



Dear Families,

Thank you for your support during the evolving situation with COVID-19. It is warming to hear and feel the support from our centre community during these difficult times.

Unfortunately, all our centres have been impacted by COVID-19, which is causing disruptions to children, families and of course, our team members. We want to remind all families of our internal practices along with a few new measures to help reduce the risk to our children, families, and team members.

- Social distancing is encouraged for all families and staff. Please take note of the floor stickers and make sure you remain distanced at drop off and collection.
- All educators are encouraged to wear face coverings throughout this outbreak. We have upgraded our request and are currently sourcing N95 respirators for all team members to further reduce the risk to our children, families, and colleagues. As per Department of Education advice, educators are permitted to lower their mask when directly interacting with children however our team are encouraged to wear a mask for the duration of their shift.
- Temperature screening of all educators, families, and children. Please remember to have your temperature taken prior to entering the service.
- Families are not permitted to enter the classrooms to minimise contact. Handover and collection of children is restricted to one guardian only. We request that no other visitors visit the service when collecting children.
- All classrooms continue to operate an indoor-outdoor curriculum as per our philosophy. This creates increased opportunity for increased airflow and reduced risk of transmission.
- Cleaning schedules continue with two-hour high touch point sanitisation. Each centre is commercially cleaned 5 days a week with a deep clean each Wednesday evening to further reduce the risk of transmission.
- All team members are double vaccinated and are encouraged to get their booster shot as soon as possible.

All childcare centres across Victoria have been significantly impacted by COVID-19 and many of them have had to close or reduced their operating hours due to a shortage of available staff. To date, we have avoided this across all our centres which is fantastic news. We ask that where possible, families support the service with a later drop off and earlier collection. We understand that this may not be possible however these strategies will help the service remain open whilst experiencing a shortage in staff.

We have detailed several frequently asked questions below:

I am not feeling well, can I still drop off my child?

If you are feeling unwell and showing signs and symptoms of COVID-19 we ask that you do not attend the service.

I dropped my child off and tested positive to COVID-19 throughout the day, what do I do?

Please arrange for immediate collection of your child. Please call ahead and we will organise a contactless collection to ensure the service is not exposed to further risk of infection.

Can I send my child to care if or a member of my household has COVID-19?

No, please do not send your child and follow the isolation guidelines from the Department of Health.

When is the centre cleaned?

The centre is cleaned each night by external commercial cleaners. In addition to this the centre also has a deep clean once a week and our team have a two-hour sanitisation schedule to help reduce the risk of transmission.

Will my fees be waived if I am absent due to COVID-19?

Fees will be waived for families who have a member of their household test positive for COVID-19. A copy of the Department of Health positive case is required for fees to be waived.

Are staff required to wear masks whilst working with children?

We have asked all staff to wear a mask whilst at the centre however they're permitted to lower their mask whilst working directly with children as per Department of Education advice. We encourage our team to wear the mask for the duration of their shift to reduce the risk of transmission.

How often will I receive communication about exposure dates at the centre?

We recognise that we are sending frequent emails to families regarding COVID-19 exposure. This forms part of our COVID Safe Plan and company values. We believe the small things are huge therefore we believe in being transparent and honest. Our intention is not to increase concern rather awareness for the centre community.

Communication will be sent daily should there be an update to an exposure date or classroom. The communication will be inclusive of all cases over a seven-day period.

How can we support centre operations?

We ask all families to mark their child's absenteeism as soon as possible. This can be done directly in the XAP APP or by emailing the centre leadership team. This helps the centre accommodate leave and manage the daily operations during these difficult times.

How are you managing staff movement?

Previously we operated solely in a Pod system which reduced the movement of staff. Unfortunately, due to the shortage of staff throughout this outbreak this is always not possible. We limit movement wherever possible to reduce the risk. We maintain a log which outlines team member movement to assist with identifying contacts should there be potential exposure to COVID-19. It is our absolute goal to not have staff move throughout the centre.

We do not share staff across multiple centres throughout an outbreak.

We would like to thank all families for your continued support throughout this time.

Kind Regards,

Jarrold Macdonald | General Manager – Operations
Maples Early Learning