



MANAGING PANDEMICS POLICY

Aim

The Little Village will minimise our staff and children's exposure to pandemic outbreaks, in this case COVID-19, by adhering to all recommended guidelines from the Australian Government- Department of Health and local Public Health Units to slow the spread of said virus. We will implement practices that help to reduce the transmission of said virus including the exclusion of any person (child, educator, staff, parent, visitor or volunteer) that is suspected or has tested positive to having a suspected virus. Our Service will implement effective hygiene practices as per our existing policies and procedures.

The Little Village will also provide up-to-date information and advice to parents, families and educators sourced from the Australian Government, Department of Health and state Ministry of Health about COVID-19 as it becomes available. Recommendations and health measures mandated by the Health Department will be strictly adhered to at all times.

National Quality Standard

This policy links to the following NQS: National Quality Standards 2.1.1; 2.1.2, 2.2

Links to other policies

First Aid Administration Policy
Dealing with Infectious Diseases

Statutory legislation and consideration


- Children (Education and Care Services National Law Application) Act 2010
- Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011: 77, 86, 88, 162, 168
- Work Health and Safety Act 2011
- Staying healthy: *Preventing infectious diseases in early childhood education and care services* (Fifth Edition)



Strategy

At The Little Village, we have the highest priority for hygiene practices, and during this COVID-19 pandemic it is no different. Our promise to review and deliver our practices to maintain a healthy and safe environment continues. We have many strategies that have been put in place to address the growing restrictions we are being faced with including:

- Educating and reminding our children about covering their coughs and sneezes with their elbows or a tissue and disposing of tissues properly. We are also integrating lessons around how germs cause transmission so children understand how cross-infection occurs
- Ensuring children are washing their hands often with soap and water, including before and after eating and after going to the toilet.
- Village staff and parents are asked to wash their hands before and after entering each care environment, and before and after contacting children
- hands must be thoroughly dried using disposal paper and disposed of in the bin provided
- Using alcohol-based hand sanitisers before using the sign-in/sign-out kiosk
- disposable tissues must be used to wipe noses, eyes or mouths and disposed of in the bin provided immediately after use
- hands must be washed following the use of tissues
- Cleaning and disinfecting surfaces. We have increased our cleaning routine and have a professional cleaning company whom are specifically sanitising children surfaces
- Asking families to stay home if they are sick with staff checking on drop off and regularly throughout the day. We have become stricter with our exclusion policy and for this reason, we reserve the right to contact a family if we feel a child may be exhibiting any symptoms of infection.
- Restricting visitors to TLV and avoiding prolonged contact with each other. We ask families to limit their presence in the learning environments. Please trust the Zias to settle your children. We also ask guardians to restrict the number of people picking up their children.
- Staff are being asked to avoid contact with others and keeping more than 1.5 metres away from people. If families need to discuss anything with the educators, our Zias are happy to talk on the phone, through The Little Village app, or email.
- Our Zias are also limiting the resources being put out and are rotating them often.



The Approved Provider, Nominated Supervisors, educators, staff, families and visitors will comply with the following:

Exclusion/ Self-isolation/ Self-quarantine

- Follow state and federal quarantine recommendations.
- agree to have their child's temperature taken by a staff member upon entry to the Service if deemed necessary by staff and/or management.
- agree to have their child excluded if their child's temperature is above 38°C
- any person who has been in close contact with someone who has a positive diagnosis, or suspected diagnosis of the virus, must self-isolate for 14 days
- household members of a person who has a **confirmed case** (including children) of COVID-19 must also be isolated from the childcare Service and general public
- the Public Health Unit will provide further information on a case-by-case basis as to the length and place of isolation. (see: [COVID-19 home isolation](#))
- families must immediately advise the Service if they, or anyone in their family, develops any symptoms of the virus or receives a positive result of the virus whilst in isolation
- any person (employee, enrolled child, parent, caregiver, visitor or contractor) who is displaying symptoms such as: fever, coughing, sore throat, fatigue and shortness of breath, must seek urgent medical attention to determine if they need to be tested for said virus and not attend our Service under any circumstance
- **depending on the reason for isolation, a doctor's clearance may be required.**
- **TLV reserves the right to refuse attendance of a child or visitor that is suspected of having symptoms of the virus as per our Dealing with Infectious Disease Policy.**

E.g. Any person displaying fever, flu-like symptoms such as coughing, sore throat and fatigue or shortness of breath may be suspected of being infected.

SOCIAL DISTANCING IN TLV

Social distancing is important because viruses are most likely to spread from person-to-person through close contact with a person while they are infectious, close contact with a person with a confirmed infection who coughs or sneezes or from touching objects or surfaces (such as door handles or tables) contaminated from a cough or sneeze from a person with a confirmed infection and then touching your nose or mouth



To reduce the spread of viruses:

- if your child is sick, do not send them to TLV
- do not visit TLV if you or another family member is unwell
- sanitise your hands at regular intervals throughout the day and when entering our Service
- avoid physical contact with other people who may be sick- such as older people and people with existing health conditions
- clean and disinfect high touch surfaces regularly (door handles, car seats, mobile phone, toys, dummies)
- promote strictest hygiene measures when preparing food at home and at TLV

PAYMENT OF FEES

Under Family Assistance Law, gap fees will still be payable if the child does not attend the Service.

Fees are payable to the Service for all enrolled children including pupil free days, sick days, public holidays and family holidays. Child Care Subsidy (CCS) can only be paid where services are open and providing care. The only exclusion is for the Christmas closure period or when a period of local emergency has been declared (eg: bushfire, forced closure due to COVID-19).

If a child does not attend the Service as a precautionary measure due to virus transmission, payment of gap fees is still required.

Whether a child is ill or not and does not attend care as part of the family's own precautionary measure against potential contact with COVID-19, Child Care Subsidy (CCS) families have access to 62 allowable absences in the 2019-2020 financial year, rather than the 42 allowable absence days without the need for families to provide documentation such as a medical certificate.

If required, families can access additional absences, without the need for evidence, in relation to COVID-19. (update from Federal Government effective : 24 March 2020)


Families affected by temporary financial hardship, including loss of income due to COVID-19 they may apply for Additional Child Care Subsidy for up to 13 weeks through MyGov.

If a child is not ill and does not attend care for a longer period, the family may wish to follow the established advice around longer absences (as set out in the [Child Care Provider Handbook](#), noting that an enrolment automatically ceases when a child does not attend care for 14 weeks).

Last reviewed: 01.04.20

Date for next review: April 21

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IN THE EVENT OF FORCED CLOSURE OR DECLARATION OF LOCAL EMERGENCY

The decision to close our Service will be made, and advised, by relevant state and territory governments or the Regulatory Authority. This may be due to a confirmed case of COVID-19 in our Service community.

Should this occur, all families will be notified immediately via email and TLV app.

The Approved Provider will notify the Regulatory Authority within 24 hours of any closure via the NQA IT System

As childcare cannot be offered if our Service is forced to close, fees will be charged as per Family Assistance Law.

STAFF ENTITLEMENTS

Confirmed Case

If an educator or staff member is confirmed to have said virus e.g. COVID-19, and they are unable to attend the workplace and cannot return unless they have a clearance from a General Practitioner of Public Health Unit.

Full and part-time employees who cannot attend work due to illness can take paid sick leave.

Caring for a family member or emergency


If an employee cannot attend work due to caring for a family member due to said virus e.g. COVID-19, they are entitled to take paid carer's leave. See **Fair Work Act** for entitlements for casual, part time and full-time employees. Reasonable evidence is required to justify the absence.

Self-isolation due to travel

As per Australian Government's new measures for COVID-19 effective 16 March 2020, any person returning from overseas must self-isolate for at least 14 days or if returning from 28 March 2020, will be mandated to isolate in designated facility. The employee is not entitled to be paid (unless they use paid leave entitlements- annual leave. Employees are not entitled to use personal sick leave as they are not 'sick'.

Self-Isolation directed by Service or as a Precaution

Where an employee is directed by the Approved Provider to stay home and self-isolate as they have shown symptoms of a flu-like illness, they will access their personal/carers leave entitlements.



If an employee wants to stay home as a precaution of contracting COVID-19 they may negotiate to take unpaid leave, annual leave or long service leave with Management.

Employee Entitlements

Employees' work arrangements may change during the outbreak of pandemics e.g. COVID-19.

Due to reduced attendance numbers and business viability, the Approved Provider will explore options for staffing and flexible work arrangements with individual employees.

Arrangements may include: reduction in hours for casual employees, encourage employees to take annual leave or other leave entitlements or changes to rostering and duties.

Employees may be requested to complete activities such as:

- professional development learning
- programming and documentation- updating Medical Plans, registers etc
- updating the Quality Improvement Plan
- conducting cleaning within the service and room preparation
- completing any maintenance required as per risk assessments
- development of online activities for children- Zoom, You Tube account

The Approved Provider will obtain written consent by the employees of any changes in their work conditions.

Stand downs

Under the *Fair Work Act*, an employee can only be stood down without pay if they cannot be usefully employed because of a stoppage of work for any cause for which the employer cannot reasonably be held responsible.

If all avenues of 'useful' employment is exhausted, and an employee is stood down, the employer is not required to make payments to the employee. During a stand down, employees will continue to accrue entitlements to leave and there is no interruption to employees' continuity of service.

A stand down under the Fair Work Act may occur in the case of our service being closed due to a mandated closure by the Government or Public Health Unit.