



Chief Practitioner's COVID-19 UPDATE

Dr Meegan Crawford | Department of Children, Youth Justice and Multicultural Affairs

28 January 2022

Dear parents, foster and kinship carers

Thank you for your ongoing support and understanding as we navigate the increasing COVID-19 infection numbers. I hope this email finds you safe and well and free from COVID.

I am writing to update you on family contact and meeting arrangements.

Family Contact Visits

As you are aware since early January 2022 family contact has been occurring mostly through phone and online means. I know that for many this has been very disappointing and has had a considerable impact.

As we approach 90% full vaccination rates in Qld and children over five years old now have access to the vaccine, we are resuming face-to-face contact visits where it is safe to do so.

As we navigate infections of parents, carers, children/young people, staff and providers as well as isolation requirements and lower staffing numbers, the following factors will apply:

1. Face-to-face contact visits will be held **outside or in a well ventilated** area wherever possible and interactions between parents and their children will be as normal as possible (so yes, parents can hug their children).
2. Everyone, except children under 12, will need to come with a **face mask** for the contact, and follow **hand sanitising** requests and any relevant health directives such as mask wearing indoors (for when we can't be outside).
3. If parents, carers, or children/young people are **symptomatic**, your CSO should be advised, and those affected should get tested and stay at home until a negative result is returned. Your CSO should also be advised if anyone involved in the family contact has tested positive for COVID-19 and when the isolation period is scheduled to end. To keep everyone well, face-to-face family contact will not resume until any isolation requirements are finalised, however telephone contact or online contact will be considered.

As we manage high COVID infection numbers family contact may be affected by staffing shortages and may, for a period, be shorter or less frequent than normal.

Finally, if different approaches to family contact over the last few weeks has been a positive

experience (for example facetime or telephone contact), speak to your CSO about whether this can continue in addition to resumed face-to-face contact.

Young people or carer households with COVID-19

Where children are confirmed to have COVID-19, CSOs will let parents know about this, including the isolation period and whether any other arrangements are in place. Where possible, online or telephone contact will be arranged during this time.

Where other household members (carers or other children) have COVID-19 and the household is required to isolate, CSOs will let parents know about the quarantine requirements but won't always say who has COVID-19, as a way to respect others' privacy. CSOs will still let parents know about the isolation period and, where possible, make online or telephone contact arrangements.

Access to Child Safety Service Centres (CSSCs)

Our CSSCs are open however we will continue to try and arrange meetings online wherever possible. Telephone is still the best way to contact your CSO.

As there are now hundreds of thousands of people either with COVID-19 or close contacts, there are some CSSC staffing impacts. We are addressing this as best we can and we do ask for your patience as we continue to feel these impacts.

Vaccinations

Hopefully by now your CSO has spoken to you about vaccination arrangements for all children over five years. The COVID-19 vaccine remains one of the best things we can do to protect ourselves, our families and communities. We have seen that it has been reassuring for children where their parents and carers have provided consistent messaging re the benefits of the vaccine.

Kind regards

Dr Meegan Crawford

Chief Practitioner

Department of Children, Youth Justice and Multicultural Affairs