

## DEALING WITH INFECTIOUS DISEASES POLICY

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**Important note:** A pandemic is an epidemic of an infectious disease that has spread across a large region, for instance multiple continents or worldwide, affecting a substantial number of people. ELAA advises that the contents of this policy are relevant to a pandemic event. In considering what actions are required by an Approved Provider, information and guidance provided by the Australian Health Protection Principal Committee (AHPPC), Victorian Government, the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) and the Department of Education and Training (DET) should be followed and adhered to.

### Mandatory – Quality Area 2

## PURPOSE

This policy will provide clear guidelines and procedures to follow when:

- a child attending Ascot Kindergarten shows symptoms of an infectious disease
- a child at Ascot Kindergarten has been diagnosed with an infectious disease
- managing and minimising the spread of infectious diseases, illnesses and infestations (including head lice)
- managing and minimising infections relating to blood-borne viruses
- managing and minimising infections relating to epidemics (refer to *Definitions*) and pandemics (refer to *Definitions*) (e.g. coronavirus (COVID-19))

## POLICY STATEMENT

### 1. VALUES

Ascot Kindergarten is committed to:

- providing a safe and healthy environment for all children, staff and any other persons attending the service
- responding to the needs of the child or adult who presents with symptoms of an infectious disease or infestation while attending the service
- preventing the spread of vaccine-preventable diseases
- complying with current exclusion schedules and guidelines set by the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS)
- complying with the advice of the Australian Health Protection Principal Committee (AHPPC), Victorian Chief Health Officer and DHHS
- providing up-to-date information and resources for families and staff regarding protection of all children from infectious diseases and blood-borne viruses, management of infestations and immunisation programs.

Ascot Kindergarten supports the Immunise Australia Program and National Immunisation Program (NIP), which is currently recommended by the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) and supported by the Commonwealth Government. All educators/staff at Ascot Kindergarten are committed to preventing the spread of infectious diseases through simple hygiene practices such as hand washing, effective cleaning procedures and assessing acceptable

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immunisation documentation and complying with recommended exclusion guidelines and timeframes for children and educators/staff

## 2. SCOPE

This policy applies to the Approved Provider, Person with Management or Control, Nominated Supervisor, Person in day-to-day Charge, staff, students on placement, volunteers, parents/guardians, children and others attending the programs and activities of Ascot Kindergarten, including during offsite excursions and activities.

## 3. BACKGROUND AND LEGISLATION

### Background

Infectious diseases are common in children. Infectious diseases such as the Chicken Pox, Common Cold, Measles and Mumps, are common in children and adults are also susceptible.

Children are at a greater risk of exposure to infections in a children's service than at home due to the amount of time spent with a large number of other children.

The DHHS publishes the *Minimum Period of Exclusion from Primary Schools and Children's Services Centres for Infectious Diseases Cases and Contacts*, to assist in protecting the public by preventing, or containing, outbreaks of infectious conditions common in schools and children's services and is regulated by the *Public Health and Wellbeing Regulations 2019*.

During an epidemic or pandemic, further instruction and guidance may be issued by the DHHS and the Australian Health Protection Principal Committee (AHPPC).

An approved service must take reasonable steps to prevent the spread of infectious diseases at the service, and ensure that the parent/guardian, authorised nominee or emergency contact of each child enrolled at the service is notified of the occurrence of an infectious disease as soon as possible. The service must have policies and procedures in place for dealing with infectious diseases (Regulation 88 of the *Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011*). The service has a duty of care to ensure that everyone attending the service is provided with a high level of protection during all hours that the service is in operation. Protection can include:

- notifying (as soon as practicable) children, families and educators/staff when an excludable illness/disease is detected at the service
- complying with relevant health department exclusion guidelines, advice and information
- increasing educator/staff awareness of cross-infection through physical contact with others.

The Victorian Government offers an immunisation program for children to assist in preventing the spread of infectious diseases. There is also the Immunise Australia Program and National Immunisation Program (NIP), which is currently recommended by the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) and supported by the Commonwealth Government.

Early childhood education and care services that are regulated under the *Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010* have obligations under No Jab No Play legislation (*Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008*), including to request, assess and manage immunisation documentation and to assist parents/carers and families who may face difficulties in meeting the requirements (refer to *Enrolment and Orientation Policy*).

### Legislation and standards

Relevant legislation and standards include but are not limited to:

- *Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010*
- *Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011: Regulation 88*
- *Family Assistance Legislation Amendment (Jobs for Families Child Care Package) Act 2017*
- *Health Records Act 2001*



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- *National Quality Standard*, Quality Area 2: Children's Health and Safety
- *National Quality Standard*, Quality Area 6: Collaborative Partnerships with Families and Communities
- *No Jab No Play Law (Vic)*
- *Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004*
- *Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014 (Vic)*
- *Privacy Act 1988 (Cwlth)*
- *Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008*
- *Public Health and Wellbeing Regulations 2019*

#### 4. DEFINITIONS

The terms defined in this section relate specifically to this policy. For commonly used terms e.g. Approved Provider, Nominated Supervisor, Regulatory Authority etc. refer to the *General Definitions* section of PolicyWorks.

**Blood-borne virus (BBV):** A virus that is spread when blood from an infected person enters another person's bloodstream. Examples of blood-borne viruses include human immunodeficiency virus (HIV), hepatitis B, hepatitis C and viral haemorrhagic fevers. Where basic hygiene, safety, infection control and first aid procedures are followed, the risks of contracting a blood-borne virus are negligible.

**Communicable Disease Section:** Responsibility for communication and advice in relation to infectious diseases on behalf of the Secretary of the Victorian DHHS.

**Epidemic:** is an outbreak of a contagious disease that spreads rapidly and extensively, and affects many individuals simultaneously in an area or population.

**Exclusion:** Inability to attend or participate in the program at the service.

**Illness:** Any sickness and/or associated symptoms that affect the child's normal participation in the program at the service.

**Infection:** The invasion and multiplication of micro-organisms in bodily tissue.

**Infestation:** The lodgement, development and reproduction of arthropods (such as head lice), either on the surface of the body of humans or animals, or in clothing.

**Infectious disease:** An infectious disease designated by the Communicable Disease Section (refer to *Definitions*), Victorian DHHS as well as those listed in Schedule 7 of the *Public Health and Wellbeing Regulations 2019*, the Minimum Period of Exclusion from Primary Schools, Education and Care Service Premises and Children's Centres for Infectious Diseases Cases and Contacts.

**Medication:** Any substance, as defined in the *Therapeutic Goods Act 1989 (Cwlth)*, that is administered for the treatment of an illness or medical condition.

**Minimum exclusion period:** The minimum period for excluding any person from attending a children's service to prevent the spread of infectious diseases as specified in Schedule 7: Minimum Period of Exclusion from Primary Schools and Children's Services for Infectious Diseases Cases and Contacts of the *Public Health and Wellbeing Regulations 2019*, the. An infringement penalty for failure to exclude a child with, or exposed to, a specified infectious disease applies (applicable to a person in charge). The exclusion period table, published by the DHHS, can be accessed at <https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/public-health/infectious-diseases/school-exclusion/school-exclusion-table>.

**Pandemic:** is an epidemic (refer to Definitions) occurring worldwide, or over a wide geographic area and affecting a large proportion of the population.

**Pediculosis:** Infestation of head lice that is transmitted by having head-to-head contact with another person who has head lice. Pediculosis does not contribute to the spread of any infectious diseases, and outbreaks of this condition are common in schools and childcare facilities.

**Serious incident:** A serious incident (regulation 12) is defined as any of the following:

- the **death of a child** while being educated and cared for at the service or following an incident while being educated and cared for by the service
- any **incident involving serious injury or trauma to a child** while the child is being educated and cared for, which:
  - a reasonable person would consider required urgent medical attention from a registered medical practitioner; or
  - the child attended or ought reasonably to have attended a hospital e.g. a broken limb\*
  - any **incident involving serious illness of a child** while that child is being educated and cared for by a service for which the child attended, or ought reasonably to have attended, a hospital e.g. severe asthma attack, seizure or anaphylaxis\*

**NOTE:** In some cases (for example rural and remote locations) a General Practitioner conducts consultation from the hospital site. Only treatment related to serious injury, illness or trauma is required to be notified, not other health matters.

- any emergency for which **emergency services** attended

NOTE: This means an incident, situation or event where there is an imminent or severe risk to the health, safety or wellbeing of a person at an education and care service. It does not mean an incident where emergency services attended as a precaution.

- a child appears to be **missing or cannot be accounted for** at the service
- a child appears to have been **taken or removed** from the service in a manner that contravenes the National Regulations
- a child was mistakenly **locked in or out of the service** premises or any part of the premises.

Notifications of serious incidents should be made to the regulatory authority (DET) through the [NQA IT System](#). If this is not practicable, the notification can be made initially in whatever way is best in the circumstances.

NOTE: some of serious incidents above are also reportable incidents under the *Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004* and require notification to WorkSafe.

## 5. SOURCES AND RELATED POLICIES

### Sources

- Communicable Disease Section, Public Health Group, Victorian Department of Health & Human Services (2011), *The Blue Book: Guidelines for the control of infectious diseases*. Available at: <https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/about/publications/researchandreports/The-blue-book>
- Communicable Disease Section, Victorian Department of Health & Human Services (2019), *A guide to the management and control of gastroenteritis outbreaks in children's centres*. Victorian Government, Melbourne: <https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/about/publications/researchandreports/A-guide-to-the-management-and-control-of-gastroenteritis-outbreaks-in-childrens-centres>
- National Immunisation Program, Department of Health, Australian Government: <https://www.health.gov.au/initiatives-and-programs/national-immunisation-program>
- Department of Health & Human Services, Victoria (2012) *Head lice management guidelines*: <https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/about/publications/policiesandguidelines/Head-lice-management-guidelines>



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- *Immunisation Enrolment Toolkit for early childhood services*: <https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/public-health/immunisation/vaccination-children/no-jab-no-play/immunisation-enrolment-toolkit>
- *Guide to the Education and Care Services National Law and the Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011* (2017), ACECQA: <https://www.acecqa.gov.au/sites/default/files/2018-01/NQF-Resource-02-Guide-to-ECS-Law-Regs.pdfv>
- *Guide to the National Quality Standard* (2017), ACECQA: <https://www.acecqa.gov.au/sites/default/files/acecqa/files/National-Quality-Framework-Resources-Kit/NQF-Resource-03-Guide-to-NQS.pdf>
- National Health and Medical Research Council (2013) *Staying Healthy: Preventing infectious diseases in early childhood education and care services* (5<sup>th</sup> edition): <https://www.nhmrc.gov.au/about-us/publications/staying-healthy-preventing-infectious-diseases-early-childhood-education-and-care-services>
- Information about immunisations, including immunisation schedule, DHHS: [www.health.vic.gov.au/immunisation](http://www.health.vic.gov.au/immunisation)
- WorkSafe, Victoria (2008) *Compliance code: First aid in the workplace*: <https://www.worksafe.vic.gov.au/resources/compliance-code-first-aid-workplace>
- Statements Section for statements on health emergencies, AHPPC. Available at: <https://www.health.gov.au/committees-and-groups/australian-health-protection-principal-committee-ahppc>

### Service policies

- *Administration of First Aid Policy*
- *Administration of Medication Policy*
- *Dealing with Medical Conditions Policy*
- *Enrolment and Orientation Policy*
- *Hygiene Policy*
- *Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Policy*
- *Inclusion and Equity Policy*
- *Occupational Health and Safety Policy*
- *Privacy and Confidentiality Policy*

## PROCEDURES

### The Approved Provider and Person with Management or Control are responsible for:

- ensuring that where there is an occurrence of an infectious disease at the service, reasonable steps are taken to prevent the spread of that infectious disease (Regulation 88(1))
- ensuring that where there is an occurrence of an infectious disease at the service, a parent/guardian or authorised emergency contact of each child at the service is notified of the occurrence as soon as is practicable (Regulation 88(2))
- ensuring that information from the DHHS about the minimum exclusion periods (refer to *Definitions*) is displayed at the service and is available to all stakeholders including staff, parents/guardians, students and volunteers
- ensuring that a child is excluded from the service in accordance with the minimum exclusion periods (refer to *Definitions*) when informed that the child is infected with an infectious disease (refer to *Definitions*) or has been in contact with a person who is infected with an infectious disease (refer to *Definitions*) as required under Regulation 111(1) of the *Public Health and Wellbeing Regulations 2019*
- contacting the Communicable Disease Section, DHHS (refer to *Definitions*) if there is an outbreak of two or more cases of gastrointestinal illness in a 48-hour period



- ensuring obligations under No Jab No Play legislation (*Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008*), including to request, assess and manage immunisation documentation and to assist parents/carers and families who may face difficulties in meeting the requirements are met (refer to *Enrolment and Orientation Policy*)
- ensuring when directed by the Chief Health Officer, that a child who is at material risk of contracting a vaccine-preventable disease is excluded until the Chief Health Officer directs that attendance can be resumed (Regulation 111(24) of the *Public Health and Wellbeing Regulations 2019*)
- notifying DET within 24 hours of a serious incident (refer to *Definitions*) via the [NQA ITS](#)
- supporting the Nominated Supervisor and the educators/staff at the service to implement the requirements of the minimum exclusion periods
- conducting a thorough inspection of the service on a regular basis, and consulting with educators/staff to assess any risks by identifying the hazards and potential sources of infection
- ensuring that the Nominated Supervisor, staff and everyone at the service adheres to the *Hygiene Policy* and the procedures for infection control relating to blood-borne viruses (refer to Attachment 4)
- ensuring that appropriate and current information and resources are provided to all staff and parents/guardians regarding the identification and management of infectious diseases, blood-borne viruses and infestations
- keeping informed about current legislation, information, research and best practice
- ensuring that any changes to the exclusion table or immunisation laws are communicated to all staff and parents/guardians in a timely manner
- complying with the advice of the Australian Health Protection Principal Committee (AHPPC), Victorian Chief Health Officer and DHHS in an epidemic or pandemic event (refer to Attachment 5).
- complying with the Ascot Kindergarten *Actions for Ascot Kinder in relation to the Coronavirus (COVID-19) Pandemic* (see Attachment 6)
- ensuring that the AKI Communication Chart is followed if a positive case of Coronavirus (COVID-19) is reported in any child or adult who has attended the service (see Attachment 7)
- ensuring that Ascot Kinder has a COVIDSafe Plan in place as per Government requirements and that staff and families are made aware of requirements under this plan (refer to *Occupational Health and Safety policy* – Attachment 4)

**The Nominated Supervisor and Person in Day-to-Day Charge are responsible for:**

- ensuring that where there is an occurrence of an infectious disease at the service, reasonable steps are taken to prevent the spread of that infectious disease (Regulation 88(1))
- ensuring that where there is an occurrence of an infectious disease at the service, a parent/guardian or authorised emergency contact of each child at the service is notified of the occurrence as soon as is practicable (Regulation 88(2))
- ensuring that information from the DHHS about the minimum exclusion periods (refer to *Definitions*) is displayed at the service and is available to all stakeholders including staff, parents/guardians, students and volunteers
- ensuring that a child is excluded from the service in accordance with the minimum exclusion periods (refer to *Definitions*) when informed that the child is infected with an infectious disease (refer to *Definitions*) or has been in contact with a person who is infected with an infectious disease (refer to *Definitions*) as required under Regulation 111(1) of the *Public Health and Wellbeing Regulations 2019*
- contacting the Communicable Disease Section (refer to *Definitions*) if there is an outbreak of two or more cases of gastrointestinal illness in a 48 hour period
- ensuring that a minimum of one educator with current approved first aid qualifications is in attendance and immediately available at all times the service is in operation (refer to *Administration of First Aid Policy*).

As a demonstration of duty of care and best practice, ELAA recommends that **all educators** have current approved first aid qualifications and anaphylaxis management training and asthma management training

- establishing good hygiene and infection control procedures, and ensuring that they are adhered to by everyone at the service (refer to *Hygiene Policy* and Attachment 4 – Procedures for infection control relating to blood-borne viruses)
- ensuring the exclusion requirements for infectious diseases are adhered to as per the minimum exclusion periods (refer to *Definitions*), notifying the Approved Provider and parents/guardians of any outbreak of infectious disease at the service, and displaying this information in a prominent position
- contacting the advising parents/guardians on enrolment that the minimum exclusion periods will be observed in regard to the outbreak of any infectious diseases or infestations (refer to: <https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/public-health/infectious-diseases/school-exclusion/school-exclusion-table>).
- advising the parents/guardians of a child who is not fully immunised on enrolment that they will be required to keep their child at home when an infectious disease is diagnosed at the service, and until there are no more occurrences of that disease and the exclusion period has ceased
- ensuring that parents/guardians understand that they must inform the Approved Provider or Nominated Supervisor as soon as practicable if the child is infected with an infectious disease or infestation, or has been in contact with a person infected with a condition for which the exclusion of contacts is specified (Regulation 110, *Public Health and Wellbeing Regulations 2019*)
- providing information and resources to parents/guardians to assist in the identification and management of infectious diseases and infestations
- if head lice are suspected in a child, provide notification to parents/guardians, either in verbal or written form, and request that the child be inspected, treated if appropriate and follow exclusion guidelines. Note: Ascot Kinder does not request parents/guardians sign a Consent form to conduct head lice inspections (Attachment 1) and does not conduct head lice checks unless express permission is provide by a parent/guardian
- providing a head lice notification letter (Attachment 3) to all parents/guardians when an infestation of head lice has been detected at the service
- maintaining confidentiality at all times (refer to *Privacy and Confidentiality Policy*)
- complying with the advice of the Australian Health Protection Principal Committee (AHPPC), Victorian Chief Health Officer and DHHS in an epidemic or pandemic event (refer to Attachment 5).
- complying with the Ascot Kindergarten *Actions for Ascot Kinder in relation to the Coronavirus (COVID-19) Pandemic* (Attachment 6)
- ensuring that the AKI Communication Chart is followed if a positive case of Coronavirus (COVID-19) is reported in any child or adult who has attended the service (see Attachment 7)
- ensuring staff and family members are aware of the requirements under the AKI COVIDSafe Plan and that staff and families adhere to the requirements under this plan (refer to *Occupational Health and Safety policy* – Attachment 4)

**All educators are responsible for:**

- encouraging parents/guardians to notify the service if their child has an infectious disease or infestation
- observing signs and symptoms of children who may appear unwell, and informing the Nominated Supervisor
- providing access to information and resources for parents/guardians to assist in the identification and management of infectious diseases and infestations



- monitoring any symptoms in children that may indicate the presence of an infectious disease and taking appropriate measures to minimise cross-infection
- complying with the *Hygiene Policy* of the service and the procedures for infection control relating to blood-borne viruses (refer to Attachment 4)
- maintaining confidentiality at all times (refer to *Privacy and Confidentiality Policy*)
- complying with the advice of the Australian Health Protection Principal Committee (AHPPC), Chief Health Officer and DHHS in an epidemic or pandemic event (refer to Attachment 5).
- complying with the Ascot Kindergarten *Actions for Ascot Kinder in relation to Coronavirus (COVID-19) Pandemic* (Attachment 6)
- Complying with any requirements in relation to the AKI COVIDSafe Plan (see *Occupational Health and Safety policy* – Attachment 4)

**Parents/guardians are responsible for:**

- keeping their child/ren at home if they are unwell or have an excludable infectious disease (refer to *Definitions*)
- informing the Approved Provider, Nominated Supervisor or Persons in Day-to-Day Charge as soon as practicable if their child has an infectious disease (refer to *Definitions*) or has been in contact with a person who has an infectious disease (Regulation 110 of the *Public Health and Wellbeing Regulations 2019*)
- complying with the minimum exclusion periods (refer to *Definitions*) or as directed by the Approved Provider or Nominated Supervisor after the Chief Health Officer directed them to exclude a child enrolled who the Chief Health Officer has determined to be at material risk of contracting a vaccine-preventable disease (Regulation 111(2) of the *Public Health and Wellbeing Regulations 2019*)
- regularly checking their child's hair for head lice or lice eggs, regularly inspecting all household members, and treating any infestations as necessary
- notifying the service if head lice or lice eggs have been found in their child's hair and when treatment was commenced
- complying with the *Hygiene Policy* and the procedures for infection control relating to blood-borne viruses (refer to Attachment 4) when in attendance at the service.
- complying with the Ascot Kindergarten *Actions for Ascot Kinder in relation to the Coronavirus (COVID-19) Pandemic* (Attachment 7)
- complying with any requirements in relation to the AKI COVIDSafe Plan (see *Occupational Health and Safety policy* – Attachment 4)

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

## EVALUATION

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

- regularly seek feedback from educators, staff, parents/guardians, children, management and all affected by the policy regarding its effectiveness
- monitor the implementation, compliance, complaints and incidents in relation to this policy
- ensure that all information related to infectious diseases on display and supplied to parents/guardians is current
- keep the policy up to date with current legislation, research, policy and best practice
- revise the policy and procedures as part of the service's policy review cycle, or as required
- notify parents/guardians at least 14 days before making any change to this policy or its procedures, unless a lesser period is necessary because of a risk (if required under legislation).



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## **ATTACHMENTS**

- Attachment 1: Consent form to conduct head lice inspections
- Attachment 2: Head lice action form
- Attachment 3: Head lice notification letter
- Attachment 4: Procedures for infection control relating to blood-borne viruses
- Attachment 5: Actions for early childhood and care services in an epidemic or pandemic event
- Attachment 6: Actions for Ascot Kinder in relation to the Coronavirus (COVID-19) Pandemic
- Attachment 7: AKI Communication Chart for a positive case of Coronavirus (COVID-19) at Ascot Kindergarten

## **AUTHORISATION**

This policy was adopted by the Approved Provider of Ascot Kindergarten on 18<sup>th</sup> August 2020

**REVIEW DATE: AUGUST 2021**



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**ATTACHMENT 1**

"[Place on service letterhead]"

**Consent form to conduct head lice inspections**

Dear parents/guardians,

Ascot Kindergarten is aware that head lice infestation can be a sensitive issue, and is committed to maintaining children’s confidentiality and avoiding stigmatisation at all times. However, management of head lice infestation is most effective when all children and their families actively support our policy and participate in our screening program.

All inspections will be conducted in a culturally-appropriate and sensitive manner, and information about why the inspections are conducted and the benefits of preventing infestations will be explained to children prior to conducting the inspections.

Only the Nominated Supervisor or an external person approved by the service, such as a nurse employed by the local council, will be permitted to carry out inspections on children at the service. Where there is concern about a potential infection, a child’s hair will be inspected for the presence of head lice or lice eggs.

Where live head lice are found, Ascot Kindergarten will notify the parents/guardians and will provide them with relevant information about the treatment of head lice. Other families will be provided with a notice to inform them that head lice have been detected in the group and to encourage them to be vigilant and carry out regular inspections of their own child.

Please note that while head lice do not spread disease, they are included in the *Minimum Period of Exclusion from Primary Schools and Children’s Services for Infectious Diseases Cases and Contacts* published by the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) which defines the minimum period of exclusion from a children’s service for children with infectious diseases. According to this table, where a child has head lice, that child must be excluded until the day after appropriate treatment has commenced.

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Child’s name: \_\_\_\_\_ Group: \_\_\_\_\_

I hereby give my consent for Ascot Kindergarten, or a person approved by Ascot Kindergarten, to inspect my child’s head when an infestation of head lice is suspected in the service.

Full name of parent/guardian: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of parent/guardian: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

I do not give consent for my child’s head to be inspected. I request that staff contact me when an infestation of head lice is suspected at the service, and I agree to come to the service to complete the inspection myself.

Full name of parent/guardian: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of parent/guardian: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_



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**ATTACHMENT 2**

**Head lice action form**

"[Place on service letterhead]"

Dear parents/guardians,

We have detected head lice or lice eggs on your child and it is very important for you to treat your child as soon as possible, using safe treatment practices. Please read the attached pamphlet *Treating and controlling head lice* from the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS). This contains guidelines regarding detecting and treating head lice and lice eggs.

Please note that while head lice do not spread disease, they are included in the *Minimum Period of Exclusion from Primary Schools and Children's Services for Infectious Diseases Cases and Contacts* published by the DHHS which defines the minimum period of exclusion from a children's service for children with infectious diseases. According to this table, where a child has head lice, that child must be excluded until the day after appropriate treatment has commenced.

Please keep your child at home until appropriate treatment has commenced and use the form provided below to notify Ascot Kindergarten, when your child returns to the service, of the action taken by you to treat the head lice/eggs.

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**Head lice treatment – action taken**

**Parent/guardian response form**

To Ascot Kindergarten

CONFIDENTIAL

Child's name: \_\_\_\_\_ Group: \_\_\_\_\_

I understand that my child must not attend the service with untreated head lice or lice eggs.

I have used the following recommended treatment for head lice or lice eggs for my child:

\_\_\_\_\_ "[write name of treatment used]" .

Treatment commenced on: \_\_\_\_\_ [write date treatment was first used].

Signature of parent/guardian: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_



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## ATTACHMENT 3

"[Place on service letterhead]"

### Head lice notification letter

Dear parents/guardians,

It has come to our attention that head lice or lice eggs have been detected in your child's group at Ascot Kindergarten and we seek your co-operation in checking your child's hair regularly throughout this week, [Date] .

Head lice are common in children and are transmitted by having head-to-head contact with someone who has head lice, but they do not transmit infectious diseases.

#### **What can you do?**

We seek your co-operation in checking your child's hair and, in instances where head lice or lice eggs are found, treating your child's hair.

We also ask that you ensure your child does not attend the service until the day after appropriate treatment has occurred in line with the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) minimum period of exclusion required for head lice.

#### **How do I treat my child for head lice?**

Please read the attached pamphlet *Treating and controlling head lice* from the DHHS. This contains guidelines regarding detecting and treating head lice and lice eggs. Additional information is also available by contacting the service.

#### **Who do I contact if my child has head lice?**

If head lice or lice eggs are found in your child's hair, you must inform:

- the service, and use the attached form to advise when treatment has commenced
- parents/guardians and carers of your child's friends so that they can also check these children for head lice or lice eggs and commence treatment if necessary.

#### **When can my child return to the service?**

DHHS regulations require that where a child has head lice, that child must be excluded until the day after appropriate treatment has commenced.

Ascot Kindergarten is aware that head lice can be a sensitive issue and is committed to maintaining your confidentiality.

Kind regards,

"[Signature of Nominated Supervisor]"

"[Name of Nominated Supervisor]"



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## ATTACHMENT 4

### Procedures for infection control relating to blood-borne viruses

This procedure is based on information available from the Department of Education and Training (DET), the Victorian Government's Better Health Channel and the National Health and Medical Research Council.

#### Important note on blood spills

A person responding to an incident involving blood at the service must first cover any cuts, sores or abrasions on their own hands and arms with waterproof dressings.

#### Equipment and procedures for responding to incidents that present blood-borne virus hazards

##### CLEANING AND REMOVAL OF BLOOD SPILLS

###### Equipment (label clearly and keep in an easily accessible location)

- Disposable gloves
- Disposable plastic bags/zip lock bags/bio hazard container (if available)
- Detergent/bleach
- Disposable towels
- Access to warm water

###### Procedure

1. Put on disposable gloves.
2. Cover the spill with paper towels.
3. Carefully remove the paper towel and contents.
4. Place the paper towels in an appropriate disposable plastic bag/zip lock bag/bio hazard container.
5. Clean the area with warm water and detergent/bleach, then rinse and dry.
6. Remove and place gloves in an appropriate disposable plastic bag/zip lock bag/bio hazard container, seal and place it in a rubbish bin inaccessible to children.
7. Wash hands in warm, soapy water and dry (follow the *Handwashing guidelines* in the *Hygiene Policy*).

##### SAFE DISPOSAL OF DISCARDED NEEDLES AND SYRINGES

###### Equipment (label clearly and keep in an easily accessible location)

- Disposable gloves
- Long-handled tongs
- Disposable plastic bags
- 'Sharps' syringe disposal container, or rigid-walled, screw-top, puncture-resistant container available for free from local council, who may also provide free training to staff on the collection of sharps
- Detergent/bleach

###### Procedure

1. Put on disposable gloves.
2. Do **not** try to re-cap the needle or to break the needle from the syringe.



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3. Place the 'sharps' syringe disposal container on the ground next to the needle/syringe and open the lid.
4. Using tongs, pick the syringe up from the middle, keeping the sharp end away from you at all times.
5. Place the syringe, needle point down, in the 'sharps' syringe disposal container and close the lid securely on the container.
6. Repeat steps 3 to 5 to pick up all syringes and/or unattached needles.
7. Remove and place gloves in a disposable plastic bag, seal and place it in a rubbish bin inaccessible to children.
8. Clean the area with warm water and detergent/bleach, then rinse and dry.
9. Wash hands in warm, soapy water and dry (follow the *Handwashing guidelines* in the *Hygiene Policy*).

Under no circumstances should children, work-experience students or volunteers be asked or encouraged to pick up needles/syringes.

If the needle/syringe is not accessible and cannot be collected, mark and supervise the area so that others are not at risk, and contact the Syringe Disposal Helpline on 1800 552 355.

Advice on the handling and disposal of needles/syringes can be accessed from:

- the Syringe Disposal Helpline on 1800 552 355 (24 hours a day, 7 days a week) for the location of the nearest needle exchange outlet or public disposal bin
- the environmental officer (health surveyor) at your local municipal/council offices
- local general practitioners
- local hospitals.

Note: 'Sharps' syringe disposal containers and/or needles/syringes must not be put in normal waste disposal bins.



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## ATTACHMENT 5

# ACTIONS FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD AND CARE SERVICES IN AN EPIDEMIC OR PANDEMIC EVENT

Early childhood education and care services should consider a variety of strategies to support physical distancing and good hygiene practices to reduce the risk of infection transmission within the practical limitations of an early learning environment.

The following actions are to be considered, adapted and implemented as necessary according to the education setting and the individual needs of the staff, children and the wider service community.

- Display educational materials, which can be downloaded and printed from the [Department of Health and Human Services \(DHHS\) website](#)
- Comply with National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) guidance [Staying healthy: Preventing infectious diseases in early childhood education and care services](#)
- Alert your approved provider about any child or staff absenteeism due to an infectious outbreak.
- Keep parents and staff informed of the actions you are taking.

## ACTIONS

Perhaps the most important action early childhood services can take to reduce the risk of infection transmission is to ensure that any unwell staff and children remain at home.

Staff or children most at risk of severe illness should individually assess appropriateness for on-site attendance at this time, with support from their medical practitioner.

It is important that visitors to early childhood services are limited to those delivering or supporting essential services and operations during a pandemic situation.

- All unwell staff and children must stay home.
- Parents/carers of children with complex medical needs (including those with compromised immune systems), should seek advice from the child's medical practitioner to support decision-making about whether on-site education and care is suitable, noting that this advice may change depending on the status of the pandemic in Victoria.
- Additional staff, including parent volunteers, should be discouraged from attending the service at this time. Ensure vigilance is maintained through the use of the visitor signing in and out record book including their contact details.
- Parent information sessions and interviews should meet physical distancing requirements of 1.5 metres between adults, or else be replaced with virtual alternatives.

## HYGIENE

Everyone can protect themselves and prevent the spread of infection by continuing effective hand hygiene.

- All staff and children should undertake regular hand hygiene, particularly on arrival to the service, before and after eating, after blowing their nose, coughing, sneezing or using the toilet. You are a good role model for the children and their parents/carers, so actively talk about why everyone needs to wash their hands and the importance of everyone doing this.
- Make sure liquid soap and running water, or alcohol-based hand sanitiser, is available at the entrance of the facility and throughout.



- Tissues should be readily accessible with bins provided in each room and in outdoor areas for easy disposal.
- It is recommended that children do not drink directly from drinking fountains at this time. Children should bring their own water bottle for use (and refilling) at the service.
- Ensure the highest hygiene practices amongst food handlers as per NHMRC guidance [Staying healthy: Preventing infectious diseases in early childhood education and care services](#). Sharing of food should not occur.
- Use of mobile phones by staff should be discouraged. Staff should be reminded to clean their phones regularly.

## ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE

To assist in minimising the spread of infection, procedures to reduce close proximity between attendees at the service should be considered.

- Consider the arrival and departure procedures for children and, where possible, minimise opportunities for parents and carers to gather in groups, especially in foyers and in children's play areas.
- It may be possible, for example, for children to be dropped off and picked up in the service entrance or foyer.
- While staggered start and finish times occur naturally in some service types, early childhood education and care services will often have one arrival and pick up time. Consider how the arrival and pick up time could be spread out. One example may be to divide the group and allocate times, noting that it is not expected that session times are extended to accommodate additional arrival and departure procedures.
- Greeting parents and children at the front door in the morning and during pick up times will allow for one-on-one communication with families while practising physical distancing and providing opportunities to consider whether children are showing any signs of being unwell.

As at 9 July 2020, daily temperature checks were introduced for services in metropolitan Melbourne and Mitchell Shire to curb the spread of coronavirus (COVID-19).

As at 10 July 2020, the Victorian Chief Health Officer recommended that people in metropolitan Melbourne and Mitchell Shire wear face masks in situations where physical distancing cannot be maintained. These recommendations apply to adults over the age of 18. Face masks should not be placed on children under two.

Victoria's Chief Health Officer has confirmed that the use of face masks or coverings by adults or children is not recommended in early childhood settings at this time.

A single use facemask or cloth mask made to DHHS standards is recommended for staff performing temperature checks. Note that a cloth mask must be washed after each use before being worn again.

## CONSIDERATIONS FOR TEACHING AND LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS

Maintaining a physical distance of 1.5 metres will not be practical in early childhood services. Physical distancing is most important between adults.

Reducing mixing between different age or room groups is recommended as a precautionary measure to minimise risk of spread of transmission and aid containment.

- Consider small group play, staggered mealtimes and indoor/outdoor play opportunities whenever possible.



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- Windows should be open during the day to promote air flow where possible.
- Consider the setup of the room and the placement of the activities and limit the number of whole group activities.
- Rather than having group times where everyone is sitting on the mat, consider using informal opportunities to engage with the children/read books/do storytelling with small groups of children at a time.
- For younger children, particularly consider the rotation of toys more often and increase the frequency of cleaning toys. Sharing of toys that have been placed in mouths should be monitored and avoided.
- Wherever possible and where you have enough staffing for adequate supervision, consider operating an indoor/outdoor program.
- A greater range of activities will encourage children and staff to spread out more broadly.
- Mixing of staff and children between rooms should be minimised where possible. It is acknowledged that staff may need to move between rooms to support breaks and, in these situations, staff should be reminded of the importance of hand hygiene.
- Where multiple staff are in a room, remind staff to maintain physical distancing from each other as much as practical.

## **CONSIDERATIONS FOR OFFICES AND STAFF FACILITIES**

- Close proximity between staff should be avoided, where possible, and especially in offices and staff rooms.
- Workstations should be spaced out as much as possible, and the number of staff in offices limited. Where possible, staff should use separate offices.
- Remind staff to maintain physical distancing from each other as much as possible in the reception, staff room and offices.

## **CLEANING AND FACILITIES MANAGEMENT**

- Environmental cleaning, coupled with regular hand hygiene, remains important to reduce the risk of infection transmission.
- Services should maintain full adherence to the NHMRC childcare cleaning guidelines, in addition:
  - clean and disinfect high-touch surfaces at least daily (e.g. play gyms, tables, hard-backed chairs, doorknobs, light switches, phones, remotes, handles, desks, toilets, sinks, kitchenware).
  - wash and launder play items and toys including washable plush toys, as appropriate, in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions. If possible, launder items using the warmest appropriate water setting for the items and dry items completely.
  - note, disinfecting and cleaning of toys and equipment is not required after every use.
- Hand hygiene before and after use of shared equipment is recommended. (For example, prior to a new activity).
- Excursions should not be undertaken other than to local parks.

## **PROVISION OF ROUTINE CARE AND FIRST AID**

Physical distancing is not practical when providing direct care. In this situation, standard precautions, including hand hygiene, are important for infection control.

- Standard precautions are advised when coming in to contact with someone for the purpose of providing routine care, assistance or first aid. Also see NHMRC guidance [Staying healthy: Preventing infectious diseases in early childhood education and care services](#).



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- Always wash hands with soap and water or use a hand sanitiser before and after performing routine care or first aid.
- Additional Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), for example face masks, is not required to provide routine care or first aid for children who are well.

## MANAGEMENT OF AN UNWELL CHILD OR STAFF MEMBER

It is important that any staff member or child who becomes unwell while at an early childhood service returns home. Sensible steps services can take while a child awaits collection by a parent or carer as a precaution.

- Staff or children should be isolated in an appropriate space with suitable supervision and collected by a parent/carer as soon as possible.
- Where staff or children are experiencing compatible symptoms important actions to take include hand hygiene, physical distance and where possible putting on a face mask.
- Face masks should not be used in situations where an individual is unable to safely or practically tolerate a mask (e.g. a child with complex medical needs, including existing respiratory needs, and younger children).
- Urgent medical attention should be sought where indicated.
- Health care plans, where relevant, should be updated to provide additional advice on monitoring and identification of the unwell child in the context of an epidemic or pandemic.
- If a staff member is unsure whether a child is unwell, it is advisable in the first instance to contact the parent/carer to discuss any concerns about the health status of the child and, taking a precautionary approach, request the parent/carer to collect their child if concerns remain. A trained staff member could take the temperature of the child, where appropriate, to support decision making. Gloves should be worn for the purpose of taking a temperature.
- Staff or children experiencing compatible symptoms with the infection should be encouraged to seek the advice of a healthcare professional who can advise on next steps. A medical certificate is not required to return to an early childhood setting after a period of illness, however staff and children should not return until symptoms resolve.
- Follow cleaning guidance according to the situation of the case. If a child spreads droplets (for example by sneezing, coughing or vomiting), clean surfaces immediately with disinfectant wipes while wearing gloves.

## SOURCE

[Health and safety advice for early childhood education and care services in the context of coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#), Department of Education and Training and DHHS.



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ATTACHMENT 6:

## **ACTIONS FOR ASCOT KINDER IN RELATION TO THE CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19) PANDEMIC**

### **CORONAVIRUS**

Coronavirus (COVID-19) is an infectious disease caused by a newly discovered coronavirus.

#### **SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS:**

- Fever
- Chills and sweats
- Cough
- Sore throat
- Shortness of breath
- Runny nose
- Loss of sense of smell or taste

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

If you have any of these symptoms, however mild, you should seek advice and get tested.

For further information see DHSS website: <https://www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/victorian-public-coronavirus-disease-covid-19>

### **ASCOT KINDER REQUIREMENTS DURING CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19) PANDEMIC**

- Children and staff are not to attend kindergarten if they are unwell and displaying any of the above symptoms.
- Parents will be contacted to collect their child if they are unwell during a session or displaying any of the above symptoms. Staff will go home if symptoms develop during the session.
- If children or staff are showing symptoms of Coronavirus (COVID-19), they are to stay home from kindergarten and get tested. They are to remain at home while waiting for test results and isolate.
- If a family member, or direct contact of a child or staff member, is currently awaiting a Coronavirus test result, that child or staff member must remain at home and not attend kinder until a negative result is confirmed. This helps protect the safety and wellbeing of children, families and staff.
- Children and staff are to adhere to hygiene procedures whilst at kinder as outlined in the AKI Risk Assessment and guidelines from DET, DHHS and ELAA.

### **DROP OFF AND PICK UP REQUIREMENTS**

- We require families to observe social distancing on arrival and departure. We encourage only one family member to complete drop off and pick up.
- Families will be required to observe any legislative requirements in relation to mask wearing, which means that currently all family members must wear masks at drop off and pick up.
- Hand sanitiser will be provided and will be dispensed to children upon entry and exit.
- Temperature checks will be undertaken on children and staff when they arrive at the service. If a temperature is above 37.5 degrees, the child or staff member will be asked to wait outside the service (child with parent/guardian) and their temperature will be checked again after 15 minutes. If it is still above 37.5 degrees, the parents/guardian will be advised to take the child home and staff members will return home.
- Educators will take your child into the kinder room and accompany them to the exit on departure.
- Educators will sign your child in and out on the Attendance Book.
- Parents will not be permitted to enter the kindergarten grounds or building unless in emergency circumstances.

### **STAFFING ARRANGEMENTS DURING PANDEMIC:**

- When directed by the State Government, staff who are able to work from home should work from home.
- Staff are to alert the Director as soon as possible if they have symptoms and are having a test for Coronavirus (COVID-19).
- If a staff member begins to display symptoms during a session they should immediately contact the Director, don a face mask and self isolate until they are able to safely leave the premises.
- In the event that Ascot Kinder is unable to staff the kindergarten with correct educator/child ratios due to unwell staff or staff being in isolation, the kindergarten will cancel sessions until adequate staff can be organised. This is to protect the safety of children, families and staff. Families will be notified as soon as practicable if this situation arises.

### **MASKS**

- As of 11.59pm on Wednesday 22<sup>nd</sup> July masks are to be worn when leaving home in Melbourne Metropolitan areas, until advised by DHHS, DET and the Victorian State Government.
- In kindergarten settings, masks are to be worn by parents, guardians or other persons when dropping off and picking up children.
- Masks are to be worn by staff when parents, guardians and others are dropping off or picking up children and when they are performing temperature checks. Masks are not mandatory for staff who are working with children, but staff may elect to wear a mask throughout the session and whilst at work.
- When staff are working in the office and in situations where they may not be able to socially distance, they are required to wear a mask.
- Disposable masks: Staff wearing disposable masks are to dispose of these in a safe, hygienic manner after use,
- Reusable Masks: Staff wearing a reusable mask must store them in a zip lock bag when not being worn at kinder and are encouraged to wash these daily.

### **CLOSURE OF ASCOT KINDER**

#### **Ascot Kinder may close in the following circumstances:**

- A positive case of Coronavirus (COVID-19) is reported in any child or staff member from Ascot Kinder.
- A positive case is reported in any family member or direct contact of, a staff member or child, who has recently attended Ascot Kinder
- In the event that there is a delay in response or advice from DHHS, and the Committee of Management and the Director deem that closure is necessary to protect the safety and wellbeing of children, families and staff. In this circumstance, the service will follow AKI guidelines and policies until further information is received from DHHS.

#### **IF THERE IS A POSITIVE CASE OF CORONAVIRUS REPORTED:**

- In the event that a positive case is recorded the service will follow the AKI Communication Chart (Attachment 7) and follow any advice or guidelines provided by DHHS in regards to actions to be taken and contact tracing.
- The kindergarten site will be closed and nobody may enter until the site has been cleaned in accordance with requirements outlined by DHHS and DET.
- The Director, President and/or Administration Staff will notify families via email and/or phone alerting them to the closure of the service. Communication will be modelled on the DET templates located in the Closure Communication Pack. Staff will also be advised of closure and be made aware they cannot return to kinder until advised it is safe to do so.
- The Director, President and Administration Staff will collect contact tracing information, as required.
- All staff and children are requested to self isolate and get tested if they have symptoms.
- Families will need to await further instructions from Ascot Kinder and/or DHHS to see if and when, asymptomatic children and staff will need to be tested.



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- If you receive advice to have your child tested and choose not to do so, they may not return to kinder for 14 days.
- If a child or staff member tests positive to coronavirus they must follow instructions received by DHHS, isolate for 14 days and return a negative test result before returning to kinder.
- The Director and/or Committee Member will contact Moonee Valley City Council to arrange cleaning in accordance with DET and DHHS requirements.
- During closure, staff are to maintain regular contact with families and help them understand the process that is underway. The following link provides resources in different languages if required: <https://www.education.vic.gov.au/childhood/Pages/closure-preparedness.aspx>
- In the event that there is a confirmed case of Coronavirus in a kindergarten group or staff member, families can contact the 24 hour Coronavirus Hotline on 1800 675 398 for further advice.

## COMMUNICATION CHART FOR A CONFIRMED CASE OF CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19) AT ASCOT KINDERGARTEN

**Ascot Kinder receives notification of a confirmed case of Coronavirus (COVID-19) by a family member, staff member or DHHS**

Notify President Megan Martin on \_\_\_\_\_

Notify Director Kirsty Rochford on \_\_\_\_\_  
Kirsty will notify all staff members

If Kirsty is not available contact Danielle on \_\_\_\_\_ or Tara on \_\_\_\_\_

### STEP 1:

Advise the **Department of Education (DET) Quality Assessment and Regulation Division (QARD)**. Kirsty or Tara to lodge a notification through the **National Quality Agenda IT System** or other staff please call **1300 307 415 (within 24 hours)**. **Lodge a second notification if required to close.**

Advise DET Regional Office in Footscray on 1300 333 232. DET will seek advice from DHHS Public Health team to confirm the case. Follow any directions provided by DET. If advised by family member or staff call DHHS on 1300 651 160 or 1800 338 663.

Call and advise Worksafe on 132 360 within 48 hours and they will email an Incident Notification Form to complete and return

### STEP 2

**If notification is received during a session the onsite teacher will complete the following tasks:**

- Notify parents/guardians via email and/or phone to collect their child
- Sample message: *"Our service has been advised that someone at Ascot Kindergarten has tested positive to coronavirus (COVID-19). We have only just been advised of this situation and the appropriate authorities have been contacted. Can you please come and collect your child as soon as you are able. If there are any problems in getting here, please call us on 9375 3548. There is no need to panic or rush. We will communicate more information to families, when we are advised by the authorities." Consider using DET templates for emails depending on circumstances- liaise with Director*
- Notify the Director (or designated person) when this is complete and all children are collected

### **If notification is received out of business hours:**

- Advise Director (or designated person)
- Advise DET QARD via portal
- Call DET as soon as practicable
- Call DHHS hotline on 1800 338 663 (weekdays 8am-8pm on weekdays and 8am-6pm on weekends) or 1300 651 160
- Contact Worksafe as above
- Follow **STEP 3**

### STEP 3

After instruction from DET and DHHS, the Director or designated person should use the appropriate email template from **DET Initial Closure Communication Pack** to notify families of the situation (in COVID folder and online). This email will advise families of closure dates, cleaning arrangements etc. (Note: DET website offers translated versions)

DHHS and DET will advise individuals from our service who are close contacts and the protocols for isolation and testing.

Contact Council Officer Renata Verrato to arrange cleaning of the service. Mobile: 0413 835 014, Wk: 8325 1834, Email: rvarrato@mvcc.vic.gov.au

Follow procedures and re-opening protocols as advised by DET and DHHS

### IN THE EVENT OF A DELAY IN CONTACT FROM DHHS:

**Close the kindergarten immediately**

**Email families to alert them of closure**

**Families/staff are encouraged to remain isolated until they hear from AK and get tested if symptomatic**

**Anyone testing positive is to self isolate for 14 days and not return to the kindergarten until they have a negative test result**