



COVID 19 Health and Safety Plan

The return to school and early childhood education and care (ECEC) services including Out of School Hours Care (OSHC) is consistent with the wider plans to relax restrictions in the ACT and the National Plan. High population vaccination coverage is a critical component of these plans, to protect both staff and students from infection with COVID-19 and minimise ECEC and school-based outbreaks. The epidemiology of the outbreak in the ACT and community restrictions will provide ongoing context for decision making.

The Australian Health Protection Principal Committee (AHPPC) encourages schools to remain vigilant and continue to prevent opportunities for transmission in school settings. AHPPC has advised that physical distancing, hand and respiratory hygiene, regular cleaning and disinfection of the environment, and staying home if unwell continue to be critical effective measures for responding to COVID-19. Systems to rapidly respond to cases (which may include temporary school closure), along with the agility to adjust measures to prevent the spread of COVID-19 in response to community transmission are important. Schools should be ready to return to a full or partial snap lockdown or temporarily close (in response to an exposure) if directed by the ACT Chief Health Officer (CHO) These principles also apply to ECECs.

Manuka Childcare Centre's (MOCCA) COVID-19 Health and Safety Plan will be available at the centre and a copy will be available on the organisation's website.

MOCCA will continue to monitor its COVID-19 Health and Safety Plan and update as needed.

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COVID-19 Health and Safety Plan

It is important to note that if there are cases of COVID-19 in the community, there are no strategies that eliminate transmission risks within an early childhood education and care community. The goal is to keep potential transmission as low as possible to safely continue operation of the early childhood education and care centre.

This planning tool has been used to assist MOCCA in reopening to full capacity following the end of the ACT Lockdown.

This health and safety plan will outline:

- Hygiene practices
- Environmental cleaning
- Use of the CBR App
- Staying home when sick
- Masks
- Physical distancing
- Ventilation
- Wellbeing supports
- Vaccination
- Managing suspected or confirmed cases to prevent further transmission

Depending on the public health condition it is possible that there could be additional actions, orders or guidance provided by the ACT Chief Health Officer, ACT Health, or the ACT Education Directorate.

This document outlines both the planning process and the COVID-19 Health and Safety Plan.

The information detailed in the document has been sourced from the ACT Education Directorate and ACT Health as current on 28 September 2021.

Health and Safety COVID-19 Coordinator

The centre Director has been identified as the person responsible for health and safety preparedness and response planning during the COVID-19 Pandemic. The centre Director will be responsible for facilitating the planning process, monitoring implementation of the COVID-19 Health and Safety Plan, and continued monitoring of local health data to assess implications for early childhood education and care operations and potential adjustments to the COVID-19 Health and Safety Plan.

Key Strategies, Policies and Procedures

Hygiene practices

Good hand and respiratory hygiene practices are vital to prevent the spread of COVID-19. Signage will be displayed throughout the centre as a reminder, and staff will proactively implement good hygiene routines and practices. All staff, visitors, children, and young people must:

- Wash their hands with soap and water or use an alcohol-based hand-sanitizer on arrival and regularly throughout the day.
- Cough into their elbows or a tissue, place used tissues straight into the bin and do hand hygiene afterwards.
- Avoid touching eyes, noses, or mouths.
- Not share food or drink.

Requirements	Action Steps	Responsibility	Materials/Resources and or supports	PD (Y/N)
All staff, children, families, and visitors must maintain hand hygiene.	Handwashing / sanitizing stations are accessible in each room, including common areas and the entrance to the centre.	Director	Running soap and water Hand sanitizers	N
Cover coughs and avoid touching the face.	Please also refer to the 'staying home when sick' section. Staff will incorporate age-appropriate learning supports to continue to help children understand the reasons behind cough covering and why to avoid touching the face.	Educators	Signage	N

Environmental cleaning

Site specific cleaning plans must be in place to ensure regular cleaning of high touch surfaces (such as handrails and desks), frequently used objects (such as staff desk top computers), common areas, toilets and play equipment.

Requirements	Action Steps	Responsibility	Materials/Resources and or supports	PD (Y/N)
High touch surface cleaning	Staff will complete the daily COVID-19 cleaning roster at regular times throughout the day.	Staff	Laminated cleaning roster and whiteboard markers. Current cleaning products are suitable.	N
Daily professional cleaning	MOCCA has a professional clean each evening which includes hospital grade cleaning products.	Cleaner	Cleaner provides all materials needed.	N
Deep cleaning following positive case	In the instance that a positive COVID-19 case be identified in relation to the MOCCA community the centre Director will work with ACT Health and the ACT Education Directorate to organize a deep clean of the building and any other tasks.	Director	Contact details for Health and Education.	N

Use of the CBR App

All staff, families and visitors must check into the site each time they arrive using the CBR check-in app.

Requirements	Action Steps	Responsibility	Materials/Resources and or supports	PD (Y/N)
CBR Check in App mandatory.	Additional CBR App signage will be placed on the front gates to support physical distancing.	Staff	Laminated QR code signage	N

Staying home when sick

Staff members and children who are unwell must not attend an ACT ECEC or school and should stay home and get tested. If they attend while unwell, they must be sent home. In circumstances where staff, children or young people have other medical reasons for recurrent symptoms, a letter from the GP is sufficient to allow return to ECEC or school without a negative test.

Requirements	Action Steps	Responsibility	Materials/Resources and or supports	PD (Y/N)
Staff and children who are unwell must not attend the centre.	Staff or children who attend the centre with symptoms of COVID-19 will be sent home and required to get tested.	Director	Regular information on COVID-19 Symptoms and testing requirements will be distributed to families and staff.	N
Recurrent symptoms for other medical reasons.	Staff or children experiencing recurrent symptoms for other medical reasons will be required to obtain a letter from their GP.	Director	Regular reminders will be given via email and on illness reports.	N

Masks

All educator, teachers and administrative staff will be required to wear appropriate face masks. Staff are encouraged to bring reusable face masks as outlined on the ACT Health Website. Disposable face masks will be available should an employee forget their mask. Staff are required to always wear face masks except for eating while physically distanced. Sporadic checks by administration will ensure that this is maintained. Families and visitors to the centre will be required to wear a face mask in order to enter the centre. Children under the age of 12 years are not required to wear masks as per the ACT Public Health order. Signage will also be provided as a reminder to all employees, families, and visitors.

Requirements	Action Steps	Responsibility	Materials/Resources and or supports	PD (Y/N)
Use of face masks by all staff and visitors	All staff, families and visitors will wear masks that cover the nose and mouth.	Rowena Muir	Face masks Signage	N
Use of face masks by children	Children are not required to wear masks. Staff will model appropriate mask wear and will incorporate age-appropriate learning supports to	Educators	Signage	N

	continue to help children understand the reasons behind mask wearing.			
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Physical distancing

While it is acknowledged that physical distancing between children/ and or staff is not always possible, particularly in single classrooms in the ECEC it is important for limiting transmission of COVID-19. Unnecessary physical interaction in ECECs should be minimised. All adults in ECEC must maintain physical distancing between themselves and other adults. Density quotients of one person per four square meters apply in non-student areas. Children should physically distance from each other and from staff where possible. Where possible, separate cohorts should be maintained, and cohorts who do not normally learn together should not mix; adults should stay within their cohort as far as possible. This does not include siblings. Signage must be displayed to ensure physical distancing requirements are clear.

Requirements	Action Steps	Responsibility	Materials/Resources and or supports	PD (Y/N)
Limiting access to the centre	Families dropping off or collecting children from the centre must limit the amount of time spent onsite, this includes refraining from congregating with other families. In all circumstances visitors must comply with the public health measures in place at the site, including wearing of masks and use of the CBR Check in app. Centre tours will be limited to those who are being offered an existing place or a confirmed place for 2022.	Director	Email reminders will be given.	N
Staff areas 1 person per 4sq meters.	Each common area/ staff space will be remeasured, and signage displayed to show the number of people able to access the area at any one time.	Director	ACT COVID-19 signage displayed.	N

Ventilation

Indoor air quality can be associated with transmission of COVID-19. Ventilation should be optimised in the learning environment to minimise transmission. Outdoor learning should be encouraged and assisted where possible (balanced against sun safety and temperature considerations). ACT ECECs are required to assess their current ventilation capacity and maximise fresh air as much as possible. This should include:

- adjusting systems where possible to increase the fresh (external) air being supplied to learning spaces and classrooms and reduce air recirculation (balanced against temperature considerations).
- using mechanical controls, such as opening windows and doors.

The routine use of portable HEPA filters and carbon dioxide (CO₂) monitors in ACT schools is not supported at this time, as the evidence for the additional public health benefit of these units over maximising fresh air is currently limited. ACT Health will continue to be guided by AHPPC advice and the evolving evidence on the specific benefit of these devices in addition to other public health measures in a school setting.

Requirements	Action Steps	Responsibility	Materials/Resources and or supports	PD (Y/N)
Assessment of current ventilation needs of the centre.	All 'classrooms' have access to fresh air through windows and doors. These will be used as much as possible with consideration given to the weather.	Director	None required.	N
Access to fresh air.	All age groups will access outdoor play as much as possible each day with consideration given to the weather and sun safety. It has been identified that the toddler room has less cross ventilation than any other room in the centre. Although not an obligation MOCCA will place the existing purifiers in the toddler room as an added precaution.	Director	Limit use of reverse cycle air-conditioner/ heaters within reason. Air purifiers as an added precaution.	N

Wellbeing supports

Children, young people, families and staff will all experience the impacts of COVID-19 in their own way. For some, this may include feelings of distress, anxiety, or confusion. A range of wellbeing supports and resources specifically for children, young people and families are available on the ACT Health website.

ECECs should identify specific wellbeing supports for children, young people, and staff.

What will happen if community infections increase in the ACT?

A cautious approach is being taken to return to ECECs and school to minimise the need for future restriction.

If an outbreak is rapidly escalating in the ACT and there is the potential for the health system to be significantly strained, ECEC and school closures may be required in line with other community restrictions, to enable control of disease in the community. ECECs and schools must be ready to respond to a community wide lockdown or temporarily close (in response to an exposure) if directed by the ACT CHO or by the Children's Education and Care Assurance (CECA) on the advice of the ACT CHO.

The benefits and risks of ECEC and school closures will be carefully weighed. This includes the impact on educational, social, health and wellbeing outcomes, especially for vulnerable children and young people.

Requirements	Action Steps	Responsibility	Materials/Resources and or supports	PD (Y/N)
Supporting the wellbeing of children and families.	The centre will continue to work with BeYou to source information for families and children's wellbeing.	Director	BeYou Registration	N
Supporting the wellbeing of staff.	The centre currently has one mental health first aider – an opportunity for a second mental health first aider will be made available over the coming month. The centre currently has an EAP and will continue to work with the organisation to support staff wellbeing.	Director Director	Mental Health First Aid Adesso Profiling	Y

Vaccination

Vaccination coverage is a key component of the return to ECEC and school plan. High levels of vaccination combined with public health social measures are the best protections against COVID. Families and staff are strongly encouraged to have 2 doses of vaccine where eligible.

ECEC staff have been prioritised for vaccination; not all will have had the opportunity to receive two doses, and children in ECECs and primary schools will still be ineligible for COVID-19 vaccination at the time of their return. Vaccination of adults around children is the most effective way to protect unvaccinated children from disease. Very high to complete vaccination levels for staff undertaking face to face learning is a critical component of the suite of measures in this plan. This will require employers to conduct site level monitoring of staff vaccination rates.

At this stage, with ACT vaccination rates high and increasing, there appears to be no need for employers to implement a mandatory vaccination policy for ECEC and school staff. However, this may need to be reconsidered.

Requirements	Action Steps	Responsibility	Materials/Resources and or supports	PD (Y/N)
Employee vaccination By 25/10/21 it is anticipated that 96% of MOCCA staff will have had 2 vaccine doses.	All employees have been strongly encouraged to receive a COVID-19 vaccination. MOCCA's active lobbying of Government for ECEC staff to be given priority of access to the vaccine is evidence of this support. A vaccine register has been established and employees are providing a copy of their completed vaccination certificate to be held on file.	Director	Register maintained and certificates collected and held on file.	N

Managing suspected or confirmed cases to prevent further transmission

ECECs and schools should have specific plans for managing children, young people, staff, and visitors who display symptoms of COVID-19 and for managing a COVID-19 diagnosis in a child, young person, staff member or visitor to the school.

Staff, children, young people or visitors with COVID-19 symptoms – Children and young people at ECECs or schools experiencing symptoms compatible with COVID-19 (e.g. fever, cough, sore throat, shortness of breath) will be isolated in an appropriate space with suitable supervision and collected by a parent/carer as soon as possible. Staff and visitors will be advised to travel directly home. The symptomatic person should wear a mask while waiting to be picked up or waiting to return home. If a child can't tolerate wearing a mask, then staff caring for a child who becomes sick whilst at an ECEC or school should wear a mask, carry out frequent hand hygiene and practise physical

distancing. There is no need for the staff member to then isolate unless they themselves become unwell or the child is confirmed to have COVID-19.

Confirmed cases – If a staff member, child, young person, or family member is diagnosed with COVID-19, ACT Health will provide direction on further management, which may result in full or partial ECEC or school closure while site cleaning and contact tracing is undertaken.

The ACT Government has procedures in place to respond to a confirmed or suspected case in an ACT ECEC or school. This includes working with the ACT CHO to determine risks and may include full or partial closure of an individual ECEC or school. Quarantine and testing requirements will be communicated directly to ECEC or school communities via the ECEC service provider or school. Schools will be responsible for supporting continuity of learning for children and young people during a period of quarantine.

COVID-19 Health and Safety Plan Professional Development

The success of our health and safety plan requires all staff, children, and families to be prepared with the necessary knowledge and skills to implement the plan as intended.

Topic	Audience	Session format	Materials	Start date	Completion date
How to wear a face mask correctly	Employees	Face to face	ACT educative materials and masks	30 September 2021	25 October 2021
Mental Health First Aid	Nominated employee	Online	Laptop and registration with provider	15 October 2021	TBC

COVID-19 Health and Safety Plan Communications

Timely and effective family and caregiver communication about health and safety protocols and schedules is critical. MOCCA is particularly mindful that frequent communications are accessible to all stakeholders. Additionally, MOCCA has well established communication with the ACT Education Directorate and ACT Health.

Topic	Audience	Responsibility	Materials	Start date	Completion date
Return to early childhood education and care procedures	Families	Director	Signage, email, Facebook, and website	30 September 2021	1 October 2021
Return to early childhood education and care procedures	Staff	Director	Virtual staff meeting, email.	30 September 2021	1 October 2021

