

COVID-19 Safe Policy

Mandatory Quality Area 1, 2, 7

Policy Rationale

Southbank Montessori has a responsibility to protect the health and safety of all individuals at all times. Many of the hygiene habits developed during the COVID-19 pandemic will continue indefinitely. Southbank Montessori demonstrates and models to children the hygiene practices which will mitigate the introduction and spread of COVID19.

The virus presents greater risks to those members of the Community that are classified as “Vulnerable Persons”.

The Australian Health Protection Principal Committee (AHPPC) identifies the following groups as being at greater risk of more serious illness if they are infected with COVID-19:

- people aged 70 years and over
- people aged 65 years and over with chronic medical conditions
- all people with compromised immune systems, and;
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people over the age of 50 with chronic medical conditions.

*The AHPPC states that there is limited evidence at this time regarding the risk in pregnant women.

[Australian Health Protection Principal Committee \(AHPPC\) | Australian Government Department of Health](#)

All members of the Southbank Montessori Community, including attendees and their family members, who fall within the Vulnerable Persons Category, and have concerns about returning to face-to-face learning are to make contact with the Southbank Montessori Executive manager, Center managers & provider approval for appropriate arrangements to be made. Each situation will be treated with sensitivity and consideration to ensure the best outcome for the individual and the broader Southbank Montessori community.

In addition to the below, ongoing reminders to staff and students on the requirements for hygiene and social distancing are communicated to the School Community via the use of:

- Signage at entrances and using the QR code

- The use of signage as to where parents can wait for drop off and pick up of students

In order to protect those vulnerable members of our School Community, together with the broader group, the following Risk Mitigation strategies have been implemented. All strategies will be updated and align with current Western Australian Government regulations.

Procedures

Face masks

All staff must carry a face mask at all times. If social distancing of 1.5 metres cannot be maintained, staff must wear their mask unless providing direct instruction/teaching (i.e. to communicate).

Staff who have a medical condition such as problems with their breathing, a serious skin condition on the face, a disability or a mental health condition will be exempt from wearing a face mask but must provide a medical certificate at least 24 hours prior to their first shift.

If required by the western Australian government States, parents/carers **MUST** wear a face mask when dropping off or picking up their child.

The Department of Health and Human Services (WAHD) website has [advice about face coverings](#), including:

- different types that can be used
- how to make your own
- how to safely wear and safely remove them.

[COVID-19 preparation and response guidelines for early childcare services V3 \(health.wa.gov.au\)](https://www.health.wa.gov.au/COVID-19-preparation-and-response-guidelines-for-early-childcare-services-V3)

[COVID-19 Use of PPE for workers in community settings \(health.wa.gov.au\)](https://www.health.wa.gov.au/COVID-19-Use-of-PPE-for-workers-in-community-settings)

Children with medical needs

Children with complex medical needs should seek advice before returning to Southbank Montessori. If your child has complex medical needs (including those with compromised immune systems) you are encouraged to talk to your medical practitioner to find out if your child can attend classroom programs.

Supporting children with disabilities with personal care needs

Physical distancing is not always possible when providing direct care to a child.

When this happens, Center staff will need to wash their hands with soap and water or use an alcohol-based hand sanitiser before and after performing routine care and when interacting with children in the Southbank Montessori environment and undertake environmental cleaning where relevant.

Southbank Montessori will make alcohol-based hand sanitizers available at school entrances and in rooms where personal care needs are provided.

Staff will not need to use extra personal protective equipment (PPE), aside from face masks. This is not required to give routine care for children who are well, unless such precautions are usually adopted in the routine care of an individual child.

Physical distancing

Safety of children mixing with each other

Evidence shows that transmission in a school environment is mainly from adult to adult, and children are less likely to spread the virus. This is why the Australian Health Protection Principal Committee (AHPPC) does not believe it is necessary for physical distancing between children, or limiting the number of children in one space, such as a classroom.

Safety of staff and parents mixing with each other

The main risk of transmission of coronavirus (COVID-19) is between adults. Staff and parents will need to practise physical distancing and avoid spending a long time in close contact with other adults.

Please see the Southbank Montessori COVID-19 Protocols for further information.

Hygiene

Hand washing and the use of hand sanitiser are effective ways of controlling COVID-19 infection and spread in the service. Staff and children must wash their hands and/or use hand sanitiser:

- at the beginning and end of a shift
- before and after eating
- after going or taking a child to the toilet
- before and after cleaning up blood and other body substances including wiping noses

All surfaces will be cleaned and sanitised thoroughly before, during and after each program each day.

The service will ensure that toilets and hand-washing facilities are easily accessible to children. Children will be reminded to wash their hands with soap after toilet use.

Staff will use individual tissues if they are required to assist young children to wipe their noses and individual washers for hands/faces. Tissues will be disposed of immediately after wiping a child's nose. Wash hands or use hand sanitiser after each procedure. Hand sanitiser may be used when outdoors.

Equipment will be cleaned regularly.

Children will be reminded to follow good hygiene practices. Staff may discuss these subjects with groups and individual children as an ongoing practice and we will evaluate in our improvement planning.

Staff are expected to act in ways that do not endanger the health and safety of children, parents or other staff, and to encourage healthy and safe behaviour in children by setting a good example.

Information distribution about health and hygiene

Employee and employer obligations in regard to OH & S issues are discussed with new staff as part of their induction.

Staff are encouraged to report incidents which lead to high stress levels to a Manager their day-to-day tasks and around covid. Positive steps will be taken to understand and minimise stress suffered by individual staff members.

When there is a notifiable infectious disease in the service, information will be made available to parents in a manner that is not prejudicial to the rights of staff or children.

If staff or children show coronavirus (COVID-19) symptoms when they arrive

If a member of staff or a child has symptoms matching those of coronavirus (COVID-19) they will be asked to go home and get tested. We will have Rapid Antigen Test (RAT) kit within the service for staff members to use. However, all members MUST obtain medical clearance in order for them to continue for fit and proper work requirements

If advised to do so by the Western Australian Government, all employees and attendees will be required to be temperature-checked upon arrival and prior to entering the premises. If temperature reading is below 37.4 degrees Celsius, it is safe to allow employee or attendee access to premises. If temperature reading is equal to or above 37.4 degrees Celsius, employee or attendee is not permitted to enter the premises

Symptoms include:

- fever
- cough
- sore throat
- shortness of breath
- Temperature is equal to or above 37.4 degrees Celsius

The staff member will be replaced to ensure the appropriate teacher to student ratio is maintained.

Isolation and supervision

Staff or children showing any symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19) during the day will be sent home or isolated in a suitable space with supervision until collected by a parent or carer as soon as possible.

Staff protection and hygiene

If the child cannot remain isolated while waiting to be collected, the staff member looking after them will wear a mask and carry out frequent hand hygiene.

If staff, a child or family member shows signs of an upper respiratory illness

All staff must be tested if they show any signs of an upper respiratory illness and cannot return to Southbank Montessori until they have received a negative result. Should any member of a household of a staff member or child be showing symptoms and tested, all householders (children and staff) must stay at home until a negative test result is received.

If a staff member or child is unwell

Any staff member or child who is unwell is not to attend Southbank Montessori.

COVID19 Protocols – Communication and Decision Making

These protocols outline processes in the event of a confirmed or suspected case of COVID19 within the Southbank Montessori Community.

Confirmed case

1. If Southbank Montessori becomes aware of an attendee or staff member who has been diagnosed with COVID-19 or has been in close contact with a confirmed case, they will immediately inform (08) 9222 4222 (switchboard) weekdays 8am to 5pm. [Contact us \(health.wa.gov.au\)](https://www.health.wa.gov.au)

2. If a COVID-19 case has been identified at your service, the Health Department will contact you directly. At this time, you will be provided with a Health Department spreadsheet to complete and return to them. These details assist with Contact Tracing. The Health Department have provided some information regarding the fields in the spreadsheet to assist with preparation:
 1. For ALL staff/parents/children/other people who were at the venue on the exposure date, you must provide:
 1. First Name and Surname
 2. Job Role if applicable OR Year/Class Room (for children)
 3. Mobile No.
 4. Date they were at the venue
 5. Shift start time and finish time if applicable OR arrival time and leaving time (for children)
 6. If they have any symptoms (fever, cough, headache, sore throat, fatigue, shortness of breath, muscle pain)
 2. Additional information that is useful: their address, date of birth and home email address
 - You are encouraged to ensure multiple people can access the information required to be completed in the spreadsheet and that service records are up to date so that accurate information is provided in a timely manner. Information on the movement of children and staff around the service, such as times of mixed grouping and when using shared playgrounds will also be required for contact tracing. Services should consider keeping a daily tracker of each room's movements throughout the day.
 - The Health Department may advise you that it is **not** the time to inform families. This is because the contact tracers need time to work through the information to identify close and casual contacts. This will ensure that they contact the *right* families, if they need contacting at all and reduce any unnecessary concern for parents/care givers. The Health Department will contact contacts directly.
 - The Health Department will inform you if there are persons connected with your service who are required to be tested, whether that is children, staff or families. If there is the need for some people to quarantine and test, the Health Department will also provide services with a template letter that you can give to families to explain the situation and what happens next. You can add content to this letter to personalise it to your specific service.
 - Depending on the information that the Health Department gives a service, will depend on what action needs to be taken next. A service may need to close for a short period of time due to staffing shortages, or for cleaning. These may be full or

partial closures depending on the spread. A fact sheet has been developed that will guide you on the required cleaning which can be found in the links below.

<https://ww2.health.wa.gov.au/~media/Corp/Documents/Health-for/Infectious-disease/COVID19/COVID19-advice-for-environmental-cleaning-of-a-site-following-COVID-19-exposure.pdf>

<https://ww2.health.wa.gov.au/~media/Files/Corporate/general-documents/Infectious-diseases/PDF/Coronavirus/COVID19-Environmental-cleaning-for-workplaces.pdf>

(Information received by ECRU Education and Care Regulatory Unit- **Email 01/02/2022**)

Close contact

Any staff/attendee who has a member of their household being tested for COVID-19, all members of the household must stay away from Southbank Montessori until a negative is received.

WAHD defines 'close contact' as someone who has either:

- had at least 15 minutes of face-to-face contact with a confirmed case of coronavirus (COVID-19)
- shared a closed space for more than two hours with someone who is a confirmed case.

WAHD (Western Australian Health Department) aware of case involving Southbank Montessori

1. If WAHD becomes aware of an attendee or staff member who has been diagnosed with COVID-19, the decision about whether to inform the relevant staff and any members of the community will be made case by case in the interests of public health.
2. WAHD will advise ECRU as appropriate so that ECRU can work with and provide Southbank Montessori with support if appropriate. (***Please refer to the information above***)

Overarching protocols Testing

1. If Southbank Montessori becomes aware of any testing of staff or attendees due to being a suspected case, the Provider approval, Executive Manager & Center Manager will use their discretion in determining whether to contact WAHD.

2. Unless advised by WAHD, Southbank Montessori should not advise their community of any testing being undertaken or reports of suspected cases. (***Please refer to the information above***)

Self-Isolation

1. WAHD advice is that attendees or staff members should self-isolate from Southbank Montessori if the following applies:
 - The person is a confirmed case of novel coronavirus
 - The person is a close contact with a confirmed case of novel coronavirus in the past 14 days. Please refer to the latest Western Australian self-isolation guidelines [WA Health, Government of Western Australia](#)
2. This advice will take the form of a directive to Southbank Montessori from the Chief Health Officer (CHO).
3. The attendee or staff member with upper respiratory symptoms must remain isolated until they receive a negative result from their COVID19 test.

Southbank Montessori Closure

1. Where an attendee or staff member is confirmed with COVID-19, WAHD may advise that Southbank Montessori be closed to enable contact tracing to occur.
2. Southbank Montessori will determine the length of the closure.
3. This advice will take the form of a directive to Southbank Montessori from WAHD.
4. The Approval provider, Executive Manager & the center Managers will inform attendees, parents and close community through their usual communication channels, including our website.
5. Southbank Montessori will make every effort to provide continuity of care.
6. During the closure, WAHD will conduct contact tracing to identify the closure period.
7. WAHD will work with Southbank Montessori regarding the timing of re-opening.

8. Southbank Montessori centers will be thoroughly cleaned and disinfected.

References

- ACECQA National Quality Framework Resource Kit (2012)
- [Education and Care Regulatory Unit \(www.wa.gov.au\)](http://www.wa.gov.au)
- Quality Area 1 – Educational Program and Practice.
- Quality Area 2 – Children’s Health and Safety
- Quality Area 7 – Governance and Leadership (Standard: 7.2; Elements: 7.3.3, 7.3.4, 7.3.5)
- Education and Care Services National Law Act (2010), S 168, S 174
- Education and Care Services National Regulations (2011), R 173, R 176
- [Australian Health Protection Principal Committee \(AHPPC\) | Australian Government Department of Health](#)
- [WA Health, Government of Western Australia](#)

To be reviewed: December 2022