

13 March 2020

Updated Information Concerning Novel Coronavirus

Dear Families,

In addition to the measures that the Australian Government is taking to protect the community against novel coronavirus you can be assured that Busy Bees have been preparing to act should the need arise and we will work closely with managing our response and our actions if required.

While continuity of care and learning is extremely important to us to support your child's learning and family care requirements, so too is the health and wellbeing of all of our centres.

As such based on updated public health advice, we continue to ask that any children, parents or staff members returning from or transiting through mainland China, Iran, South Korea or Italy are not to attend any of our Busy Bees Services for at least 14 days after leaving these respective countries. In addition, any child or staff member who has come into close contact with someone with a confirmed case of coronavirus also needs to self-isolate for a 14 day period.

While the extent of cases in Australia is not as widespread as other countries, we believe this continued precautionary action is needed as the safety and wellbeing of the staff, children, and the wider community associated with our centre is paramount.

We have developed a set of FAQ's for your reference and if you have any questions or concerns please speak with your Centre Director or email covid-19@busybees.edu.au. If you have concerns you may have been exposed to the virus, the public health advice is to contact your GP immediately and self-isolate.

Family Frequently Asked Questions - Covid-19

Covid-19 Awareness

- On 30 January 2020, the [World Health Organization](#) declared the coronavirus outbreak a Public Health Emergency of International Concern.
- On 27 February 2020, the Prime Minister announced the activation of the '[Australian Health Sector Emergency Response Plan for Novel Coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#)'.

What are the symptoms of Covid-19 (Coronavirus)?

- A high temperature (fever), a cough and shortness of breath however, these are common symptoms of other illnesses such as cold and flu. Having these symptoms does not necessarily mean you have Covid-19.

What is Busy Bees doing to manage the risk?

- We are monitoring all updates and following the required recommendations and guidance from the Australian Government - Department of Health.
- As a global organisation we regularly speak to our colleagues from around the World and have utilised this experience to review our internal procedures to help us best manage the current risk in line with the Australian Government - Department of Health.

Absences from child care

- Whether a child is actually ill or not, including where a child does not attend care as part of the family's own precautionary measure against potential contact with COVID-19, Childcare Subsidy (CCS) can be paid for up to 42 absence days per child, per financial year, without the need for families to provide documentation.
- Once a child's 42 initial absences have been used, Childcare Subsidy (CCS) can be paid for additional absences including illness. Evidence is required to

be kept by the childcare centre for any additional absences claimed, e.g. a doctors certificate.

- If a child is not ill, and does not attend care (as part of the family's own precautionary measure against potential contact with COVID-19, some medical practitioners may support families by providing a medical certificate allowing them access to additional absences, if required.
- If a child is not ill and does not attend care for a longer period of time families will be required to complete a new "Complying Written Arrangement" form.
- When a child is absent or sick on a routine and booked day, standard daily fees apply and are payable in full.

Additional Child Care Subsidy (temporary financial hardship)

- ACCS (temporary financial hardship) is available to provide short-term support to families experiencing a significantly reduced ability to pay child care fees, such as if the parent lost income due to being unable to attend work. Eligible families will receive a subsidy equal to the actual fee charged by the child care service, up to 120 per cent of the Childcare Subsidy (CCS) hourly rate cap. In most cases, the full cost of child care will be covered. It can be accessed for up to 13 weeks and eligible families are entitled to up to 100 hours of subsidised child care per fortnight. Families will be required to provide supporting evidence of a substantial reduction in their ability to pay child care fees, such as an email from their employer.

Temporary withdrawal

- Whether a child is actually ill or not, including where a child does not attend care as part of the family's own precautionary measure against potential contact with COVID-19, Childcare Subsidy (CCS) can be paid for up to 42 absence days per child, per financial year, without the need for families to provide documentation.
- Four weeks written notice is required of the intention to request a temporary withdraw a child from the Service, this can be via an email or a letter. If

temporary withdraw is required without providing such notification, Child Care Subsidy (CCS) will be jeopardised resulting in full fees being charged.

- Temporary withdrawal will not guarantee the reinstatement of current booked days

Withdrawal

- Whether a child is actually ill or not, including where a child does not attend care as part of the family's own precautionary measure against potential contact with COVID-19, Childcare Subsidy (CCS) can be paid for up to 42 absence days per child, per financial year, without the need for families to provide documentation.
- Four weeks written notice is required of the intention to withdraw a child from the Service, this can be via an email or a letter. If termination is required without providing such notification, Child Care Subsidy (CCS) will be jeopardised resulting in full fees being charged

Management of employees, parents and visitors to advise of recent travel?

- Currently the virus is only common in certain locations, by identifying persons who have travelled to affected areas, we are asking employees, parents and visitors not to attend our centre for a period of time to minimise the likelihood of those persons spreading it to other people.

Management of travel to affected areas to not attend Busy Bees for 14 days?

- The incubation period for Covid-19 is thought to be 14 days, this means that if someone has contracted the virus, we would expect them to show symptoms within this period of time. By asking people not to attend our centre for 14 days after they arrive back home, we are preventing them from giving the virus to children in our care or working for us. This is the most effective way of reducing the spread of an outbreak to try and contain the virus.

- The 14-day period away from Busy Bees is in line with Government guidance to self-isolate if persons have travelled to certain areas or are showing symptoms of the virus after travel.

Close contact with a confirmed case (including family members who reside in the same household) to not attend our centres?

- We do not know exactly how Coronavirus is spread from person to person, but similar viruses are spread through cough droplets. Persons who have close contact with people who have the virus are at greater risk of catching it. When considering the risk from those who may have travelled to affected areas, we also consider partners and those who reside in the same house as also possibly having the virus even though they may not have travelled themselves.

What if staff are intending on travelling abroad soon?

- Any travel overseas that is planned by a staff member (whether for business or personal) is required to be discussed with the employees line manager prior to undertaking travel and a travel register must be completed before their return to the centre.
- Busy Bees has advised all employees that travel to affected areas is not recommended as this will result in a 14-day period where staff cannot return to the centre as per our procedure.
- At a domestic level, Busy Bess is minimising all staff travel to essential critical operational travel only with an aim to minimise the possibility of exposure. Busy Bees will continue to monitor our position on staff travel

Is Busy Bees advice different to that of the Australian Government - Department of Health?

- No, our advice is in line with guidance from the Australian Government - Department of Health. We take safety very seriously and we are working hard to minimise the risk to our staff and the children in our care. We would ask that



staff, parents and families work with us to reduce the risk to everyone at Busy Bees.

Why are schools or other businesses shutting in our community and we are not?

- The risk to individual organisations and premises will vary depending on several factors and many businesses are taking steps to manage the risk. A closure may not definitively mean a positive case of Covid-19 has been confirmed, it may just be unviable to stay open if key personnel are being asked to stay at home due to travel to affected areas.
- A confirmed case of Covid-19 in a nearby location may not put you at any greater risk unless you have come into contact with the individual. The Australian Government – Department of Health Authorities are working hard to trace contacts from those that have been confirmed with the virus, so if you have not been contacted as part of this process, try not to worry.

For the latest on the coronavirus please refer to the following Australian Government website: <https://www.health.gov.au/health-topics/novel-coronavirus-2019-ncov>

Coronavirus Factsheets issued by the Australian Government's Department of Education can be found at this link: <https://education.govcms.gov.au/novel-coronavirus-2019-ncov>

Thank you in advance for your understanding and cooperation in relation to this important matter.

Warm regards,

Robert Hughes
Chief Executive Officer