

# Kindergarten Families – Term 4

## Frequently Asked Questions

Update October 2020



### Attendance

#### How many children will be attending City of Casey Kindergartens in term four?

From Monday 5 October, in line with public health advice, kindergartens will be open for all children's attendance on-site, with appropriate risk mitigation measures in place as listed throughout this document. We look forward to welcoming all the children and families back to the kindergartens over the coming weeks.

Children who are enrolled in more than one service, for example kindergarten and a long day care service, may attend both.

#### When will families be able to enter the kindergarten room for arrival and departure times?

The City of Casey will continue to follow the advice of the relevant authorities. The Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) and the Department of Education and Training (DET) both provide advice to inform the kindergarten program. Opportunities for people to gather in groups, especially in foyers and within kindergartens will continue to be minimised.

#### Are we staggering drop off and pick up times?

Kindergartens may choose to stagger the arrival and departure for children in some circumstances. Staggered arrival and departure times support families to access the kindergarten foyer in smaller numbers, and to maintain physical distancing. The teaching teams will consider a range of factors unique to each kindergarten and will liaise with families for the implementation of the staggered start times. Families should ensure that only ONE person attends with the child during arrival and departure times at the kindergarten.

### Unwell

#### What does the City of Casey mean by unwell?

It should be noted that City of Casey does not define the meaning of unwell, rather we rely on the guidance from the Australian Health Protection Principal Committee (AHPPC) and the Department of Education and Training (DET) to provide this advice. The AHPPC have advised that early childhood services should implement several risk mitigation measures to ensure a COVID safe environment, one of which is the exclusion of unwell staff, **children** and visitors.

Any children showing **any signs of illness or appearing unwell** are required to stay at home until symptoms resolve. The [staying healthy 2013](#) document by National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) (page 31) provides a list of symptoms to be aware of for unwell children. Particularly, in relation to COVID-19, these symptoms include cough, runny nose, sore throat or shortness of breath and fever.

City of Casey Kindergartens will be conducting health and temperature screenings for all children entering our services as per the current advice from Victoria's Chief Health Officer and the

Department of Education and Training recommendations. During arrival time and whilst performing temperature checks, staff will wear face masks as physical distancing cannot be maintained. Please read the below information about health and temperature checks.

### What if my child has a clear runny nose, are they able to attend kindergarten?

No. Any child showing **any signs of illness or appearing unwell** is required to stay at home until symptoms resolve. A runny nose may be attributed to other underlying medical conditions (e.g. allergy). In this case we ask parents to seek advice from their medical practitioner who will be able to provide a medical management plan advising of the medical condition, details of any symptoms that may be observed as a result of the medical condition and the treatment currently in place for the child. Effective mitigation strategies can then be put in place for the safety of the child and our educators.

From the current research, children are making up a small proportion of diagnosed cases of COVID-19 both in Australia and overseas. Generally, when they get the virus, young children appear to have mild or no symptoms. This means identifying illness can be difficult. However, where there are signs of illness, or a child is appearing unwell, they must not engage our service again until symptoms resolve, or we have clear medical advice that they can return.

### Are the City of Casey Guidelines being updated to reflect the exclusion of children during COVID-19?

The teaching teams will continue to follow Regulation 88(2) of the Education and Care Regulations. It states: If there is an occurrence of an infectious disease at a centre-based service, the approved provider of the service must ensure that a parent or an authorised emergency contact of each child being educated and cared for by the service is notified of the occurrence as soon as practicable. Notification should be via signage at the front entry, StoryPark notification or SMS.

### If my child is sent home due to being unwell when can they return? Do I need a doctor's certificate when they return?

If your child becomes unwell during the day, and has any of the following symptoms, you will be required to collect your child immediately:

- Fever
- Chills or sweats
- Cough
- Sore throat
- Shortness of breath
- Runny nose
- Loss of sense of smell or taste

Children can return once the symptoms resolve. A doctor's certificate is not required for them to return to Kindergarten. However, we encourage you to seek medical advice if your child is sent home with any of these symptoms to ensure that your child does not have an underlying medical condition.

### Does my child need the flu vaccination to attend kindergarten?

No, it is not a requirement. However, it is recommended by DHHS and DET that staff, children and parents/carers have the influenza vaccination wherever possible.

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#### Contact City of Casey

03 9705 5200

TIS: 131 450

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## Can a child attend kindergarten if a member of their household has been diagnosed with COVID-19?

Please note that if families advise that their child has been in close contact with a person who has been confirmed as having COVID-19 they are required to self-isolate at home for 14 days and/or follow the instructions of their medical practitioner or DHHS.

If the child has been tested for COVID-19 and has not received their test results, then they cannot stay at the service. If the child received a negative result and does not have any of the symptoms associated with COVID-19, they will be able to attend kindergarten.

## Fees

### Can I receive a refund if I have previously made a payment towards my kindergarten fees for Term 2 or Term 3 and these were automatically transferred for Term 4?

Families have been sent communication about claiming a refund. Families seeking further information about their fees or a refund can contact Kindergarten Enrolments by email at [kinderenrolment@casey.vic.gov.au](mailto:kinderenrolment@casey.vic.gov.au) or by telephone on 9705 5200.

## Health and Safety

### What safety measures have been put in place to ensure the health and wellbeing of my child is maintained while attending kindergarten?

The Kindergarten room and running of the day have been modified to follow current advice from DHHS and DET, to support the children and teaching team's health and wellbeing while accessing the Kindergarten program. This will include:

- A member of the teaching team will continue to sign in children in at the Kindergarten door.
- A health and temperature check will be conducted at the door upon sign in.
- An indoor/outdoor program will run from the beginning to end of session.
- Learning environments are set up for individual or small groups of children to participate in.
- Children are actively encouraged to frequently wash their hands throughout the day.
- High touch areas are cleaned throughout the Kindergarten session.
- The teaching teams are actively engaging in teaching the children about the importance of health hygiene and cough etiquette.

### What is the process involved in the health and temperature check as children arrive?

Upon advice from Victoria's Chief Health Officer and the Department of Education and Training, temperature screening will be implemented for all children entering the kindergarten. On arrival you will be asked to answer questions about your family's health. These questions will provide important

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information to staff in relation to your child and may result in your child not being able to stay at the service. The questions will be:

- Have you or your child been in contact with a person who has been confirmed as having COVID-19?
- Have you or has your child been tested for COVID-19 in the past 14 days? If yes, please provide details as to the test results and when these were received.
- Do you or your child have any of the following symptoms: fever, chills or sweats, cough, sore throat, runny nose, shortness of breath or loss of sense of smell or taste?

Responding 'YES' to some of our health questions, may result in your child not being able to stay at the service.

All children will be required to have their temperature checked prior to entering the service. This process will involve:

- Upon arrival your child's temperature will be checked using an infrared thermometer.
- Temperatures may also be rechecked throughout the session.
- If your child registers a temperature of 37.5 Degrees Celsius or above, families will be provided with the option to return to their car and return after 15 minutes for the child's temperature to be rechecked. If your child registers a temperature of 37.5 Degrees Celsius or above during the second check, your child cannot stay at the service.
- Parents and staff will not be required to undergo temperature checks, parents and staff should only attend the service if they are well.

## What can families do at home to support their child's awareness of personal hygiene?

Families can actively engage in conversations and role model to their children about the importance of hand hygiene. Families may wish to highlight the importance of washing their hands upon arrival to the kindergarten, before and after accessing learning environments, before and after eating, after blowing their nose, coughing, sneezing or using the toilet.

## What extra measures have been put in place regarding cleaning?

Professional cleaning is being undertaken in accordance with the National Guidelines including a thorough clean being completed after each session. Additional cleaning of high touch areas will also occur throughout the kindergarten session.

## Is the kindergarten providing hand sanitiser or are families allowed to provide their own?

Where soap and water are not readily available, hand sanitiser will be available for use. If families would like to send their own hand sanitisers for the personal use by their child, they are welcome to do so.

Please ensure these are clearly named and the teaching team will store them appropriately.

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## How exactly will physical distancing be achieved?

Upon advice from DHHS and DET maintaining physical distancing is not practical in early childhood services for children. Physical distancing is most important for adults. Kindergartens will continue to modify the indoor and outdoor environments to consider opportunities for small group play, staggered mealtimes, and indoor and outdoor play.

## Are educators required to wear masks and gloves during the kindergarten session?

All staff will be required to wear a face mask that fits properly over the nose and mouth to and from their workplaces as per recommendations from the Victorian Chief Health Officer. Face shields, scarves and bandanas can no longer be used on their own.

All families must now wear a face mask or face mask that fits properly over the nose and mouth when leaving their home to attend the kindergarten to drop off or collect their child. Face shields, scarves and bandanas can no longer be used on their own.

Upon the recommendation from the Victorian Chief Health Officer, face masks are not required for face to face teaching (except for temperature checking) however, it is up to each individual teacher and educator whether they choose to wear a mask or not whilst in the kindergarten setting.

As advised by the Department of Education a single use facemask or a cloth mask made to DHHS standards is recommended for staff performing temperature checks.

## Kindergarten Routines

### Are the children participating in mat time?

Yes, children are still participating in mat time. The children are encouraged to be spaced out and where required are participating in smaller groups rather than all together.

### Are comfort toys and birthday cakes allowed to be brought to kindergarten?

At this time, we suggest that families ensure all self-care items (e.g. blankets, comforters) brought from home to Kindergarten are clean. Children's personal items should not be shared, including food. There will be no sharing of food until further notice, and as such, no birthday/celebration foods can be sent to Kindergarten.

### How is physical distancing encouraged during arrival and departure times?

To assist with physical distancing markers are already in place in the kindergarten foyer and entry areas. It is recommended where possible, that only ONE family member enter the foyer to drop off and collect their child. Families may need to consider the amount of other people already accessing the kindergarten foyer during arrival and departure times. With this in mind, and due to increasing numbers of children returning to the kindergarten over the coming weeks the arrival and departure procedures may take longer than normal.

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## Will the teaching team continue to sign the children in and out upon arrival?

Yes, a member of the teaching team will continue to be responsible for signing each child in and inviting them into the kindergarten room.

During this time teachers and educators continue to provide high quality educational programs to numerous children across the City of Casey. We understand that this is a difficult time for many, and we greatly appreciate families continuing to engage with the teaching teams with courtesy and respect.

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