



COVID-19 Update

What you need to know:

- Staff who live or work in the [12 LGAs of concern](#) are required to have their first vaccination dose by 6 September.
- [Priority vaccination appointments](#) are available now for staff of all ages who live and work in the 12 LGAs of concern. Updates on vaccines for those who have had a positive COVID case or are pregnant.
- Ventilation in centres
- Primary school children are strongly encouraged to wear masks in OSHC settings
- A [webinar on the early childhood guided learning packages](#) will be held this Thursday
- A reminder about attendance
- Update on First Aid qualifications

Dear services and providers

A reminder that staff who live or work in the [12 LGAs of concern](#) need to have had their first dose of a COVID-19 vaccine in order to work in services **from Monday 6 September**. The best protection from COVID-19 is vaccination and the Department urges all educators to get vaccinated in line with the current health advice.

[Priority vaccination appointments](#) are still available for staff of all ages in LGAs of concern, and the COVID-19 Vaccination Program hotline is available on 1800 571 155 between 8am – 9.30pm, 7 days a week to help staff access a vaccination.

In addition, from 6 September the Qudos Bank Arena is prioritising vaccines for all early childhood education staff. We know this will be welcome news for many staff and we look forward to providing further details as soon as they are available.

For regional staff, we encourage you to use the [vaccine eligibility checker](#) to find appointments at a clinic near you. In addition, you can:

- Book into one of the [regional and rural vaccination clinics](#) to everyone aged over 18 years.
- Attend one of the [pop up clinics in Western NSW](#).

We invite you to consult our vaccination FAQs below, and to contact the Information and Enquiries team on 1800 619 113 or by emailing ececd@det.nsw.edu.au if necessary.

Vaccination Update

Additional vaccine availability for Camden LGA and Randwick

If you live in the **Camden LGA or the suburb of Randwick and are aged 16-49**, [priority Pfizer vaccinations appointments](#) are now available to you.

If you live **outside the LGAs of concern**, you will be able to access priority vaccination at Sydney Olympic Park Qudos Bank Arena along with school staff in the week beginning 6 September.

What if I'm pregnant or have an underlying medical condition?

Early childhood educators must not enter or remain in the worker's place of work from 6 September unless the worker:

- (a) has had at least 1 dose of a COVID-19 vaccine, or
- (b) has been issued with a medical contraindication certificate.

The following groups can provide immunisation medical exemptions:

- general practitioners (GP) registered as a specialist in General Practice with the Medical Board of Australia
- vocational registered GPs who have general registration with the Medical Board of Australia
- general practice registrars on an approved 3GA training placement
- paediatricians
- public health physicians
- infectious diseases physicians

- clinical immunologists.

You can find out more about immunisation medical exemptions on the [Services Australia website](#).

How does mandatory vaccination apply to me if I have previously had COVID-19?

According to the latest clinical guidance from ATAGI, past infection with SARS-CoV-2 (COVID-19) does not mean you cannot be vaccinated. It is recommended that vaccination be deferred for up to six months after the acute illness in those who have had confirmed COVID-19.

If someone wishes to have vaccination earlier than 6 months, they may have a discussion about the risks and benefits with their healthcare provider. If vaccination is deferred, a medical practitioner is able to authorise a temporary exemption from vaccination by completing a NSW COVID-19 vaccine medical contraindication form. This can be used for services in the LGAs of concern where vaccination will be mandatory from 6 September.

What if I have a question that isn't covered on your web page or in this update?

If you need assistance to **make a booking to receive a COVID-19 vaccination or have vaccination specific questions**, you can call the COVID-19 Vaccination Program hotline on 1800 571 155 between 8am – 9.30pm, 7 days a week for assistance.

If you have any questions about **your individual circumstances in relation to ECE service operation** you can contact the Information and Enquiries team on 1800 619 113 or by emailing ececd@det.nsw.edu.au.

Ventilation in centres

Why ventilation is important

The virus that causes COVID-19 can be spread from person to person through contact with droplets, which are produced when a person sneezes or coughs, or through other small respiratory particles that are produced when adults or children talk, sing or shout.

These small particles can remain in the air for some time. Aerosolised particles may build up if there is not enough ventilation, for example, if an activity requires children to sing or speak loudly in an indoor space without the windows or doors open.

Open or well-ventilated spaces reduce the risk of transmission of COVID-19 because infectious particles are more quickly diffused in the open air than in spaces with less ventilation.

To help reduce the risk, it is important to take steps to improve ventilation in your centre so that any infectious particles that may be present in the air are more quickly removed.

What you can do:

Use outdoor settings wherever possible

In most cases, outdoor settings have better natural airflow than indoor areas.

Use large, well-ventilated indoor spaces

If you must use an indoor space, avoid crowded or noisy indoor spaces as:

- a crowd generates more droplets and aerosolised particles and
- noisy spaces encourage people to shout or talk loudly, increasing the generation of aerosolised particles, and therefore the risk of transmission of COVID-19.

Take steps to improve ventilation in indoor settings

Indoor ventilation can be most easily improved by opening doors and windows. Other ways to safely improve ventilation include to:

- avoid directing fans towards children's faces, aim them continuously towards the ceiling or floor. Limit oscillation and turbulence of fans
- regularly inspect, maintain and clean heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) systems
- avoid using only recirculated air in HVAC systems, and increase the outside air intake
- consider disabling ventilation controls with automated settings that reduce air supply based on temperature or occupancy
- ensure exhaust fans are operational if in place.

If you can't modify the ventilation or choose an outdoor location

You could consider:

- reducing the number of people in an indoor space at any one time by splitting children into groups and encouraging them to use different areas around the centre
- reducing the length of time that children spend indoors all together

Further information on the importance of ventilation is available on the NSW government's [COVID-19 website](#).

Masks for primary school children

Masks are now strongly recommended for primary school aged children. This recommendation should also apply in Out of School Hours Care services, including before and after school care services and vacation care.

Guided learning packages and webinar

Following the launch of the [Early childhood guided learning packages](#), the Early Learning team will [host a webinar on Thursday 2 September at 3:30pm](#) to explain the intent of the packages and answer any questions.

Early childhood teachers and educators are encouraged to attend. No registration is required but numbers are limited so the recording will be made available.

A reminder about attendance

NSW Health has provided [advice to the sector](#):

NSW Health is closely monitoring the COVID-19 situation in Early Childhood Education Centres (ECEC). Many ECECs have been affected by cases of COVID-19 resulting in temporary closure of centres and isolation of both staff and children and their families. People infected with COVID-19 can become very sick.

At this time, NSW Health is strongly urging the community to keep their children at home to reduce the risk of infection and transmission of COVID-19 in ECEC across NSW, unless they need to be at an ECEC.

Services are encouraged to use their policies and procedures to determine attendance, as well as working with individual families to understand their needs.

First aid requirements

The National Quality Framework includes requirements for educators to:

- hold a current approved first aid qualification
- have undertaken current anaphylaxis management and emergency asthma management training.

This is to ensure the health, safety and wellbeing of children attending education and care services.

Centre-based services must ensure one educator or nominated supervisor who holds these qualifications is available at all times.

The same person may hold one or more of these qualifications.

Each **family day care** educator and educator assistant must hold these qualifications.

New first aid qualification

Educators who need a new first aid qualification should:

- discuss the options with training providers
- complete the theoretical aspects and receive confirmation of progress from the training provider if the practical parts of a course can't be completed at this time
- complete practical parts of a course as soon as it is possible and safe to do so.

Refresher training

Educators who hold a first aid qualification but require a refresher should explore available options to complete this training. We realise it may only be possible to complete the theoretical parts of a course at this time.

If Regulation 136 is not able to be complied with then a waiver must be applied for. This includes the scenario where an educator has completed the theoretical aspects and is unable to complete the practical parts of a course.

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](#) and [NSW Government website](#) regarding up-to-date restrictions in NSW. Here are some links that may be useful:

- [Regional and rural NSW restrictions](#)
- [COVID-19 tests for Sydney workers](#)
- [COVID-19 vaccination for workers](#)

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.



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