

COVID 19 Policy

These guidelines are automatically superseded should MOH or MOE advise change to require greater restrictions. Should MOH and MOE advice become less stringent then these operating procedures shall be reviewed and amended as appropriate.

Purpose:

This Procedure provides guidance to staff, children and families at Treetops Early Learning Centres during the COVID 19 pandemic.

It is important that children, staff, parents and whanau are both protected from infection and prevented from spreading infection. It is also important that Treetops ELC supports our local communities. These procedures are intended both to ensure that our centre is safe and to give everyone in our community confidence that we are as safe as we can be.

This policy is designed to:

- Manage health and safety risks associated with COVID 19.
- Provide a security process to manage access.
- Provide staff with authority to challenge and control access.
- Ensure all members of our learning community understand the rules and regulations in place.

Key principles

The two key public health principles are:

- Firstly to minimise the risk that someone gets infected in the first place, and
- Secondly to limit the number of possible contacts people have if they do get infected, to make it easier to rapidly stop further spread.

Level 4:

- At level four, all Treetops Early Learning Centres will be closed.
- No access will be available to anyone wanting to enter the building.
- Teachers will maintain daily contact with families through Educa and/or other means such as social media to keep in contact.
- Centre Director will update families and staff regularly as applicable.

Level 3:

- The overriding principle for Alert level three is to **stay at home** other than for essential personal movement and going to work and ECE.
- All families will be asked whether they **need** to be at the centre during level three.
- We ask that any children who can stay at home remain at home. In the first instance, please consider extending your own family bubble to include family or friends to care for your children if possible.
- We acknowledge that some of these protocols are in contrast to our philosophy and beliefs around best practice. However, they are a health and safety requirement. If children are unduly upset, we ask parents to reconsider bringing your child into the centre.
- A maximum of ten children per bubble will be allowed at the centre during level three. These bubbles will be arranged in two rooms - one for under 2 year olds and one for over 2 year olds.
- Staff and children at higher risk of severe illness from COVID-19 are encouraged to stay at home due to lack

of ability to physically distance from young children.

- Treetops ELC will ensure that all usual regulations are adhered to throughout the level three lockdown PLUS the following new COVID-19 prevention rules:

Contactless thermometer checks for entry:

- All staff, parents, whanau and children will have their temperature checked outside the front door of the centre by the administrator or Centre Manager before entering. A high temperature is specified by the Ministry of Health as being over 38 degrees celsius ([Ministry of Health](#)).
- If there is a queue to enter the centre, please remain in your car until called.
- If anyone has a high temperature they **will not be allowed to enter** the centre.
 - Turning families and children away will be managed kindly and respectfully.
 - We want to be as inclusive as we can, while enforcing this strict rule for the health and safety of everyone at our centre, as well as our nation.
 - Families should then contact Healthline on 0800 358 5453 for further information.

On arrival:

- Parents **will not be allowed to enter** our classrooms in level three. Instead, parents will be asked to bring their children to reception, where a teacher will greet you (at a 1 meter distance when possible) and will welcome your child inside. Staff will sign your child in.
- Your child will immediately wash their hands and apply zoono or hand sanitizer.
- Only one family member will be allowed to bring your child into the centre throughout the full period of Level 3 (this is to facilitate social distancing).

On pick up:

- **Parents will not be allowed to enter** our classrooms. Parents will need to wait in the car park and call the centre or wait outside the centre.
- A teacher will wash your child's hands, sign them out and bring your child to you. This will transfer your child from our safe bubble into your safe bubble.

Government proposed mini-bubbles:

- We have designed our centres to be generously spaced. During level three, the Ministry of Education has increased the sqm per child to 3m per child and this will limit the number of children who can attend the centre in level three.
- Our adult:child ratios will remain well above our MOE requirements.
- We will work with families on a needs basis in determining the priority based makeup of each 'mini bubble' group.

Centre practices:

- Indoor temperatures which were set at 16 degrees celsius will be increased to 18 degrees celsius. This will be monitored throughout the day.
- It will be ensured that all food is prepared and served to children in a way that limits any cross contamination. It will be ensured that children are seated in such a way that they cannot take food from each other.
- Above our usual sanitation and cleaning routines (which have always been stringent) - staff will disinfect all surfaces and toys that children have access to daily.
- We acknowledge that it is incredibly difficult to maintain social distancing with very young children. However the following guidelines will be in place:
- Children will be placed to sleep at least 1 metre apart.
- Group times will only be conducted if children can be dispersed at 1m distances.

Personal protective equipment (PPE):

- MOH and MOE advise that gloves and face masks are not required for normal activities.

No entry if symptomatic:

- If any teacher, parent or child shows any of the COVID-19 symptoms as stated on the [Ministry of Health website](#):
 - A cough
 - A high temperature (over 38 degrees celsius)
 - Shortness of breath
 - Sore throat
 - Sneezing and runny nose
 - Temporary loss of smell

They **will not be allowed entry** into our centre. See guidelines here: <https://covid19.govt.nz>.

- If any child develops or shows any COVID-19 symptoms whilst at the centre, they will be isolated immediately and parents will be required to pick them up without delay.
- If any parent starts to feel any COVID-19 symptoms while at work during the day, and if there is no other pick up option for the child, then before entering the centre to pick up their child, they must call our centre and wait outside the front entrance. One of the teachers will sign out and bring their child to them. The parent should then contact Healthline on 0800 358 5453 for advice before returning to our centre.

No fees if absent:

We want to be as supportive as we can to help you through this if you and your child choose to stay at home. Full fees will be charged for children attending the centre.

Cancellation of enrolment:

If any parent is found to be breaking these guidelines, then their enrolment will be cancelled immediately and we may be required to report them to the Ministry of Health.

No entry for visitors or walk ins:

We do not allow walk-ins by anyone with non-enrolled children to any of our centres for the foreseeable future.

No excursions:

We have postponed all centre excursions for the foreseeable future to eliminate contact with strangers or unclean surfaces. There is an ample exciting discovery, exploration and fun awaiting our children still in our playgrounds.

As teachers, parents, whanau and immediate contact communities all responded quickly and seriously to this, nobody connected with our centre has been in close contact with someone who has been confirmed as having COVID-19 that we are aware of. Should this change at any stage, all families will be notified with urgency.

With the above established elevated practices and strict rules to safely transfer between home bubbles and our centre bubble, these are the best practices that can be practically achieved on a day to day basis for the health and safety of our children and teachers.

Level 2:

Centre practices:

- Indoor temperatures will be maintained at 18 degrees celsius. This will be monitored throughout the day.
- We will ensure that all food is prepared and served to children in a way that limits any cross contamination. We will ensure that children are seated in such a way that they cannot take food from each other.
- Above our usual sanitation and cleaning routines (which have always been stringent) - staff will disinfect all surfaces and toys that children have access to daily.
- We have developed a routine to disinfect and clean high touch surfaces (e.g. play gyms, tables, hard-backed chairs, doorknobs, light switches, remotes, handles, desks, toilets, sinks) regularly throughout the day. In our nest, with crawling infants, this will include table legs and items a child uses to pull themselves up to a standing position.
- Toys will be wiped down at the end of each day. Dress ups and other fabric items will be regularly laundered.
- Any item that has been in children's mouths will be removed from the playspace and thoroughly cleaned.
- Sanitiser and wipes will be available for parents/caregivers to use on door handles. Staff will be disinfecting high touch areas throughout the day.
- Professional cleaners have always been employed to clean the centres thoroughly at the end of each day. This has been increased to include disinfecting all high touch areas at the end of each day.
- Teachers will direct and supervise hand washing at a minimum before and after eating food and going to the toilet, either through washing hands with soap and water, or use of hand sanitiser according to need.
- Children who are too young to wash their own hands will need to have this done for them regularly, including after having their nappy changed.
- We acknowledge that it is incredibly difficult to maintain social distancing with very young children. However the following guidelines will be in place:

- Children will be placed to sleep at least 1 metre apart.
- Group times will only be conducted if children can be dispersed at 1m distances.
- All beds/mattresses will be sprayed with disinfectant at the end of each sleep time.
- Sandpits will be raked as usual, on advice from MOE and MOH.
- Playdough and other resources can be used. Teachers will monitor the use of this closely.

Personal protective equipment (PPE):

- MOH and MOE advise that gloves and face masks are not required for normal activities.

No entry if symptomatic:

- If any teacher, parent or child shows any of the COVID-19 symptoms as stated on the [Ministry of Health website](#):
 - A cough
 - A high temperature (over 38 degrees celsius)
 - Shortness of breath
 - Sore throat
 - Sneezing and runny nose
 - Temporary loss of smell

They **will not be allowed entry** into our centre. See guidelines here: <https://covid19.govt.nz>.

- If any child develops or shows any COVID-19 symptoms whilst at the centre, they will be isolated immediately and parents will be required to pick them up without delay (within 30 minutes of calling).
- If any parent starts to feel any COVID-19 symptoms while at work during the day, and if there is no other pick up option for the child, then before entering the centre to pick up their child, they must call our centre and wait outside the front entrance. One of the teachers will sign out and bring their child to them. The parent should then contact Healthline on 0800 358 5453 for advice before returning to our centre.

No fees if absent:

We want to be as supportive as we can to help you through this if you and your child choose to stay at home. Full fees will be charged for children attending the centre throughout May and June

Cancellation of enrolment:

If any parent is found to be breaking these guidelines, then their enrolment will be cancelled immediately and we may be required to report them to the Ministry of Health.

Upon advice from the local medical officer of health, if we were to be connected to a confirmed or probable case of COVID-19, we must close on an individual or group basis for 72 hours to allow contact tracing, and then potentially for a further 14 days.

Level 1:

The overriding principles at level one are:

- People who are ill should stay away
- People who have flu-like or COVID-like symptoms should seek medical advice and get tested for COVID-19 if advised to do so.
- Hand hygiene, cough/sneeze etiquette and regular cleaning, particularly of high-touch surfaces, continue to help prevent spread of illness including COVID-19.
- Our local health authority will contact us if there is a confirmed/probable case linked to our early learning service.
- Local health authorities through the Medical Officer of Health will make the decision whether we need to close for a period of time, and will determine who is required to undertake self-isolation.

- Any change in COVID Alert Level will also need to be adhered to.

If there was a confirmed or probable case linked with our early learning service, we will be advised of that by the Medical Officer of Health or our local public health authority.

Our regional Ministry of Education staff will work with us and local health authorities to agree a plan. That will happen quickly and **support will be provided.**

If the person or persons who are a confirmed or probable case have worked in or attended our centre when they could have been infectious (which could start up to 2 days prior to having symptoms) our centre will be closed for at least 72 hours to allow time for contact tracing and a clean of the centre to align with Ministry of Health guidelines.

Close contacts at our centre would be anyone who had:

- face-to-face contact in any setting within two metres of a case for 15 minutes or more
- having been in a closed environment (eg, a classroom, hospital waiting room) within 2 metres of a case for 15 minutes or more

Further closure for up to 14 days

In addition to closure for 72 hours for contact tracing health authorities could require closure for longer periods of time, up to 14 further days. This is likely to be because health authorities consider there could be risk of community transmission or there could be a large number of cases within a school or early learning service that mean a high proportion of children, students and staff could be considered close contacts and therefore need to self-isolate.

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