



25 January 2022

## **COVID-19 Update**

### **What you need to know:**

- Critical worker exemption
- Cleaning after a positive case
- Delivery of Rapid Antigen Testing kits for all early childhood education and care staff
- SafeWork NSW notification requirements

## **Critical worker exemption**

Critical workers for “early childhood education and care” have now been included in the [Public Health Order exemption from self-isolation](#).

### **What is a critical worker?**

A critical worker is defined as someone “employed or engaged to perform, or to provide services that are necessary for, that activity” (clause 3) and is a person:

- Whose absence from the workplace poses a high risk of disruption of critical services or activities (e.g. early childhood education and care); and
- Is unable to work from home.

This may include essential ancillary employees/contractors (such as cleaners, drivers etc).

### **What does this mean for early childhood education and care?**

This means that a worker who would normally have to self-isolate for 7 days due to being a household contact can attend an early childhood facility for work if:

- They are approved by their employer to attend
- They only travel directly between their home and the workplace
- They wear a mask at all times in the workplace (except when eating or drinking)
- They undergo **regular** RATs for 7 days. NOTE: 'regular' is not defined and there is no requirement for daily testing
- They do not have any symptoms – if they have symptoms they must immediately self-isolate
- They must comply with any reasonable measures put in place by their employer.

### **Should my service utilise this exemption?**

Employers will need to consider the individual circumstances of their service and each employee when deciding whether to utilise this exemption, remembering only those workers whose absence poses a high risk of disruption to the delivery of a critical service or activity will be eligible for the exemption.

NSW Health has provided [guidance](#) on the health risks associated with household contacts and how employers can manage these risks.

### **If you have concerns as an employer or an employee**

The [Fair Work Ombudsman](#) has tools, resources and contact information to

help you understand your rights and responsibilities at work during the pandemic.

## **Cleaning after a positive case**

After a COVID positive case at your service, you will need to undertake a thorough clean and disinfection of all areas.

Please note:

- Your usual cleaning staff can do the cleaning.
- NSW Health does not require you to use specialised cleaning companies however, you can if you want to.
- NSW Health does not endorse or recommend any particular cleaning companies.
- There is no certification process endorsed by the NSW Government for cleaning companies undertaking cleaning and disinfection services after a COVID positive case.
- You are not required to provide a certificate of cleaning completion.

Services can access cleaning resources on the managing COVID cases [webpage](#).

## **Delivery of Rapid Antigen Testing kits for staff**

All early childhood education and outside school hour care services will receive supplies of Rapid Antigen Testing (RAT) kits to allow staff to test twice a week, for a period of at least four weeks.

Services can begin surveillance testing as soon as kits arrive – there is no start or end date.

Participation in the surveillance testing is optional.

### **Family Day Care**

RAT kits for family day care staff will be supplied to the Principal Office for distribution to family day care educators.

### **OSHC services on school sites**

Our provision of RAT kits includes all OSHC services (on and off school sites). OSHC services on school sites will receive their own bundle and delivery (to the service address listed in NQA ITS).

### **Arrival of RAT kits**

Distribution of RAT kits has commenced, services can expect to receive a supply of kits before the start of the school term, in addition to any kits already received.

Services that are not yet operational for 2022, including preschools, mobile services and OSHC services who do not operate Vacation Care, will receive kits in the first week of operation.

More information on RAT kits on the [Managing COVID cases webpage](#).

## **A reminder about SafeWork NSW notification requirements**

[SafeWork NSW](#) requires workplaces to report hospitalisation (where treatment as an in-patient in a hospital is required), and any fatality, where the worker contracted COVID-19, or is likely to have contracted COVID-19, at the workplace.

## For more information

Educators are encouraged to regularly check the [NSW Health website](#) and [NSW Government 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:ececd@det.nsw.edu.au).

If you have a positive COVID case or have specific questions about your service's response to COVID-19, you can also email [ECEC.COVIDCASE@det.nsw.edu.au](mailto:ECEC.COVIDCASE@det.nsw.edu.au)



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