



14 March 2022

## COVID-19 Update

### What you need to know:

- The Public Health Order has been extended.
- Services are encouraged to maintain COVID-smart measures.
- If a child or staff member has tested positive, they must isolate for 7 days and can leave isolation after 7 days only if they are symptom-free, and do not need to test before returning to the service.
- The COVID self-isolation requirements have recently been updated for household contacts.
- Managing children or staff members who have ongoing conditions that cause similar symptoms to COVID-19.

Dear services and providers

Services are encouraged to maintain COVID-smart measures, which will continue to be reviewed and updated, as necessary based on health advice.

This includes encouraging the use of rapid antigen tests (RAT) by staff and children immediately if they have COVID symptoms.

NSW Health continues to recommend the wearing of masks indoors when you cannot socially distance, and this is now a decision for services and educators to determine.

## Public Health Order - extended

The NSW [Public Health Order](#) has been extended by a further two months up to and including 12 May 2022.

This means mandatory double vaccination requirements remain for all early childhood education and care service staff and volunteers.

NSW Health advises that [booster vaccinations](#) can now be given 3 or more months after your first 2 doses of the COVID-19 vaccine.

Requirements to be vaccinated do not apply to workers who need to visit early childhood sites during an emergency. An emergency is defined as:

- a serious, unexpected and dangerous situation.
- an event posing an immediate and serious risk to the operation of the early childhood premise and to the children and staff in that premise.

An emergency in an early childhood setting might include a medical emergency, a fire or a gas leak for example.

Only vaccinated workers can attend where the situation is not an emergency.

## Returning to a service after COVID

If a child or staff member is unwell, they should not attend the service.

If a child or staff member has tested positive, they must isolate and should not attend the service for 7 days. They can leave isolation after 7 days only if they are symptom-free, and do not need to test before returning to the service.

Please review the latest isolation requirements from [NSW Health](#).

## Isolation requirements for household contacts

The COVID self-isolation requirements, under the [Public Health \(COVID-19 Self-Isolation\) Order](#), have recently been updated for household contacts:

- All household contacts must follow the self-isolation guideline and self-isolate for 7 days from the time the first COVID-positive person in your household had their test.
- You do not need to repeat isolation if another person in your household tests positive in the 14 days after your isolation period ends.
- If another person in your household tests positive for COVID-19 more than 14 days after your isolation period ends, you will have to isolate again and follow the instructions for household contacts of people with COVID-19.

If you get a positive result at any time, you should continue your isolation and follow the [Testing positive to COVID-19 and managing COVID-19 safely at home](#) advice.

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## Reminder: notification of a positive case

If there is a positive case in your service:

- Notify us (under Regulation 175(2)(c)) within 7 days, however it is recommended that you lodge the notification as soon as possible.
- You don't need to submit a separate notification for each positive case if detected **within 7 days** of lodging the original notification.
  - Keep a record of any additional cases detected within the 7 days and upload this as additional documentation to the original notification.

- Cases detected **after 7 days** of lodging the original notification should be notified via separate notifications to ensure the notification timeframe of Regulation 175(2)(c) is being met.

## Managing sick children or staff members

Any person with symptoms of COVID-19 should seek out a COVID test and only return to the service when the test is negative and they are symptom free.

For children or staff with seasonal allergic rhinitis or other conditions that have similar symptoms to COVID-19, an initial negative COVID-19 test is recommended before returning to ECE.

Following this, only if the person's symptoms change from their usual symptoms, then repeat COVID-19 testing should be performed.

To lodge an incident notification in NQA ITS, follow the instructions in the [how to guide](#).

If you can't access NQAITS, please contact us on 1800 619 113 or [ececd@det.nsw.edu.au](mailto:ececd@det.nsw.edu.au) and our team can assist.

## For more information

ECE staff 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 specific questions about COVID-19, you can also email [ECEC.COVIDCASE@det.nsw.edu.au](mailto:ECEC.COVIDCASE@det.nsw.edu.au)



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**Our mailing address is:**

Early Childhood Education  
L 8 10 Valentine Avenue  
Parramatta, NSW 2150  
Australia

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