

EDUCATION AND CARE

COVID-19 NEWSLETTER

31 January 2022

HOT TOPIC THIS FORTNIGHT

Masks & Rapid Antigen Tests for Staff

The initial allocation of RATs and masks by the [Tasmanian Government](#) to Tasmanian Education and Care and Child Care services for your staff will be available for collection from Monday, 31 January 2022.

- Details around collection were contained in an email we sent to all providers on Thursday, 27 January 2022.
- Please let us know if you didn't receive this email.
- You can view the [Government's media release](#) for more information.

Other recent Updates

The Tasmanian Early Childhood Education and Care COVID-19 document is no longer current.

- It's been replaced by [Tasmania's Operational Plan for Managing COVID-19 in Early Childhood Education and Care](#).

We've developed [FAQs for Parents/Carers](#)

- You might like to share these with your families. All information is informed by Public Health advice.

New close contact definition:

- Children are **not** considered close contacts in relation to positive cases identified in a ECEC setting.
- For more information you can [view our FAQs](#).

New outbreak definition:

- A group outbreak is defined as 5 or more cases of COVID-19 diagnosed in children and staff from a specific group in an early childhood

education and care setting (eg a childcare room) within 7 days of each other.

- [View our FAQs](#) for more information.

We're continuing with notifications for Assessment and Rating visits. However:

- We understand the pressures you're currently experiencing, so the notification process will be flexible and responsive to your circumstances.
- If you have any concerns about A&R visits, please contact the A&R Officer as advised in your notification letter.

We're pausing our proactive monitoring visits during January and February.

Your POC officer will maintain communication by phone during this time. We are also focusing on processing COVID-19 related waiver applications in a timely manner and prioritising responding to high-risk incidents and issues.

The [ECU Living with Covid-19 Response Plan](#) sets out our approach to working as the Tasmanian Regulatory Authority as we move towards living with Covid-19.

Guidance

Don't forget that you must notify ECU of positive cases of COVID:

- Notify the ECU of positive cases through the NQAITS portal.
- If you have questions about submitting notifications, you can call your POC Authorised Officer directly.

More information is available on the [ECU website](#) (including examples).

Where you can go to find more information:

- Call the dedicated ECU COVID Advice team on 616 55 438 OR 616 56 508 (operating weekdays between 9:00 am – 5:00 pm)
- Send an email to:
ECU.COVID19@education.tas.gov.au
You'll receive either a written response, or your Point of Contact (POC) Authorised Officer might call you.
- [FAQs on ECU website](#)
- Our [ECU Living with COVID-19 Response Plan](#) sets out our approach to working as the Tasmanian Regulatory Authority as we move towards living with COVID-19.

On occasion, ECU will contact Public Health on your behalf to find out the information you need.

This means there may be a delay in getting the information to you.

- From Public Health:
 - Phone 1800 671 738
 - [Coronavirus website](#)
- Australian Government, Department of Education, Skills and Employment (DESE)
<https://www.dese.gov.au/covid-19/childcare#toc-gap-fee-waiving>

NOTE:

We recommend contacting ECU directly where possible, and only using Public Health resources on the weekend or after hours.

The Education and Care Unit,
Department of Education

Contact details

Education and Care Unit
Department of Education
GPO Box 169
HOBART Tasmania 7001
Email: ecu.comment@education.tas.gov.au