

# EDUCATION AND CARE

## COVID-19 NEWSLETTER

11 February 2022

### HOT TOPIC THIS FORTNIGHT

#### Guidance on Outbreak Management

Public Health Emergency Operations Centre (PHEOC) in collaboration with the ECU have developed the [Covid-19 Case and Outbreak Management Guidelines for Tasmanian ECEC Settings](#).

This document will assist service providers to determine, notify, manage, and resolve an outbreak at your service.

#### Masks & Rapid Antigen Tests for Children

The government will be providing RATs for children attending services. These kits will be distributed by Public Health and the allocation will cover all service types in your organisation.

#### How many RATs will we receive?

The number of RATs has been calculated using Commonwealth Government data for the November 2021 period. Attendance figures for this period better reflects your service capacity.

#### Will we receive a RAT for each child?

RATs will not be provided for children under two years of age. PCR tests are more suitable for use with children of this age group.

#### Critical Worker Exemptions

Education and care/childcare services are included in the temporary exemption framework for critical industries. This means essential staff can be exempt from the

quarantine requirement for close contacts if they are identified as critical workers.

#### When can ECEC staff apply?

Staff who are close contacts may only qualify if the ECEC setting is facing a critical shortage of staff due to COVID-19 isolation/quarantine measures.

Registration must be made by the employer through the [Coronavirus website](#) and is subject to restrictions.

Public Health will notify the ECU of registrations.

#### Gap Fee Waiver requirements

The Australian Government, Department of Education, Skills and Employment (AGDESE) has revised their requirements to qualify for the gap fee waiver.

The requirement for written acknowledgement from public health or the ECU is no longer necessary.

Refer to the [AGDESE website](#) and our [FAQs](#) for more detail on when services will qualify for a gap fee waiver.

#### Ventilation in ECEC settings

We have developed an information sheet explaining the benefits of increased ventilation and how it reduces risk of COVID-19 transmission. This document is available on the [ECU website](#).

#### Other Updates

##### Staffing

- Vivienne Mitchell retired in January 2022 after 22 years of service in the ECU. Liz McNally has been appointed as the Operations Manager (Compliance) at the ECU.

- Estelle Clerk is on maternity leave. Vanessa Morris has been appointed as the Acting Manager, Policy and Engagement at the ECU.
- Bryan Cheong has been appointed as the Policy and Communications Officer at the ECU.

### Where you can go to find more information:

The [ECU COVID-19 enquiry process](#) informs services of the immediate steps to take when a positive case has been identified at an Education and Care setting.

Our [Resources for living with and managing COVID-19 in ECEC services - Education and Care](#) contains guidance and information on responding to COVID-19 related matters as we move towards living with COVID-19.

The [FAQs on ECU website](#) are frequently updated with the latest information.

Call the dedicated ECU COVID Advice team on 6165 5438 OR 6165 6508 (operating weekdays between 9:00 am – 5:00 pm)

Send an email to: [ECU.COVID19@education.tas.gov.au](mailto:ECU.COVID19@education.tas.gov.au)

You will receive either a written response, or your Point of Contact (POC) Authorised Officer might call you.

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 information to you.

- From Public Health:
  - Phone 1800 671 738
  - [Coronavirus website](#)

- [Australian Government, Department of Education, Skills and Employment](#) Website

### 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

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