled with the child’s name.
<p>Social Events and Meetings</p>	<p>The Director/Nominated Supervisor will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure social events and tours of the service by prospective families do not go ahead during COVID-19 heightened risk periods. • Ensure COVID-safe risk assessments are undertaken for group celebrations and the service abides by any restrictions for groups size, square-metre allowance and other measures and communicates these to families. • Ensure meetings are restricted during heightened risk periods, taking into account the latest advice from authorities regarding physical distancing and limits on indoor gatherings of people.

⁶⁸ https://www.abc.net.au/abckids/early-education/reflective-journal/masks-in-early-education-and-care/13476116?fbclid=IwAR1aGQf3JJaNJOWQ_JXoKqmvFWg6Zm4xEH7QqQYgyPOA4asR9d-S8D6QZSN4

⁶⁹ <https://www.covid19.act.gov.au/stay-safe-and-healthy/protect-yourself#Face-masks>



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Utilise zoom as an option for Committee meetings to allow office holders and ordinary members to participate remotely.
<p>Lockdown and Evacuation Arrangements</p>	<p>The Director/Nominated Supervisor will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adjust evacuation and lockdown rehearsals to accommodate social distancing where practicable during heightened COVID-19 risk periods. Consider rehearsals taking place in smaller groups or talking the procedure through with children as an interim measure. Document any adjustments to lockdown and evacuation rehearsals.
<p>Managing Medical Conditions/ Children with a Disability</p>	<p>Children</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Heritage recognises the same principles of preventing the spread of COVID-19 can reduce the likelihood of severe disease for children with a medical condition or disability. However, the measures may be more challenging to implement for those children. <p>The Director/Nominated Supervisor will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advise parents/cares of children with a current Medical Condition Management Plan or Asthma Action Plan to update this if needed during the COVID-19 pandemic in consultation with their child’s health care professional. Encourage parents/carers of children with complex medical needs or a disability to consult their medical practitioner to determine if reasonable adjustments are required to ensure they can safely return to onsite learning during the COVID-19 pandemic. Where reasonable adjustments can be made based on the medical practitioner’s advice, ensure those adjustments are put in place. Where providing education and care to a child with a disability involves a greater risk of exposure to blood or body fluids, ensure educators wear PPE such as gloves and a disposable apron. Ensure this is removed and disposed of safely⁷⁰ after caring for each individual and hand hygiene performed. Where reasonable adjustments cannot be made, ensure children with complex medical needs/a disability are supported to learn from home. <p>Staff Members</p> <p>The Director/Nominated Supervisor will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Request staff with compromised immune systems seek medical advice while working in early education and care during the pandemic. Based on medical advice, staff with complex medical conditions may be supported to work from home, where practicable.
<p>Curriculum and Educational Program</p>	<p>Educators will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Run the Belonging Program in rooms as required and focus on children’s settling and reconnecting to their social and physical environments on returning to Heritage after periods of quarantine/closure. Ensure the Health and Hygiene Program is run through all rooms and revisited regularly, including keeping a healthy body and practising good hygiene and how hygiene practices for children is their best defence against COVID-19. Provide age-appropriate Information to children about COVID-19 and be sensitive to their emotional wellbeing. Acknowledge children’s concerns and be open to discussions about COVID-19. Inform children about the virus and emphasise preventative measures such as handwashing, use of tissues, cough and sneeze techniques and limiting touching other children’s faces.

⁷⁰ Refer to: Hygiene and Infection Control Policy



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initiate discussions with children about the importance of hygiene throughout the day, particularly at mealtimes and other transitions. • Refer children to posters to demonstrate correct handwashing methods and model techniques. • Be aware of play practices that could spread germs such as play dough and clay play and ensure children have their own portion and/or discard it after play. • Ensure high risk behaviours for generation of aerosols, such as singing and playing wind instruments occur outdoors. (See: Ventilation) • Consider children’s voices in evaluating programs and policies and record these through jottings/observations. • Monitor children’s emotional well-being, respect their questions and communicate any concerns with parents and families. (See: Supporting Wellbeing). • Utilise a variety of resources to support children’s understanding of COVID-19 such as from the Department of Health and Human Rights Commission: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Help Stop the Spread ○ Social Distancing ○ ABC Kids Playschool’s Hello Friends (COVID-19 Special) ○ Little J and Big Cuz: Everybody Wash’em Now ○ https://hrc.act.gov.au/childrenyoungpeople/covid-info-for-kids/ <p style="margin-left: 40px;">- What’s with all the RATs?</p>
<p>Training and Professional Development</p>	<p>The Director/Nominated Supervisor will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure the health, safety and wellbeing of the children remains a priority and follow the guidance of Safe Work Australia that advises that any face-to-face training should only be held only with spacing requirements implemented and adequate ventilation. • Cancel non-essential training and explore on-line options during COVID-19 heightened risk periods. • Refer to the information about renewing first-aid, anaphylaxis and asthma qualifications during the COVID-19 pandemic on the ACECQA website. • Consider educators undertaking the online infection control training module on the Department of Health website which covers the fundamentals of infection prevention and control for COVID-19 is also available. Note: Although tailored for the health sector, this training is applicable to education and care settings.⁷¹ • Where it is not possible to complete a specific qualification, eg, a work placement is affected by COVID-19 control measures, ensure the qualification/ placement is completed as soon as reasonably practicable. • Support Heritage educators in professional learning to help children deal with trauma related to COVID-19 through resources, webinars and online modules, eg Emerging Minds, Be You – see sections on Educational Program and Supporting Wellbeing. • If unable to fulfill training requirements under the National Regulations, contact the Information and Enquiries team at the Early Childhood Directorate on 1800 619 113 for advice.
<p>Supporting Wellbeing</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Heritage recognises that children, families and staff will experience the impacts of COVID-19 in their own way and that for some, this may include feelings of distress, anxiety, or confusion.

⁷¹ <https://www.health.gov.au/resources/apps-and-tools/covid-19-infection-control-training>



- The Director/Nominated Supervisor and educators will utilise relevant resources and tools to recognise and support the mental health and wellbeing of the Heritage community such as:
 - CECA website: <https://www.education.act.gov.au/early-childhood/information-on-novel-coronavirus-covid-19-for-early-childhood/resources>
 - ACT Health website. <https://www.health.act.gov.au/services-and-programs/mental-health/mental-health-and-wellbeing-during-covid-19>
 - Australian Government website: [Head to Health](#)
 - **Be You Website:** [Be You Early Learning](#)
 - Emerging Minds Website: [Emerging Minds](#)
 - [Talking to children about the COVID-19 Pandemic](#)
 - [Talking to children about traumatic events or worries about the future](#)
 - Beyond Blue Website: [Beyond Blue](#)
 - Australian Childhood Foundation Website: [Australian Childhood Foundation](#)
- Staff working from home will be supported to take breaks regularly and to stretch. **Refer to:** <https://headspace.org.au/headspace-centres/maitland/new-blog-post-3/> and www.safework.nsw.gov.au/resource-library/six-simple-stretches

Supporting children on returning to Heritage after quarantine or closure of a room/the service.

- The rooms will regularly run their Belonging Programs which focus on children’s settling and reconnecting to our social and physical environments.
- For children returning to Heritage after a break, we ask families to try a predictable drop off routine using the front entrance and short days if necessary.
- Parents will be kept informed of how their child as required.
- Educators will assess how children are coping individually and discuss next steps with parents if the need arises.
- Heritage recognises that although our educator-to-child ratios are adequate, there are many children that will require emotional support as they get back into their Heritage routine and ask families to work in partnership with us during this time.
- Educators will at all times be child focused.



Communication Strategies

Contact Details

The Director/Nominated Supervisor will:

- Ensure that after-hours emergency contact details for the service in the NQAITS are up to date, including a name and mobile number that can be answered at nights and on weekends. Heritage understands that:
 - The emergency contacts for the service must have access to staff and children's attendance details and be able to respond to questions and directions from ACT Health.
 - These numbers will be used by ACT Health/CECA to contact the service in the event of a potential exposure at the service.
 - The ability to contact services directly supports minimising the risk of further exposure to children and staff, through faster response times and appropriate action
 - Unanswered phones cause delays and prevent CECA from interacting with services in a timely and critical manner.
- Ensure procedures are in place for contact details of each child's parent/guardian/ authorised emergency person to be recorded for each day a child is in attendance, to ensure that a person will be available to collect the child at any time across the period of care being provided. (See also: Attendance Records).
- Ensure contact details for ACT Health, CECA and emergency services are kept on hand in case of a critical situation.
- Ensure staff contact details are up to date as they may need to be contacted out of working hours.

Communication Plan

The Director/Nominated Supervisor will:

- **Ensure the COVID-19 Policy and Procedures is kept up to date** and readily available to the Heritage community.
- **In the event of the service or a room being closed** as a precaution to limit the spread of the COVID-19 virus, information will be rapidly provided to parents/families by phone/text and email to explain the situation and the restrictions, utilising the communication templates provided by ACT Health and CECA. All other stakeholders will also be informed promptly including visitors, contractors, outside agencies as required.
- **Regularly communicate and check in with staff and educators**, making sure they are aware of COVID-19 symptoms, the processes which the service will follow if COVID-19 directly affects the service and understand their roles and responsibilities in line with the service RAT surveillance program, risk assessment and policies and procedures, including appropriate hygiene measures and when they should not attend the service if unwell with COVID symptoms.
- **Ensure staff are consulted on health and safety** matters relating to COVID-19 and provided an opportunity to express views before decisions are made.
- **Ensure staff are reminded of their duty of care** to take reasonable care for their own health and safety and to not adversely affect the health and safety of others.
- **Communicate risk management/protection strategies** and the latest advice, directions and guidance from government authorities to staff and families⁷² immediately including through email, newsletters, factsheets, signs and posters. Information provided may include:
 - Symptoms of COVID-19.
 - How the virus is transmitted.
 - Testing, quarantine, isolation and exclusion requirements.
 - Protection strategies and procedures including vaccination, ventilation, hand hygiene, mask wearing and physical distancing.
 - Contact details for health advice.
 - Child Care Subsidy information.
 - Public Health orders/directives
- **Rapidly inform staff and families of any changes** in advice/directives notified by government authorities.

⁷² Refer to: Appendix 3: Communication with Families Checklist



- **Ensure signs and posters are displayed at** the service on COVID-19 from trusted authorities such as:
 - <https://www.act.gov.au/business/business-resources>
 - <https://www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au/doc/signage-and-posters-covid-19>
 - https://health.act.gov.au/sites/default/files/2020-03/CV_Good%20hygiene_Poster_Accessible_0.pdf
 - https://health.act.gov.au/sites/default/files/2020-03/CV_Hand%20hygiene_Poster_Accessible.pdf
- **Provide information on wellbeing** to staff and families. (See: References).
- **Ensure the Privacy and Confidentiality Policy is adhered to** in any communication.

Managing the Service as COVID Restrictions Progressively Lift

- Heritage will re-evaluate the situation regularly and prioritise the health and safety of children, educators and families.
- Heritage will continue to communicate health and safety priorities and procedures to families on a regular basis and ensure all staff are aware of the vigilance required to keep everyone in the Heritage community safe on a daily basis.

Managing Enrolments

- Heritage will continue to prioritise children of ANU families with an existing enrolment prior to the Early Childhood Education and Care Relief Package,⁷³ and who are vulnerable or have parents who are essential workers.

Related Policies and Documents

Name	Location
COVID Safe Plan	
Creating Inclusion and Equity Policy	
First Aid for Incidents, Injury, Illness and Trauma Policy	Policy Manuals in Main Office, Staff Programming Room
Emergency and Evacuation Policy	
Excursions and Incursions Policy	
Hygiene and Infection Control (incl. Toileting) Policy	Heritage Website, Members Section
Illness and Infectious Diseases Policy	
Medical Conditions Policy	
Privacy and Confidentiality Policy	
Work Health and Safety Policy	

References and Further Reading

Legislative References

Australian Children’s Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA). (2020). *Guide to the National Quality Framework.* <https://www.acecqa.gov.au/sites/default/files/2020-09/Guide-to-the-NQF-September-2020.pdf>

Australian Government Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations. (2009). *Belonging, Being & Becoming, the Early Years Learning Framework for Australia.* https://www.acecqa.gov.au/sites/default/files/2018-02/belonging_being_and_becoming_the_early_years_learning_framework_for_australia.pdf

Education and Care Services National Law Act 2011 (ACT). <http://www.legislation.act.gov.au/a/2011-42/current/pdf/2011-42.pdf>

Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011 (ACT). <https://www.legislation.nsw.gov.au/#/view/regulation/2011/653>

⁷³ <https://www.dese.gov.au/early-childhood/resources/early-childhood-education-and-care-relief-package-conditions>



Other References

Australian Children’s Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA).

Information, support and guidance for the children’s education and care sector and families (2022)

<https://www.acecqa.gov.au/covid-19>

Risk assessment and management information sheet (2021)

https://www.acecqa.gov.au/sites/default/files/2021-05/Risk_management_and_management.pdf

NQA ITS Portal Emergency Management Help Guide (2020)

<https://www.acecqa.gov.au/sites/default/files/2020-07/NQA%20ITS%20Portal%20Emergency%20Management%20Help%20Guide.pdf>

ACT Government (2022)

National Framework for Managing COVID-19 in Schools and Early Childhood Education and Care January 2022. <https://www.dese.gov.au/covid-19/resources/national-framework-managing-covid19>

Information for People Exposed to COVID-19

<https://www.covid19.act.gov.au/stay-safe-and-healthy/exposed-to-covid19>

Information on novel coronavirus (COVID-19) for ECECs

<https://www.education.act.gov.au/early-childhood/information-on-novel-coronavirus-covid-19-for-early-childhood>

ACT Health. (2022).

COVID-19 information and advice in the ACT

<https://www.covid19.act.gov.au/>

Current Restrictions

<https://www.covid19.act.gov.au/restrictions/current-restrictions>

COVID-19 Infection Control Training

<https://www.health.gov.au/resources/apps-and-tools/covid-19-infection-control-training>

Australian Health Protection Principal Committee (AHPPC). (2022). *Statements on Early Childhood and Learning Centres.* <https://www.health.gov.au/committees-and-groups/australian-health-protection-principal-committee-ahppc>

Community Early Learning Australia (CELA). (2022).

<https://www.cela.org.au/publications/member-resources/covid-19/member-news-covid-19-information-advocacy> and *COVID 19 – Sample Policy*

CECA at The ACT Education Directorate (2022):

Health Guidelines for Schools and Early Childhood Education and Care. Term 1 2022 – Version 5.0 Updated 4 February 2022.

https://www.education.act.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0003/1935444/January-2022-Health-Guidelines-for-Schools-and-ECEC.pdf

Information about Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) for ECECs

<https://www.education.act.gov.au/early-childhood/information-on-novel-coronavirus-covid-19-for-early-childhood>

Vaccination for Staff in ECECs

<https://www.education.act.gov.au/early-childhood/information-on-novel-coronavirus-covid-19-for-early-childhood/vaccinations-for-staff-in-education-and-care-services>

Managing a Confirmed Case of COVID-19 in an ECEC

<https://www.education.act.gov.au/early-childhood/information-on-novel-coronavirus-covid-19-for-early-childhood/managing-a-confirmed-case-of-covid-19-in-education-and-care-services>

FAQs for ECECs:

<https://www.education.act.gov.au/early-childhood/information-on-novel-coronavirus-covid-19-for-early-childhood/faqs-for-education-and-care-services>

Mental Health and Wellbeing Resources: <https://www.education.act.gov.au/early-childhood/information-on-novel-coronavirus-covid-19-for-early-childhood/resources>

CECA at The ACT Education Directorate (2021):

COVID-19 Infection Control Model Policy for ECECs.

<https://www.education.act.gov.au/early-childhood/information-on-novel-coronavirus-covid-19-for-early-childhood/covid-19-risk-mitigation-for-education-and-care-services>

Early Childhood Australia (2021). *COVID-19 Resources.*



<http://www.earlychildhoodaustralia.org.au/media/covid-19-resources-early-childhood-services-families/>

National Health Medical Research Council. (2013). *Staying Healthy. Preventing infectious diseases in early childhood education and care services, 5th Edition.*

<https://www.nhmrc.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/reports/clinical%20guidelines/ch5-5-staying-healthy.pdf>

Safe Work Australia. (2022).

ECEC Cleaning. <https://covid19.swa.gov.au/covid-19-information-workplaces/industry-information/early-childhood-education/cleaning>

Information for ECECS. <https://covid19.swa.gov.au/covid-19-information-workplaces/industry-information/early-childhood-education>

COVID-19 for Workplaces Pack for the Employer in the ECEC Industry.

<https://covid19.swa.gov.au/covid-19-print-pack/750/733>

Safe Work Australia. (2020).

Early Childhood Education and Care Workers: Minimising the Risk of Exposure to COVID-19. https://www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au/sites/default/files/2020-04/early-childhood-education-minimising-the-risk-of-exposure-to-covid-19_0.pdf

Key considerations for undertaking a COVID-19 risk assessment.

<https://www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au/doc/key-considerations-undertaking-risk-assessment-covid-19>

World Health Organisation. (2021).

Ventilation and Air-conditioning. <https://www.who.int/news-room/questions-and-answers/item/coronavirus-disease-covid-19-ventilation-and-air-conditioning>

COVID-19 Advice for the Public.

<https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/advice-for-public>

Useful Factsheet and Websites for Families

ACT Human Rights Commission Videos. *Supporting children's understanding of COVID-19 and lockdown.* <https://hrc.act.gov.au/childrenyoungpeople/covid-info-for-kids/>

- o What's with all the RATs?
- o Getting a COVID Vaccination

CECA: Mental Health and Wellbeing Resources: <https://www.education.act.gov.au/early-childhood/information-on-novel-coronavirus-covid-19-for-early-childhood/resources>

HealthDirect. *COVID-19 Childcare Exclusion FAQ and Symptom Checker*

- <https://www.healthdirect.gov.au/covid19-restriction-checker/education-and-childcare/act>
- <https://www.healthdirect.gov.au/symptom-checker/tool/basic-details>

Factsheet for Parents: Testing children for COVID-19 using a rapid antigen test:

https://www.covid19.act.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0006/1947669/Factsheet-Parents-and-kids-Rat-test.pdf

Starting Blocks: *Information for Families on COVID-19.*

<https://www.startingblocks.gov.au/covid-19/>

Unicef Australia. *How to talk to your children about coronavirus (COVID-19).*

<https://www.unicef.org.au/blog/resources/march-2020/how-to-talk-to-your-children-about-coronavirus>

Version Control and Change History

Version Number	Approval Date	Approved by	Author and Amendments
1	March 2020	Director	New policy in response to COVID-19 pandemic including Risk Assessment
2	December 2020	Director	Updated references and procedures to reflect latest advice from relevant federal and local government authorities, including the AHPPC, ACT Health, CECA and Safework Australia. Updated all links. Added Appendices – Checklists. Created COVID-Safe Plan folder consisting of:



			COVID-19 Policy and Procedures and all attachments/checklists and links to relevant authorities.
3	June 30 2021	Director	<p>Updated in response to new mask mandate, 28 June 2021.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parents and visitors to an education and care service will be required to wear a mask when on the premises. Educators will be required to wear a face mask when on excursion. Educators will need to wear a face mask for face-to-face engagement with the community. <p>Other updates:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Summary of Responsibilities moved to beginning. Updated information from WHO on transmission via aerosols. Updated information from AMA on transmission in children of Delta virus. Added procedures for closing service. Added Heritage will ensure attendance records are maintained for all children, parents, staff, students, volunteers and visitors at all times, including a contact phone number. Visitors must sign the visitors book using their own pen or a sanitised pen provided by Heritage. Added Heritage strongly recommends that all staff and families receive the COVID-19 vaccination as soon as eligible. Added activating a local emergency allows families access to additional absences if the initial 42 absence days per child per financial year have been used. Additional absence days claimed due to COVID-19 related reasons, do not require a medical certificate. Added if the service is advised or directed to close on public health advice as a result of COVID-19, out of pocket fees (Gap Fees) will be waived. (Effective 30 June 2021 until 31 December 2021). Added Health Direct COVID-19 FAQ, Restrictions Checker and Symptom Checker.
4	July 2021	Director	Updated information on mask mandates.
5	October 2021	Director	<p>Updated all links and references. Updated Risk Assessment. Updated to reflect:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> New procedure guidance provided for a Confirmed case of COVID-19, 12 November. Latest information from: https://www.education.act.gov.au/early-childhood/information-on-novel-coronavirus-covid-19-for-early-childhood New vaccination mandate for contact staff. CECA Guidelines for Schools and Early Childhood Education Services on returning to face-to-face learning for Term 4 2021. Australian Health Protection Principles Committee’s updated advice on minimising the



			<p>potential risk of COVID-19 transmission in schools/ECECs (October 2021). Cross checked policy with new model policy from CECA: https://www.education.act.gov.au/_data/assets/wor_doc/0011/1867097/Infection-control-during-the-COVID-19-pandemic-model-policy.docx Expanded section on Communication to reflect latest advice from CECA (October 2021).</p> <p><u>Appendices:</u> Added AHPPC statement (October update) Removed Scenario Planning Risk Assessment and replaced with Scenario Planning section at beginning of policy. Removed New Virus/Influenza Pandemic Emergency Plan and referred to it in the Emergency and Evacuation Policy. Moved checklists to COVID-Safe Plan folder and referred to them at end of Communication with Families Checklist.</p>
6	February 2022	Director	<p>Updated to reflect National Strategy transition to the “living with COVID” context; the response of government authorities to the rapid spread of the new Omicron variant; and the Plan for Term 1 2022 for Schools and ECECs.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exposure sites are no longer being reported. • Services must take the lead in identifying who has been exposed, identifying moderate to high-risk scenarios and communicating these situations to families. <p>Added Timeline of COVID-19 updates for ECECs. Updated information in COVID-19 Background to include Omicron variant. Updated Heritage Service COVID Risk Assessment and created separate document to be attached as Attachment 1. Updated information on “Up to Date” vaccinations status definition and Booster Vaccination Program including priority COVID-19 booster vaccinations for ECEC staff. Updated procedures for a positive case or potential exposure at the service, and COVID-19 Exposure Risk Assessment, to reflect new CECA operation guidance (9 February 2022) and ACT Health updated information on people exposed to COVID. https://www.covid19.act.gov.au/stay-safe-and-healthy/exposed-to-covid19 Added Rapid Antigen Testing surveillance process introduced for Term 1 2022 to Table of Preventative Strategies. Updated procedures for full or partial closure. Updated all attachments and links. Added Factsheet for Parents on RATs: https://www.covid19.act.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0006/1947669/Factsheet-Parents-and-kids-Rat-test.pdf</p>



Attachment 2: Communication with Families Checklist

- Access trusted sources of information on a daily basis to keep informed and knowledgeable, including Australian Department of Health, ACT Regulatory Authority CECA, ACT Health and Safe Work ACT.
- Consult with and communicate the latest information with educators from reliable sources of knowledge.
- Develop a COVID-19 policy and communicate and implement this diligently.
- Share up to date information with families consistently through various communication methods: Heritage website, email and notices.
- Share COVID-related contact numbers and websites with families, including: The National Coronavirus Health Information Line (1800 020 080)
- Reinforce exclusion guidelines in relation to COVID-19 frequently, particularly as they change, via different modes of communication: Heritage website, email and notices.
- Set up a hand-sanitiser in the entry for families to use on arrival and request they wash their hands and their children's hands. Repeat at departure.
- Through various communication channels, advise parents about the procedure for notifying Heritage if families fall into any of the exclusion categories.
- Display signage informing families of the exclusion criteria in relation to COVID-19, and how to inform the service in a timely and confidential manner if they meet the criteria.
- Inform families about COVID risk management procedures including:
 - Rapid Antigen Surveillance Testing to reduce transmission.
 - Increased hand washing with the children, staff and visitors throughout the day as well as before and after eating and toileting, and when sneezing.
 - Intentional teaching on wash hands effectively and cough and sneeze hygiene.
 - Increased routine environmental cleaning, particularly on high touch surfaces.
 - Diligent implementation of the latest advice and direction from relevant authorities.
 - Strict food safety procedures that ensure hygienic standards are implemented.
 - Enforcing required exclusion for families/children/staff in a confidential manner.
 - Ensuring the service is well stocked with sanitiser, tissues, gloves and disinfectant.
- Check on family's wellbeing, ask if there is anything you can do to help support them.
- Provide families with contact numbers/referrals to support agencies if they require additional help relating to their mental wellbeing and access to basic necessities.
- Work with families to share practices that they can also implement in their homes to maintain health and hygiene.
- Be aware of children with medical conditions and provide support and consistent communication to work in partnership and respond to any changing health needs.

Refer also to: COVID-19 Priorities Checklist; Checklist for Families; Physical Distancing Checklist; Staffing Arrangements Checklist in COVID Safe Plan Folder in Dropbox.



Attachment 3

Testing children for COVID-19 using a rapid antigen test



Information for parents and carers

Rapid antigen tests (RATs) are a quick way to test your child for COVID-19.

PCR testing is also available free of charge at a number of facilities across the ACT. Testing centre locations can be found on the ACT Government's COVID-19 website.

What is a Rapid Antigen Test (RAT)?

RATs involve taking either a saliva sample or nasal swab that is placed into a chemical solution. The result usually takes 10 to 30 minutes.

RATs are not recommended for children under 2 years of age. It is recommended young children instead get a PCR test.

If you test positive with a RAT you must isolate immediately and follow guidance on the [COVID-19 website](#).

Using a RAT

A RAT can be used to test your child if they have had a COVID-19 exposure, or if they have symptoms. If the test is positive, your child has COVID. You should register the test and follow the advice online.

If the test is negative, then your child should stay home from school until their symptoms have gone away. If the first test that was negative was a RAT and your child continues to have symptoms, they should take another RAT in 24 hours, or have a PCR test.

If your child has a COVID-19 exposure, a RAT is a useful screening tool, even if your child doesn't have COVID-19 symptoms.

If your child has symptoms of COVID-19, they should not attend school.

If your child has recovered from COVID-19 in the past 4 weeks, COVID-19 testing is not recommended, unless they have developed new COVID-19 symptoms after a period of being well.

It is important to note that you may still test positive to COVID-19 without displaying any symptoms. It is not compulsory for students or staff to do a RAT.



covid19.act.gov.au





How do I do a RAT with my child?

Each RAT comes with a set of instructions. Please read and follow these instructions closely. Many test manufacturers have instructional videos online that you can also watch.

Reporting positive results

Parents should report a positive RAT to ACT Health via the [COVID-19 website](https://www.covid19.act.gov.au).

You should also notify your child's school via email or phone call. You **do not** need to report a negative RAT.

What if a RAT is not suited to my child?

If they have had a COVID exposure or have symptoms then you can take your child for a PCR test.

Remember to practise COVID-safe behaviours, monitor for symptoms and stay home if unwell.

We know this is a stressful time for your child. You may wish to reach out to your school for support or visit the www.education.act.gov.au for handy links to additional support resources.

My child is scared/unsure about taking a RAT. What can I do?

We know that some children may find the idea of having a RAT scary or daunting.

There are a number of things you can do to help your child:

- › Talk to your child – explain the process ahead of time
- › Let them watch you when you next take a test
- › Do the test at a time of day that works best for them (eg when they are less tired)
- › You may also like to show them the video on the COVID-19 website.

Handy links

- › For more information about how to use RAT tests (including registering positive results), testing facilities and general COVID-19 information visit: www.covid19.act.gov.au
- › For more information on the ACT Government's Back to School Plan for Term 1 visit: www.education.act.gov.au or talk with your school.



[covid19.act.gov.au](https://www.covid19.act.gov.au)

