



## COVID-19 update for early childhood education

Dear services and providers

The department is conscious of the impact the rapidly changing and evolving COVID-19 situation is having on many early childhood education and care services. Today's update provides details on the changing requirements for parts of Sydney.

The department has received a number of enquiries with regards to 'what happens if I have a confirmed case in my service'. We have compiled some information to support your response, should this occur in your service, noting that it is most important that you meet your reporting requirements and work closely with NSW Health in your response.

Please continue to [visit our website for updates](#).

## Increased restrictions for Southwest Sydney

The spread of the pandemic in Sydney's Southwest and West has been declared a National Emergency this morning. The department continues to advocate for priority vaccination for the sector and will keep services updated where vaccination is prioritised for ECE.

Early childhood education and care services, including Family Day Care residences and Outside School Hours Care services, may continue to operate at this time. In the following local government areas parents are strongly encouraged to keep their children at home if they are able to do so, in order to limit movement in the community:

- Fairfield
- Canterbury/Bankstown
- Liverpool

- Cumberland
- Blacktown

Services in the Cumberland and Blacktown LGAs will now be subject to the same restrictions as the Fairfield, Canterbury-Bankstown and Liverpool LGAs. This means that workers from all these five areas must not leave their LGAs unless they are undertaking [critical work which does include Early Childhood Education and Care](#).

## Close contacts

The department has received a number of enquiries with regards to 'what happens if a deemed **close contact** attended or works in my service'. We have compiled the following information in consultation with NSW Health to support your service in responding to this situation.

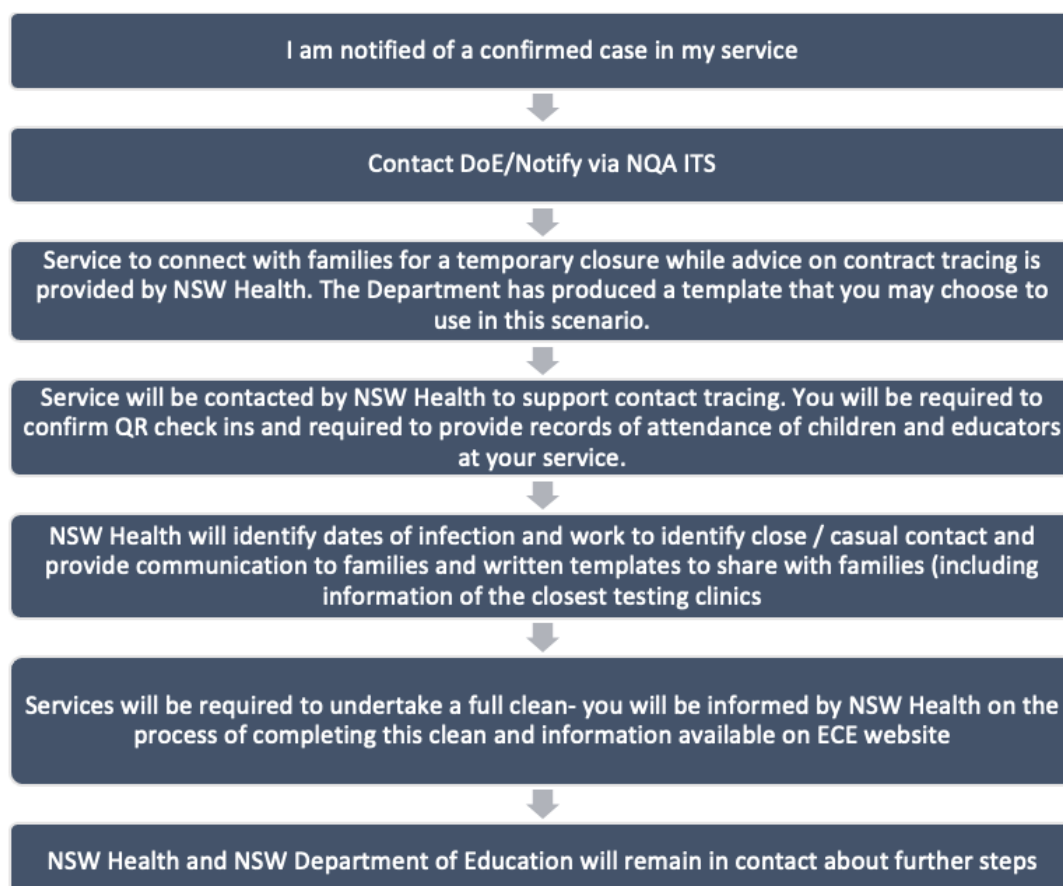
- Primary close contacts will all need to get tested and self-isolate for the full 14 days as per the current health advice.
- NSW Health has assessed the situation regarding secondary close contacts. Where a person has been identified as a close contact, then only people who have been in their households and their very close friends need to isolate until they received a negative test, **not** other people at the Early Childhood Service unless they have symptoms.
- Any staff, children or parents who have been to a location with a confirmed COVID-19 case will need to follow the NSW Health advice. People who have been to an identified venue of concern who have been identified as a close contact, will need to follow the advice from NSW Health and get tested and self-isolate for 14 days. This information will have been communicated directly to those who are close contacts.
- If you have been to one of the venues on the [NSW Government website](#) and have not yet been contacted by NSW Health, please call 1800 943 553.
- Anyone who is a close contact must isolate for the full 14 days as directed by NSW Health and not return to any Early Childhood Service during this time.
- Anyone who has even the mildest of symptoms including fever, cough, sore throat, shortness of breath, runny nose, loss of smell/taste, muscle/joint pains, diarrhoea,

nausea/vomiting or extreme tiredness should immediately be tested and isolate until they get a negative test result and then when they are free of symptoms can return to your service.

## Notifying the department of a confirmed case in a service

If you have a confirmed case of COVID-19 in your service (a child or an educator or parent who has attended), you will be supported by the NSW Department of Education and NSW Health.

You should be aware of the following steps:



If you are notified of a **confirmed case** in your service **within normal business hours**, please contact the department's Information and Enquiries line on **1800 619 113**.

If you are notified of a **confirmed case** in your service **outside of business hours**, please contact the department's Emergency COVID number on 0477 388 715.

The department will contact a dedicated team at the Ministry of Health and work through the required processes with your service.

While close contacts may receive a text message in relation to secondary close contacts applying to work colleagues, Health have determined that this only applies in very specific circumstances and does not apply in an ECE work setting. The only exception to this would be where educators or children reside together, carpool together, or spent significant time together outside of the work context.

## **Draft template for a confirmed case in your service**

*(Centre Name)* has been advised of a possible case of COVID-19, linked to the service.

*(Centre Name)* will be non-operational for on-site attendance *tomorrow/today*, *(Day, Date, Month, Year)*.

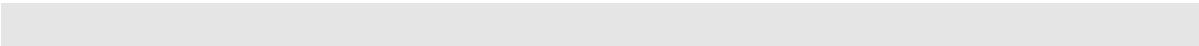
We ask that everyone who attends our centre, including our parents/carers self-isolate until we receive confirmation from NSW Health on the impact on our service. While we cannot confirm at this stage that every child and or educator at our service has been impacted, we are taking every safety precaution while NSW Health undertakes contact tracing.

Further information will be provided to all families as soon as we receive advice on this matter from NSW Health.

The centre will continue to work with NSW Health to complete contact tracing. If your family are personally impacted, you may hear from NSW Health.

The health, safety and wellbeing of our staff and children is of paramount importance to us. We will continue to work closely with NSW Health and NSW Department of Education to ensure that all necessary health advice is adhered to.

Thank you for your ongoing support.



## Keeping our ECE Community Safe

While the vaccine rollout continues, the measures that ECE services take to protect their staff, as well as the children and families attending, are critical in stopping the spread of COVID-19.

- In the Greater Sydney region, Orange, Blayney and Cabonne LGA's educators and staff must wear a mask- limited exemptions apply
- avoid non-essential visitors to your service
- minimise contact during drop-offs and pick-ups, ensure parents and staff all wear a mask during these periods
- ensure all visitors sign in using the Service NSW QR Code
- consider how to improve ventilation in the service by increasing time outdoors and keeping windows open where possible. Refer to [COVID-19 guidance on ventilation](#)
- if you or your staff member is unwell, go to a [COVID-19 testing clinic](#) near your home or work and remain at home until symptoms clear.

## For more information

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

Educators are encouraged to regularly check the [NSW Health website](#) regarding up to date restrictions in NSW.

**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:emailing_ececd@det.nsw.edu.au).**



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Sent to all services and providers in NSW

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