

Coronavirus (COVID-19) Pandemic Management Policy

Policy Statement

COVID-19 is a contagious viral infection that generally causes respiratory illness in humans. The World Health Organization (WHO), has declared that COVID-19 outbreak as a 'pandemic'- a Public Health Emergency of International Concern (effective 11 March 2020). This is mainly due to the speed and scale of transmission of the virus in countries around the world, including Australia.

Presentation can range from no symptoms (asymptomatic) to severe illness with potentially life-threatening complications, including pneumonia.

People with COVID-19 may experience:

- fever
- flu-like symptoms such as coughing, sore throat and fatigue
- shortness of breath

COVID-19 is spread by contact with respiratory secretions and objects or materials which are likely to carry infection, such as clothes, utensils and furniture.

The Australian Government is constantly updating the current status of COVID-19 including health recommendations, travel restrictions, and a vast collection of resources and information to help people make informed decisions.

As this information is changing rapidly, Meerilinga is monitoring health alerts and implementing measures suggested by key health experts to minimise the transmission of COVID-19.

We have a range of comprehensive policies in place to guide best practice in relation to health and safety, dealing with infectious diseases and maintaining a safe environment. Our duty of care and responsibilities to children, families, students and all staff to provide a safe environment is of utmost importance.

The evolving nature of COVID-19 and the unprecedented steps required to protect our community as recommended by the Australian Government, has resulted in the development of a specific policy to assist our organisation to manage this pandemic.

This policy will change as required to ensure the protective measures against COVID-19 as advised by our Government are implemented by our Services.

Policy Purpose

Meerilinga will minimise staff, children, family and student exposure to COVID-19 by adhering to all recommended guidelines from the Australian Government- Department of Health and local Public Health Units to slow the spread of the virus.

We will implement practices that help to reduce the transmission of the virus including the exclusion of any person (child, educator, staff, parent, visitor or volunteer) that is suspected or has tested positive to having COVID-19. We will implement effective hygiene practices as per our existing policies and procedures.

Our Services will provide up-to-date information and advice to parents, families and educators sourced from the Australian Government, Department of Health and state Ministry of Health about COVID-19 as it becomes available. Recommendations and health measures mandated by the Health Department will be strictly adhered to at all times.

Scope

This policy applies to the Board of Governors, Executive, all workers, customer, clients, students and those employed on a fee for service or contract basis while conducting Meerilinga business.

Exclusions

Policy Review

At least annually or from time to time the organisation may make changes to this policy to improve the effectiveness of its operation.

Implementation

Meerilinga is committed to minimise the spread of the COVID-19 virus by implementing recommendations provided by the Australian Government- Department of Health and Safe Work Australia.

We implement procedures as stated in the Staying Healthy: Preventing infectious diseases in early childhood education and care services (Fifth Edition) developed by the Australian Government National Health and Medical Research Council as part of our day-to-day operation.

We are guided by explicit decisions regarding exclusion periods and notification of any infectious disease by the Australian Government - Department of Health and local Public Health Units in our jurisdiction under the Public Health Act. COVID-19 is a notifiable condition in all states and territories of Australia.

In the event of any child, educator, staff member or visitor attending our Service who is suspected or confirmed to have the infection, the Approved Provider will contact the Public Health Unit.

National Coronavirus (COVID-19) Health Information Line
1800 020 080 Call 131 450 for translating and interpreting service
Health Direct 1800 022 222
WA Department of Health WA – Communicable Disease Control Directorate 9222 0255 or after hours emergency 9328 0553

This Policy must be read in conjunction with our other relevant and associated sections of the organisational policies and processes.

Meerilinga Policy and Process Manual:

- Section 1 - Strategic and Business Planning (Code of Ethics & Conduct)
- Section 2 - Human Resources
- Section 3 - Finance, Assets and Administration
- Section 4 - Branding, Image & Reputation
- Section 5 - Meerilinga Training College
- Section 6 - Children's Program
- Section 7 - Workplace Health and Safety
- Section 8 - Guidelines

Minimising the transmission of COVID-19

Our Service has implemented risk management planning to identify any possible risks and hazards to our work and learning environment and practices. Where possible, we have eliminated or minimised these risks as is reasonably practicable.

Effective 15 March 2020, the [Australian Health Protection Principal Committee](#) has made recommendations to the general public to help manage the spread of COVID-19. These measures include implementing good hygiene, self-isolation and social distancing.

Our staff are committed to assist in infection prevention controls and have completed COVID-19 infection control training.

Summary Information - Protecting yourself and others:

<https://healthywa.wa.gov.au/protectyourself>

- **Wash hands** often with soap and water, or hand sanitiser. Enhanced personal hygiene measures have been introduced for children, families and staff.
https://healthywa.wa.gov.au/Articles/F_I/Facts-about-hand-hygiene
- **Cover coughs and sneezes** with a tissue or use your inner elbow.
- **Stay home** if you are sick.
- **Clean surfaces** and objects. Touch points such as gates, door handles, light switches, telephone and hard surfaces regularly. Staff must comply with policy and processes relevant to daily cleaning schedules and procedures that align with Staying Healthy - NHMRC Guidelines.
<https://ww2.health.wa.gov.au/~media/Files/Corporate/general%20documents/Infectious%20diseases/PDF/Coronavirus/COVID19-Environmental-Cleaning-for-workplaces.pdf>
- Where possible, maintain physical distancing **stay 1.5 metres from other people** as a minimum.
https://www.health.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/2020/03/coronavirus-covid-19-information-on-social-distancing_1.pdf
- **Do not touch your face** unless you have washed or sanitised your hands.

Immunisation

Whilst there is no vaccination for COVID-19, we strongly recommend that all staff, children and families receive the seasonal influenza vaccination.

Information and Communication

Signs and posters will be displayed at the entry of the premises to remind employees and visitors of the risks of COVID-19 and the measures that are necessary to stop its spread including hand washing and hand rub procedures.

Alcohol-based hand sanitiser will be available in a wall mounted dispenser upon entry and exit of the premises. Kept out of reach of young children and only available for adults to use. If parents decide to apply this to their child, they must supervise their child to avoid rubbing it into their eyes or ingesting. Hand washing facilities are accessible in all areas of the premises

We will establish regular communication channels with families, students and staff to share information about COVID-19 and our service delivery as required. This will be communicated to families through our website, email, social media and Earlyworks.

Information provided to families and staff may include:

- symptoms of COVID-19
- transmission of the virus
- self-isolation and exclusion
- prevention strategies- including hand hygiene and self-isolation
- contact details for health assistance
- payment of fees updated information about temporary changes to Payment of Fees policy.

Due to the fluid nature of COVID-19 and the possibility of self-isolation for some staff members, our Service will endeavour to inform parents and families of any staff changes as required.

The Approved Provider, Nominated Supervisor, educators, staff, families and visitors will comply with the following:

Exclusion / Self-isolation / Self-quarantine

- Essential staff, enrolled children and families will be permitted entry to the premises. Record of attendance will be written on the child's attendance and staff roster.
- Authorised tradespeople for essential maintenance are allowed entry subject to protective control measures being strictly adhered to (no close contact with anyone with a positive COVID-19 in the past 14 days, hand hygiene, physical distancing etc). Record attendance in visitor logbook.
- Deliveries must be left in a designated safe area at the entry to the premises. If signing for goods is required, staff must use their own pen to sign paper or wash hands immediately after using electronic signing.
- Any person who has been in close contact with someone who has a positive diagnosis must self-isolate for 14 days.

- Household members of a person who has a confirmed case (including children) of COVID-19 must also be isolated from the Service and general public.
- The Public Health Unit will provide further information on a case-by-case basis as to the length and place of isolation. (see: [COVID-19 home isolation](#))
- Families must immediately advise the Service if they, or anyone in their family, develops any symptoms of the virus or receives a positive result of the virus whilst in isolation.
- Any person (employee, enrolled child, parent, caregiver, visitor or contractor) who is displaying symptoms such as: fever, coughing, sore throat, fatigue and shortness of breath, must seek urgent medical attention to determine if they need to be tested for COVID-19 and not attend our Service **under any circumstance**.

Implement effective hygiene measures

The national campaign *Help Stop The Spread and Stay Healthy*, launched by the Australian Government has emphasised that effective handwashing is a vital strategy to help reduce the spread of the COVID-19 virus. Handwashing with soap and water for at least 20 seconds whenever you cough, sneeze or blow your nose, prepare food or eat, touch your face or use the toilet is required.

Meerilinga will adhere to National Regulation requirements and Government guidelines to ensure all educators, children, families and visitors to the Service implement best practice.

We will ensure:

- Educators and staff must adhere to our *Handwashing Process* at all times. 'How to wash your hands' signs will be displayed at all handwashing areas for children and adults. Handwashing with soap and water in the first instance is best practice.
- Children are supervised when washing hands.
- Hands must be thoroughly dried using clean hand towel or disposal paper and disposed of in the bin provided.
- All employees, parents, children and visitors must wash their hands with soap and water or use the >60% alcohol-based hand sanitiser provided upon arrival and departure of the Service.
- Disposable tissues must be used to wipe noses, eyes or mouths and disposed of in the bin provided immediately after use, and then wash hands.
- Hands must be washed thoroughly using soap and water before and after using the toilet.
- Cough and sneeze etiquette must be maintained - cover your cough and sneeze with a tissue or use your inner elbow.
- Educators and staff must adhere to effective food preparation and food handling procedures.
- Educators will wash their hands before and after wearing gloves.

- Educators and staff must adhere to our *Health, Hygiene and Infection Control Policy and Procedures* for cleaning and disinfecting surfaces and equipment (such as indoor outdoor toys, puzzles, furniture, floors bedding etc) in accordance with *Staying Healthy: Preventing infectious diseases in early childhood education and care services* guidelines.
- Universal cleaning processes will apply across the organisation, these include specific colour coded cleaning equipment (labelled) for separate areas to reduce the risk of cross contamination eg: children and adult bathroom facilities.
- Staff will maintain daily cleaning register of all surfaces and equipment conducted.
- Equipment, resources and surfaces including high-touch surfaces- taps, door handles, light switches, bathrooms, nappy change areas and toys will be cleaned more frequently as required using detergent and water followed by disinfectant.
- Cleaning contractors hygienically clean the Service to ensure risk of contamination is removed as per [Environmental Cleaning and Disinfection Principles for COVID-19](#)
- Bathroom facilities for adults have adequate supplies of hand soap, paper towel, toilet paper and lined rubbish bin.

NOTE: According to the World Health Organisation, COVID-19 may survive on surfaces for a few hours or up to several days. (March 14 2020)

Social or physical distancing in children's services

Distancing is important because COVID-19 is most likely spread from person-to-person through close contact with a person while they are infectious, close contact with a person with a confirmed infection who coughs or sneezes or from touching objects or surfaces (such as door handles or tables) contaminated from a cough or sneeze from a person with a confirmed infection and then touching your nose or mouth.

(source: Australian Government Department of Health. Coronavirus disease)

Due to the age and needs of children, social or physical distancing in an early childhood education and care setting is challenging for educators to perform their job. We will implement measures to minimise the risk of exposure as reasonably practicable.

Guidelines have been developed according to Safe Work Australia- Early childhood education and care workers: [Minimising the risk of exposure to COVID-19](#)

To reduce the spread of COVID-19 families are reminded of the following:

- If your child is sick, do not send them to our Service.
- Do not visit our Service if you or another family member is unwell.
- Wash or sanitise your hands at regular intervals throughout the day.
- Avoid physical contact with other people who may be sick or vulnerable - such as older people and people with existing health conditions.
- Clean and disinfect high touch surfaces regularly (door handles, car seats, mobile phone, toys, child comforters such as dummies)
- Promote strictest hygiene measures when preparing food at home for your child to bring to the Service for their mealtimes.

To minimise the risk of exposure to COVID-19 our Service will:

- Restrict the number of visitors to our Service (including: students, delivery of goods).
- Restrict the number of family members visiting our Service at one time. Families may be asked to wait outside during peak drop off and collection times.
- Where possible, outdoor play will be promoted within our Service to provide children with additional personal space.
- Increase ventilation within the Service.
- Monitor large groups. Flexible learning in both the indoor and outdoor environment will be provided to ensure groups are smaller and the mixing of children in one area is reduced:
 - Open internal partition divider walls to allow for more indoor play space.
 - Seat children at opposite ends of a table when playing and eating.
 - Avoid any situation when children are required to queue - waiting their turn to use bathroom for handwashing or toileting, waiting their turn to use a piece of equipment etc.
 - Ensure bed mats are positioned at least 1.5 metres apart.
- Contact parents of children who have chronic medical conditions or immunosuppression as they may be at an increased risk of disease and require additional support/care.
- Cancel all group outings to public places (excursions to local shops, schools, libraries, aged care facilities).
- Cancel large group celebrations (Easter, Grandparent's Day, special day celebrations)
- Discourage use of public transport by staff if possible and recommend that staff:
 - Travel directly from home to work (avoid stopping at shops or petrol station).
 - Wash hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or sanitise hands with alcohol-based sanitiser before and after travelling to work.
 - If using public transport, maintain physical distancing measures during any trip

Suspected cases of COVID-19 at our Service

In accordance with our *Illness and Infectious Disease Policy* we reserve the right to refuse a child into care if they:

- Are unwell and unable to participate in normal activities or require additional attention.
- Have had a temperature/fever, or vomiting in the last 24 hours.
- Have had diarrhoea in the last 48 hours.
- Have been given medication for a temperature prior to arriving at the Service.
- Have started a course of anti-biotics in the last 24 hours or
- If we have reasonable grounds to believe that a child has a contagious or infectious disease (this includes COVID-19).

If your child becomes ill whilst at the Service, educators/staff will respond to their individual symptoms of illness and provide comfort and care. The child will be taken to the designated isolated area within the Service.

Educators will take your child's temperature. If the temperature is above 38°C you will be contacted immediately and required to collect your child within 30 minutes. If you are unable to collect your child, an emergency contact person will be contacted, and they must collect your child within 30 minutes.

Educators will attempt to lower your child's temperature by:

- Removing excessive clothing (shoes, socks, jumpers).
- Encourage your child to take small sips of water.

Educators will maintain personal hygiene by regularly washing hands and wear disposable gloves to avoid possible contamination.

Educators will keep accurate records of the child's temperature, time taken, time parent/s were contacted, staff member's name and time of collection.

All information will be recorded in our *Child Incident Report*. Parents will be required to sign this record upon collection of their child.

Parents are reminded to ensure their contact details are current and the emergency contact details of their authorised nominees on the child's enrolment record.

Our Service also reserves the right to prevent employees, parents, family members or visitors to enter our premises if the Nominated Supervisor or Approved Provider suspects instances of COVID-19.

Notification

The Approved Provider or Nominated Supervisor is mandated by law to notify the Public Health Unit - WA Department of Health WA – Communicable Disease Control Directorate 9222 0255 or COVID Health Information Line 1800 020 080 of any confirmed or suspected cases of COVID-19. In addition, the Approved Provider must also notify the [Regulatory Authority](#) in their state or territory within 24 hours.

Management reserves the right to request employees to self-isolate if they suspect they have come into contact with someone who has a confirmed COVID-19 infection.

Talking to children about COVID-19

As per our *Relationships and Interactions with Children* as well as our *Relationships and Partnerships with Families Policies*, our Service is committed to maintaining positive interactions and relationships with children and their families.

Through intentional teaching strategies and in accordance with our *Children's Experiences, Learning and Education Policy*, information will be provided to children about COVID-19 in a manner that is age appropriate and sensitive to their emotional wellbeing. Educators will both acknowledge children's concerns and be open to discussions about COVID-19.

Educator resources used to support children's enquiry and learning as well as sharing with families:

Dr Michelle Dickinson - Video for kids about COVID-19

<https://youtu.be/OPsY-jLqaXM>

Emerging Minds- Talking to Children about Natural Disasters, Traumatic Events or Worries About the Future

<https://emergingminds.com.au/resources/supporting-children-during-the-coronavirus-covid-19-outbreak/>

Play School - Hello Friends! (A COVID-19 Special)

<https://www.abc.net.au/abckids/shows/play-school/covid-19/12114308>

UNICEF- How to talk to your child about COVID-19

Educators will inform children about the virus and emphasise preventative measures such as handwashing, use of tissues, cough and sneeze techniques, play in small groups and limit touching other children, particularly their faces.

Children's visual posters to demonstrate correct handwashing methods will be displayed at child level near handwashing basins. Educators will refer to, as well as sing handwashing songs and role model techniques eg: Playschool 'Wash your hands' song

<https://www.abc.net.au/abckids/shows/play-school/covid-19/12114308>

Children's emotional well-being will be closely monitored by all educators and staff and any concerns communicated with parents and families.

Children's questions will be respected and supported.

In the event of the Service being closed as a precaution to limit the spread of the virus, information will be provided to parents/families to help explain the situation to young children.

Payment of Fees for Meerilinga Services

Community Groups - playgroup, facility hire etc.

As directed by Government, prohibited activities and venue restrictions came into effect from 26 March 2020.

Enrolled playgroup families received reimbursement of fees for the remaining weeks of term one 2020, where fees were paid in advance.

All facility hire bookings cancelled, reimbursement offered for fees paid or hirer choice to have fees held for re-booking event at a later date when restrictions lifted as directed by WA State Government.

Training College

Information regarding changes to the Government of Western Australia Department of Training and Workforce Development Vet fees and Charges Policy 2020 consult the following addendum.

VET FEES REFUND AND FEE WAIVER FRAMEWORK – COVID-19 RESPONSE

(Attachment A) outlines a set of principles for training providers to apply when students seek a refund or fee waiver as a result of their training program being interrupted because of issues related to COVID-19.

Pre-Kindy Early Learning Programs

The new *Early Childhood Education and Care Relief Package* effective 6 April 2020 will replace the Child Care Subsidy and the Additional Child Care Subsidy. This is effective until the week ending 28 June 2020.

No fees will be charged to families during this time, including the Services administration fee.

Attendance information of children who attend our Service will be recorded each day on a paper copy and in some cases digitally. Families will be provided with a statement of sessions attended.

Placements will be prioritised to provide care of essential workers, vulnerable and disadvantaged children and previously enrolled children.

Families receiving Additional Child Care Subsidy

If a family's current ACCS determination continues past the end of the above package period, they will return to ACCS entitlement. If, however this determination expires during the period, our service will need to apply for determination to ensure ACCS continues to flow when the system return to normal ie: Child Care Subsidy.

Children considered at risk

Where a child is enrolled and is considered 'at risk' of serious abuse or neglect, our Service will refer the child or family to the appropriate support agency in order to comply with the legislative requirements.

Absences from our Early Learning Program

Whether a child is ill or not and does not attend care as part of the family's own precautionary measure against potential contact with COVID-19, families have access to 62 allowable absences in the 2019-2020 financial year, rather than the 42 allowable absence days without the need for families to provide documentation such as a medical certificate.

Absences will not be counted during the Early Childhood Education and Care Relief Package period (commencing 6 April 2020). If a child is absent on their last day of enrolment in the period between 23 March and 28 Jun 2020, any CCS received by the Service will not be recovered.

What happens if our Service is forced to close?

The decision to close our Service will be made, and advised, by State Government or the Regulatory Authority. This may be due to a confirmed case of COVID-19 in our Service community.

Should this occur, all families will be notified immediately via email and/or phone.

The Approved Provider will notify the Regulatory Authority 24hours of any closure via the [NQA IT System](#).

Early Childhood Education and Care Relief Package payment will still be paid in the event of a forced closure.

Services must stay open, with at least one active enrolment, to receive payment.

No payment will be payable, if a service decides to close and has not been directed to do so for valid health and safety reasons.

Service Waivers

In the event of staff members requiring to self-isolate due to possible infection of COVID-19, the Approved Provider will apply to the Regulatory Authority for qualification waivers and/or ratios to minimise disruptions to our provision of care. (Payment for waivers must be paid, however will be reimbursed by the regulatory authority).

Employees

Staff entitlements if sick or suspected to have COVID-19

Our organisation must ensure the health and safety of all employees under the principal OSH law in Western Australia consisting of the *Occupational Safety and Health Act 1984*, supported by the *Occupational Safety and Health Regulations 1996*.

If an educator or staff member is confirmed to have COVID-19, they are unable to attend the workplace and cannot return to work until they have completed a period of self-isolation of at least 14 days. Employees must obtain a declaration in writing from their doctor or public health unit that they are fit for work, have no symptoms of COVID-19 and no longer need to be in isolation.

Full and part-time employees who cannot attend work due to illness can take paid sick leave.

<https://coronavirus.fairwork.gov.au/coronavirus-and-australian-workplace-laws/pay-and-leave-during-coronavirus#what-happens-if-an-employee-or-their-family-member-is-sick-with-coronavirus>

Caring for a family member or emergency

If an employee cannot attend work due to caring for a family member due to COVID-19, they are entitled to take paid carer's leave. Casual employees are eligible to have 2 days unpaid carer's leave per occasion. See Fair Work Act for entitlements for casual, part time and full-time employees. Reasonable evidence is required to justify the absence.

Self-isolation due to travel

As per State and Federal Government's new measures for COVID-19 effective 28 March 2020, any person returning from overseas or interstate will be mandated to isolate in a designated facility. The employee is not entitled to be paid (unless they use paid leave entitlements - annual leave. Employees are not entitled to use personal sick leave as they are not 'sick'.

Self-Isolation Unpaid Pandemic Leave

Effective 8 April 2020 until 30 June 2020, employees who are required to self-isolate by government or medical authorities or acting on advice of a medical practitioner may access unpaid pandemic leave.

This leave provides employees with:

- 2 weeks of unpaid pandemic leave

- the ability to take twice as much annual leave at half their normal pay if their employer agrees.

<https://coronavirus.fairwork.gov.au/coronavirus-and-australian-workplace-laws/flexibility-in-workplace-laws-during-coronavirus/unpaid-pandemic-leave-in-awards>

Self-Isolation directed by Service

Where an employee is directed by the CEO to stay home and self-isolate as they have shown symptoms of a flu-like illness, and the employee is not sick and able to work, our Service will continue to pay the employee as per their contract. The employee will be requested to complete work from home negotiated with the CEO.

Self-isolation as a precaution

If an employee wants to stay home as a precaution of contracting COVID-19 they may negotiate to take unpaid leave, annual leave or long service leave with the Executive.

Employees who are stuck overseas or in quarantine

If an employee cannot return to Australia due to the COVID-19 virus, they must contact the CEO immediately. The Executive will negotiate payment considering accrued annual leave, long service leave or leave without pay.

<https://coronavirus.fairwork.gov.au/coronavirus-and-australian-workplace-laws/pay-and-leave-during-coronavirus#what-if-an-employee-is-stuck-overseas-or-is-required-to-be-quarantined-or-to-self-isolate>

Employees Entitlements- Fair Work Commission (new flexibility laws and changes)

Refer to links in previous section

Meerilinga is permitted to request employees to perform different duties within their skill and competence, the Executive will explore options for staffing and flexible work arrangements with individual employees. Any direction will from consultation with the employee and at least three (3) days provided before any change is implemented.

Arrangements may include: reduction in hours, request employees to take annual leave or other leave entitlements or changes to rostering and duties.

Employees may be requested to complete activities such as:

- Professional development learning.
- Programming and documentation.
- Updating the Quality Improvement Plan.
- Conducting cleaning within the service and room preparation.
- Completing any maintenance required as per risk assessments.
- Develop and maintain connection with families choosing to stay home, via social media. Providing information on the current experiences and activities happening in the program at the Service using photos, video's, including live feeds and activities for children to do at home.

The Executive will obtain written consent by the employees of any changes in their work conditions.

JobKeeper Subsidy Payment

Meerilinga business has been significantly impacted financially by coronavirus and meets the eligibility criteria to receive Jobkeeper subsidy payment for employees. Application made with the ATO.

Eligible employees are those who:

- Are currently employed by the eligible employer (including those stood down or re-hired).
- Were employed by the employer at 1 March 2020.
- Are full-time, part-time or long-term casuals (employed on a regular basis for longer than 12 months as at 1 March 2020).
- Are sole traders.
- Are at least 16 years of age.
- Are an Australian citizen, permanent visa holder or a Special Category (subclass 444) visa holder and
- Are not in receipt of a JobKeeper payment from another employer.

The Approved Provider will notify the Commissioner via the approved Australian Taxation Office (ATO) form that the employer elects to participate in the JobKeeper scheme.

If the employee agrees to be nominated by the Approved Provider as their primary employer and receive JobKeeper payments for them, they must provide the approved ATO nomination form (JobKeeper employee nomination).

Further information about JobKeeper, superannuation and tax will be discussed with each individual employee.

If applicable, employees who have been stood down before the commencement of this scheme, will be able to be reengaged. The Executive will discuss options individually with involved staff members.

Refer to ato.gov.au/general/gen/JobKeeper-payment/

Caring for our community

We understand that the outbreak of COVID-19 and the constant amount of information received through the media may be very stressful for people. The anxiety about this disease may be overwhelming and cause fear and anxiety to some people, especially children.

Meerilinga is committed to providing quality services, to continue support for all persons of the organisation and community during this unprecedented challenge with the COVID-19 outbreak.

Knowing how to look after yourself, and others is very important during this crisis.

We will promote a safe and supportive environment for children and adults by:

- Reassuring they are safe.
- Acknowledging and listening questions.
- Promoting and implementing protective control measures such hygiene routines for handwashing, cough and sneezing and daily cleaning.
- Keeping regular and familiar routines within our Service.
- Ensuring we eat well throughout the day.
- Engage in physical activities, play and games.

- Be alert to raised anxiety levels in people.
- Ensuring children are provided with rest and sleep when needed.
- Providing current information and support services to families and staff as required.

Process	
Process Owner	CEO
Effective Date	1 March 2020
Date of Last Revision	16 April 2020

Process Details	
	Description
1.	<p>Visitors and Attendance onsite at Meerilinga service locations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Essential staff, enrolled children, families and tradespeople (contractors) will be permitted entry to the premises subject to protective control measures being strictly adhered to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - No close contact with anyone with a positive COVID-19 in the past 14 days - Hand & personal hygiene (hand washing, cough and sneeze etiquette) - Physical / social distancing. - Written record of all person's attendance by way of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Children's attendance (records child and person delivering and collecting) - Staff Roster - Visitor logbook (essential tradespeople – use own pen to sign) - Deliveries must be left in a designated safe area at the entry to the premises. (if required, use own pen to sign for goods)
2.	<p>COVID-19 Government of Western Australia, Department of Health directive</p> <p>Protect yourself and others:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Wash hands often with soap and water or hand sanitiser. 2. Cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue or use your inner elbow. 3. Maintain 1.5 meter distance from other people as a minimum. 4. Clean surfaces and objects regularly. 5. Stay home if you are sick.
3.	<p>Exclusion / Self-isolation / Self-quarantine</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Any person (staff, enrolled child, parent, caregiver, visitor or contractor) who is displaying symptoms such as: fever, coughing, sore throat, fatigue and shortness of breath, must seek urgent medical attention to determine if they need to be tested for COVID-19 and not attend our Service under any circumstance. - Any person who has been in close contact with someone who has a positive

Process Details

	Description
	<p>diagnosis must self-isolate for 14 days.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Household members of a person who has a confirmed case (including children) of COVID-19 must also be isolated from the Service and general public.- The Public Health Unit will provide further information on a case-by-case basis as to the length and place of isolation. (see: COVID-19 home isolation)- All persons must immediately advise the Service if they, or anyone in their family, develops any symptoms of the virus or receives a positive result of the virus whilst in isolation.
4.	

Associated Documents

Meerilinga Policy Manual

- Coronavirus (COVID-19) Staff Wellbeing Policy
- Preface - Section 1 - Strategic and Business Planning Policies (Code of Ethics & Conduct)
 - Customer Service, Confidentiality and Privacy Policy
 - Risk Management
 - Strategic Management
- Section 2 - Human Resources Policies
 - Recruitment and Employment
 - Wellness
- Section 3 - Finance, Assets and Administration Policies
 - Community Use
 - Fees, Charges, Refunds, Deferred Payment and Waiver Policy and Processes.
 - Financial Management
 - Security and Safety
- Section 5 - Meerilinga Training College
 - Assessment
 - Enrolment
 - Fees, Charges, Refunds, Deferred Payment and Waiver Policy and Processes.
 - Issuing AQF Qualifications
 - Management of Scope
 - Student Placement Work Experience
 - Validation
- Section 4 - Branding, Image & Reputation
 - Functions and Events
 - Marketing and Advertising
 - Social Media
 - Media
- Section 6 - Children's Program Policies
 - Management of Local Services
 - Enrolment and Orientation
 - Delivery and Collection
 - Relationships and partnerships with Families
 - Children's Experiences, Learning and Evaluation
 - Relationships and Interactions with Children
 - Incident, Injury, Trauma and First Aid
 - Health, Hygiene and Infection Control
 - Toileting and Nappy Change
 - Illness and Infectious Disease
 - Medical Conditions
 - Medications
 - Nutrition and Beverages
 - Child Safe Environment
 - Supervision
 - Excursion and Incursion
- Section 7 - Workplace Health and Safety Policies
 - Reporting Accidents and Incidents
 - Workplace Health & Safety
 - Use and Storage of Dangerous Products

- Staying Healthy - Preventing Infectious Diseases in Early Childhood Education and Care Services, 5th Edition.

Records Management

Title	Location	Responsible Officer	Minimum Retention Period
Health / Hygiene / Safety Risk Assessment Plans	CFC W/Leed	CEO	3 years
CFC Internal Daily Cleaning Schedule	CFC	Nominated Supervisor	3 years
Accident, Incident, Near Miss Report	CFC W/Leed	All Employees Direct Report	3 years
Child Incident Report	CFC	Nominated Supervisor	Until the child is 25 years old
CFC Daily Checklist	CFC	Nominated Supervisor	3 years
Notification to Regulatory Authority or Health Department	CFC W/Leed	Quality Advisor CEO	3 years
JobKeeper Employee Nomination	W/Leed	Executive Finance CEO	3 years

Reference

- Education and Care Services National Law Act (WA) 2012 - January 2019
- Education and Care Services National Regulations (WA) 2012 - December 2019
- ACECQA - National Quality Standards - January 2020
- ACECQA - Belonging, Being & Becoming - Early Years Learning Framework
- ECA Code of Ethics 2016
- Code of Conduct - Meerilinga
- Children and Community Services Act 2004
- Privacy Act 1988
- Public Health Act 2010 - Public Health Amendment Act 2017
- Staying Healthy - Preventing Infectious Diseases in Early Childhood Education and Care Services, 5th Edition. Australian Government National Health and Medical Research Council - June 2013 <https://nhmrc.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/reports/clinical%20guidelines/ch55-staying-healthy.pdf>
- The Australian Parenting website Raisingchildren <https://raisingchildren.net.au/guides/a-z-health-reference/coronavirus-and-children-in-australia>
- Occupational Safety and Health Act 1984 and the Occupational Safety and Health Regulations 1996.
- Safe Work Australia (2020) Early childhood education and care workers: Minimising the risk of exposure to COVID-19 <https://www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au/doc/early-childhood-education-and-care-workers-minimising-risk-exposure-covid-19>
- Australian Government Department of Health Topics Health Topics Coronavirus COVID-19
- Australian Government Department of Health Coronavirus (COVID-19) advice for travellers <https://www.health.gov.au/resources/apps-and-tools/covid-19-infection-control-training>

- Australian Government Fair Work Ombudsman Coronavirus and Australian workplace laws (updated 13 March 2020) <https://www.fairwork.gov.au/about-us/news-and-media-releases/website-news/coronavirus-and-australian-workplace-laws>
- Australian Government Department of Education, Skills and Employment Information for child care providers and services <https://docs-edu.govcms.gov.au/node/53362>
- Australian Government Federal Register of Legislation Child Care Subsidy Amendment (Coronavirus Economic Response Package) 23 March 2020 https://www.legislation.gov.au/Details/F2020L00295?utm_source=Facebook&utm_content=240320
- Australian Government The Treasury JobKeeper payment
- Fair Work Ombudsman Coronavirus and Australian workplace laws (2020) <https://coronavirus.fairwork.gov.au/coronavirus-and-australian-workplace-laws>

Definitions

Term	Definition
Self Isolation	The condition of you being separated from other people either by staying at home, hotel or your normal place of residence.
Jobkeeper Subsidy Payment	A Government scheme to support businesses to retain employees during the Coronavirus (COVID-19) Pandemic crisis.

Mapping Policy and Processes

Education and Care Services National Law (WA) Act 2012	
Section	Division 4 – Suspension or cancellation of Service Approval, Division 5 – Application for Service Waiver, Division 6 – Temporary Waiver, 165, 167, 168, 169, 170, 171, 172, 173, 174, .

Education and Care Services National Regulations (WA) 2012	
Regulations	12, 35, 40, Division 5 – Service Waiver, Division 6 – Temporary Waiver, 55, 56, 73, 77, 78, 84, 85, 86, 87, 88, 89, 103, 105, 106, 107, 108, 109, 110, 112, 117A, B, C, 122, 123, 126, 136, Division 9 – Staff and Educator Records, 155, 156, 157, 158, 162, 165, 168, 170, 171, 172, 173, 175, 176, 177, 180, 181, 183, 185.

Standards for RTOs 2015
Vocational Education and Training is a significant contributor to Australia's economy domestically, being the primary mechanism to meet the skilling needs of the Australian community. The standards give the community confidence that RTOs are delivering quality training and assessment that is highly regarded both locally and overseas.

Policy Area	National Quality Standards Early Childhood	National Standards for Volunteering Involvement 2015	Standards to Community Services	Standards to Family Support
Children's Programs	QA 1 - 1.1, 1.1.2, 1.1.3, 1.2, 1.2.1, 1.2.2, 1.2.3, 1.3, 1.3.2, 1.3.3 QA 2 - 2.1, 2.1.1, 2.1.2, 2.1.3, 2.2, 2.2.1, 2.2.2, 2.2.3. QA 3 - 3.1.2, 3.2.3. QA 4 - 4.1.1, 4.1.2, 4.2.2. QA 5 - 5.1.1, 5.1.2, 5.2.1 QA 6 - 6.1, 6.1.2, 6.1.3, 6.2.2. QA 7 - 7.1, 7.1.1, 7.1.2, 7.1.3, 7.2, 7.2.1, 7.2.3.			