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COVID-19 Communication from Extend After School Care

As uncertainty surrounding COVID-19 continues to spread across Australia and internationally, we would like to share with you the key information about the current situation and our delivery of Outside School Hours Care services at your school as we continue to safely care for your children and reduce disruption at this time.

Firstly, some facts about the 2019 Coronavirus

SARS-CoV-2 is the virus responsible for causing Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19). In most people, SARS-CoV-2 infection will cause either no symptoms or mild symptoms of COVID-19, and the overwhelming majority of people infected will make a full recovery. For the elderly or those who are immunocompromised (due to unrelated medical treatments or existing underlying conditions), the virus can cause more severe COVID-19 symptoms.

The current situation

As with pandemics of the past, the circumstances regarding SARS-CoV-2 and its resulting respiratory disease, COVID-19, is a constantly evolving situation. Current information is as follows:

- Similar to the original SARS-CoV pandemic of 2003-04, this current strain, SARS-CoV-2, appears to affect older people more severely, with young people and children remaining relatively unaffected by symptoms of COVID-19. This is in contrast to other pandemics of the past such as Swine Flu (H1N1pdm09) 2009, which affected fit and healthy younger people as well as the elderly.
- The virus can be spread by asymptomatic carriers, who are infected with SARS-CoV-2 but do not display any symptoms of COVID-19. However, at this stage, this is not believed to be the primary form of transmission.
- There is currently no cure or vaccine for the virus or the disease it causes.
- The median incubation period for SARS-CoV-2 is 5.1 days but can be as much as 14 days. Approximately 97.5% of infected patients will develop symptoms within 11.5 days.
- The virus is spread by respiratory droplets of an infected person within a two metres proximity or via contact with surfaces contaminated with the virus.
- Good hygiene practices remain the single best protection against SARS-CoV-2 infection, namely hand washing for greater than 20 seconds with liquid soap.
- At this stage, it appears the virus is able to live on hard surfaces for up to 72 hours.
- Simple household disinfectants and bleach kill SARS-CoV-2 on hard surfaces.

There is no need for alarm

Although this health situation needs to be managed responsibly by all global citizens, there is no need for undue alarm or panic. This is not the first pandemic and it will not be the last. The Australian Government advises that people with no symptoms are able to go about their day, attending school and work as normal. As some people carrying the virus may not exhibit symptoms, it is the responsibility of everyone in the community at this time to demonstrate good hygiene practices. Should this be done, the risk of spread of the virus will be greatly reduced.

What Parents and Educators Should Know

How to reduce the risk of infection

- Wash your hands frequently with liquid soap and water for a minimum of 20 seconds.
- Encourage your children to also wash their hands frequently in the same manner as above.
- Scrub every surface of the hands including between the fingers, dry hands and turn off the tap with paper towel.
- Wash hands before and after preparing food, before and after eating, after coughing, sneezing or blowing your nose and before and after touching your face.
- Cover mouth and nose with a tissue when coughing or sneezing and throw the tissue in the bin, or cough into your elbow instead of your hand.
- Avoid very close contact with those with cold or flu-like symptoms.
- All children should bring a water bottle from home each day instead of using bubblers or drinking fountains.

The difference between cleaning and disinfecting

- Cleaning refers to the removal of dirt and germs on surfaces. Cleaning does not kill germs but by removing them, you minimise risk of infection from contaminated surfaces.
- Disinfecting is the process of using chemicals to kill germs on surfaces, thereby minimising risk of infection from contaminated surfaces. It is understood that bleach and other household disinfectants can be used to kill SARS-CoV-2 on surfaces.
- The most effective way to maintain an uncontaminated environment at work and at home is to ensure your hard surfaces are clean and disinfected as part of normal hygiene practices.
- Wear gloves when cleaning and disinfecting hard surfaces. If you are using reusable rubber gloves rather than disposable gloves, wash your gloved hands for greater than 20 seconds with liquid soap and/or disinfectant before removing gloves after cleaning. Keep those gloves separately contained and do not use those gloves again for anything except cleaning and disinfecting hard surfaces.
- Surfaces to consider cleaning and disinfecting include tables, benches, hard-backed chairs, door handles, light switches, remote controls, desks, sinks, toilets etc.

- For soft surfaces, launder linen and washable items and allow them to air dry, and regularly vacuum carpets and fabric couches.

Should I be vaccinated with the influenza vaccine this winter?

The Australian Government is recommending people be vaccinated against Influenza this year, as they do every year. This will alleviate the strain on the health care system during the management of COVID-19 as winter approaches.

Should I reconsider my travel plans this year?

As of March 11, the Australian Government has travel bans in place for travel to China, South Korea, Italy and Iran. Please carefully consider all plans to travel internationally.

Do I need to stock-pile toilet paper, soap, tissues etc?

No. Manufacturing has not stopped. If people don't panic, there will be enough supplies for all who need them. Just have a small supply for two weeks and remember, supermarkets still deliver and can leave your items at the front door.

Does Extend have a Pandemic Policy?

Yes. A printable PDF copy of Extend's Pandemic Policy can be accessed [here](#). For Extend Educators and Managers, it's business as usual. Good hygiene practices including hand washing and clean surfaces are part of our everyday routine during epidemics, pandemics and at all other times.

Does Extend have an Exclusion Policy in place for children attending the service?

Yes. Extend follows the directives of the Australian Government. Every school with which we partner follows these same Government directives so if the child is attending school, they can attend our service before or after school. If the child is isolated from school, they are also isolated from our services. During Vacation Care, if the child is deemed to be well and there are no reportable risks, the child is welcome to attend Vacation Care at Extend.

Does Extend have an Exclusion Policy in place for Educators and Managers working in the service?

Yes. Extend follows the directives of the Australian Government. All Educators who have visited China, South Korea, Iran and Italy will be required to self-isolate for 14 days on their exit from those countries. If an Educator is known to come into close contact with an infected person, they must self-isolate until it is deemed safe for them to return to work. If an Educator is unwell they must seek medical clearance prior to returning to work. At all other times, Educators practice exemplary hygiene practices in the services we operate and encourage our children to do the same.

Is it safe to send my child to school and to the Extend service?

Yes. Parents are asked to model and reinforce responsible hygiene practices with their children to create good habits which will be brought from home into the school environment. Good hygiene practices should be in place for all children, but if they aren't embedded with your child yet, this is the perfect opportunity to teach them healthy hygiene practices in a calm, non-alarmist way. This helps them to adopt healthy, life-long habits and prevent the spread of the many contagious diseases that exist in our community at all times.

What will happen if the Government orders the closure of my school?

In the event that the school is forced to close, Extend will not operate our services. In the event that we are unable to deliver the services due to closure of the site on which we operate, no fees will be charged for the period of closure. You do not need to cancel your bookings. We will communicate with you as the situation unfolds.

Is Extend equipped to continue to operate throughout this pandemic?

Yes. An event such as this puts a financial strain on individuals and businesses alike. Having said that, Extend is a strong family business with a history of responsible financial management practices. With the cooperation of our families and partner schools, we are able to support our operation throughout this

crisis and will continue to provide our quality services for many years to come.

In conclusion

At Extend, we take the safety and well-being of the children in our care very seriously. We continue to reinforce responsible hygiene practices with all our Educators in the services we operate across Australia. We will continue to encourage your children to also adhere to responsible hygiene practices, and we ask that you assist us in this by continuing to reinforce clean hands, a clean environment and healthy habits with your child.

This is an evolving situation and we will update our procedures as further recommendations become available from the Australian Government. For up to date health care advice you can call the Coronavirus Health Information Line on 1800 020 080.

Sources:

- NSW Health
- Victorian Department of Health and Human Services
- Centre for Disease Control and Prevention
- Unicef
- World Health Organisation
- The Lancet
- Annals of Internal Medicine
- Harvard Medical School Health Publishing
- The Australian Government
- Commonwealth Chief Medical Officer

With sincere thanks,
Extend Team