



## COVID-19 update

Dear services and providers,

From 5pm Friday, 9 July, further additional restrictions will be in place across Greater Sydney including the Central Coast, Blue Mountains, Wollongong and Shellharbour to curb the current outbreak of COVID-19. Restrictions in regional NSW will remain unchanged. For information on the latest update, please visit the NSW Government [website](#).

Given the recent announcements, we would like to take the opportunity to clarify the advice and expectations of early childhood education and care services during these challenging times.

Please also keep visiting [our website](#) for the latest updates.

## Frequently asked questions

### Attending education and care services

Staff and children must not attend work or the service if unwell, even with the mildest of COVID-19 symptoms. Any person with COVID-19 symptoms should be sent home and not return to the service until they are symptom free, even if they return a negative COVID-19 test result.

### When are masks required to be worn?

A mask exemption continues to apply in Early Childhood Education services while educators are interacting with children. It is recommended that masks are worn when staff are interacting with adults.

In line with guidance issued to schools, for OSHC services on school sites in the Greater Sydney region, masks will now be required to be worn by educators while in indoor areas.

**Why do early childhood education and care services need to remain open if schools have been directed to start Term 3 online?**

Both early childhood education and schools are considered essential services and are able to remain open during this period.

However, the capacity to implement learning from home for schools will help to limit mobility in the community for a short period of time while NSW manages the current outbreak. Reducing mobility in the community was emphasised as a priority to reducing the spread.

**Can educators and staff send their own children to school if they need to?**

Schools are still open, and while students are strongly encouraged to learn from home, schools will not turn away any student from attending the school site in person where this is required, including for children of Early Childhood Education and Care educators.

Student must not attend school if unwell, even with the mildest symptoms of COVID-19.

**Can early childhood education and care services accept school age children during school hours when Term 3 commences?**

No, schools remain open for children unable to undertake their learning from home.

**Will Vacation Care be open on the Pupil Free Day of Monday 12<sup>th</sup> July?**

Vacation Care services are able to be open on Monday – this is a matter for individual services to determine.

**Why do services need to display the Service NSW QR code when attendance and visitor data is already captured?**

The use of the Service NSW QR code has been found to be the most effective system in assisting NSW Health to protect the community, particularly given the evolving COVID-19 situation. The use of the Service NSW QR code allows authorities to respond quickly and efficiently to confirmed or suspected cases relating to COVID-19 within our community. It

also ensures that services are notified as quickly and efficiently as possible if a member of your community affected by the virus has interacted with your service.

**Who needs to check-in using the Service NSW QR code at a centre or other service type?**

Staff, families and visitors to services, including long day care, outside school hours care, family day care, preschool, mobile and out of scope services will need to check in using the Service NSW QR code. Children are excluded from this requirement. The department encourages wide and extensive use of the Service NSW QR code in line with NSW Health advice. If a family, staff member or visitor has interacted with your service, no matter how minor the interaction may be, they should check-in using the Service NSW QR code.

**Who needs to check-in using the Service NSW QR code at a Family Day Care (FDC) residence?**

Family day care residences are required to display the Service NSW QR code for the duration of the time they are operating as an education and care service. Families and visitors to the residence operating as a Family Day Care service are required to check-in using the Service NSW QR code. Household members and educators who always live at the residence do not need to check-in.

**Does an OSHC service on a school site need its own QR code, or can families just use the school QR code?**

OSHC services, including those on school sites, should have their own separate QR code as this makes it easier for NSW Health to complete contact tracing based on the specific operating hours and interactions of the business, should they be required to do so.

**Given that OSHCs on school sites will have their own QR code, do families need to check in to both the school QR code and the OSHC QR code?**

If families are attending school during school hours, they should use the school QR code. If families are attending OSHC during OSHC business hours, they should use the OSHC QR code. Of course, if families are unsure and wish to use both they may do so. This is to ensure effective contact tracing, should a risk arise.

**Why do Early Childhood Education and Care educators not have priority for the vaccine?**

The Department of Education and the Minister for Education and Early Childhood Learning continue to advocate for educators to be a priority for vaccination. You can get the vaccine now if you are 40 years of age or older, or match the eligibility criteria. Visit the [NSW Government's getting vaccinated webpage](#) for the latest information on the rollout including booking an appointment for those who are eligible. We encourage you to make a booking.

### **How can I support families and children during this period?**

[Emerging Minds](#) have developed a range of resources, including videos, fact sheets, podcasts and guides, that you might find useful. A summary of the resources can be accessed [here](#).

### **Has the local area emergency period been extended by the Australian Government?**

On 7 July, the NSW Government extended the stay at home direction for Greater Sydney (including the Blue Mountains, Central Coast, Wollongong and Shellharbour) to 11.59 pm on Friday 16 July. In line with this extension, the Australian Government has [extended the Local Area Emergency \(LAE\) period for services](#) in affected Local Government Areas (LGAs). Services directed to close by a local authority because of COVID-19 can waive gap fees until 31 December 2021.

### **Is any other assistance available for services and providers?**

The [NSW Government has announced](#) support for small businesses – you can find out more information [here about eligibility and detail about what is covered](#).

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## **For more information**

The department regularly updates the [COVID-19 Guidelines for ECEC services](#) based on advice from NSW Health.

If you have any questions about your service operation you can contact the Information and Enquiries team on 1800 619 113 or by emailing [ececd@det.nsw.edu.au](mailto:ececd@det.nsw.edu.au).

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