



2022 Health and Safety Policy and Covid-19 Implications

Playful Connections Speech Pathology is committed to ensuring high levels of workplace, and client, health and safety. This policy includes standard health and safety measures as well as those developed in response to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Playful Connections Speech Pathology is obligated by law to follow SA Health Covid-19 response guidelines and follows advice and recommendations provided by Speech Pathology Australia.

Playful Connections Speech Pathology primarily offers face-to-face sessions (indoors and outdoors) but is able to provide telehealth services as necessary in line with health and safety risks.

Covid 19 Pre-appointment questionnaire

Clients will be sent a pre-appointment questionnaire prior to every scheduled Speech Pathology appointment. Completion of this form is mandatory, and sessions will not be conducted if there has been a failure to respond.

Covid-19 Symptoms or Exposure

Face-to-face services are not available in the following instances:

- If a client or anyone in their household is displaying any cold or flu-like symptoms
- If a client or anyone in their household is experiencing a cough or any shortness of breath
- If a client or anyone in their household has had any close contact with anyone who tested positive for Covid-19 in the last 7 days
- If a client or anyone in their household is waiting on the result of a RAT or PCR Covid Test
- If a client or anyone in their household has had a positive Covid-19 RAT or PCR test within the last 14 days

The above criteria also apply to Playful Connections Speech Pathologists.

The below appointment options will be offered, and corresponding cancellation protocols will be applied. These protocols have been developed in order to ensure sustainability of service provision for both client and Playful Connections Speech Pathology.

- In the event of any of the above criteria, a scheduled face-to-face appointment will be cancelled

- The following options will be made available to families in the event of a face-to-face cancellation:
 - o Telehealth therapy session (if appropriate for client and goals)
 - o Telehealth parent education session
 - o Home Program creation
 - o Educator support program
 - o Resource creation

- If client or caregiver is unwell as a result of Covid-19, cancels within 12 hours of an appointment and does not wish to access any of the alternative service options above, one short notice cancellation fee per term will be waived.

- If a client cancels multiple sessions, is not acutely unwell and does not accept any of the alternative supports above then cancellation fees will apply.

If a client, caregiver or family member attends a Speech Pathology session with any signs of illness, session will be cancelled immediately and full session cost will be charged.

Failure to be honest regarding client or household contact illness, Covid-19 exposure or any of the above criteria will not be tolerated as it risks the health and safety of Speech Pathologist, other staff and clients, and the ability of Playful Connections Speech Pathology to provide services to the community. Failure to disclose information may result in the termination of services.

Other illnesses

Whilst Covid-19 is currently at the forefront of our minds, other illnesses may still occur. The following guidelines are to be followed by staff and clients in regards to other illnesses:

- Vomiting and/or Diarrhea – do not attend appointment until no symptoms for 48 hours (as per SA Health recommendations)
- Unexplained fever and/or lethargy – do not attend appointment
- Undiagnosed rashes - do not attend appointment
- Doctor has recommended staying home from childcare or preschool – do not attend appointment

Speech Pathologist reserves the right to cancel a session at full cost if client presents with any of the above illnesses, or in any state that is not conducive to providing face-to-face therapy services.

Hygiene Requirements:

- Speech Pathologists, clients and caregivers must wash and sanitise their hands prior to each appointment
- Speech Pathologist is responsible for cleaning all resources and surfaces at the conclusion of each appointment with hospital grade disinfectant

Appointment environment and mask use – Covid-19:

- Appointments will be offered in well ventilated areas (whether at a Playful Connections clinic setting, education setting or home)
- Clients should attend appointment with one caregiver only. Siblings may only attend sessions if no other care is available.
- Mask use is mandatory for anyone over the age of 12 years. The following relevant SA Health mask exemptions may apply to the practising Speech Pathologist:
 - o *For a person communicating with those who are deaf or hard of hearing and visibility of the mouth is essential for communication.*
 - o *Where the nature of the work or education means that clear enunciation (ie speech) or visibility of their mouth is essential.*
- During a peak, or high risk period, of South Australian Covid-19 infections the following will apply:
 - o sessions will be conducted outdoors if mask exemptions are enacted
 - o Speech Pathologist will endeavour to maintain 1.5m social distancing between self and client/caregiver. Caregivers will be asked to engage in a coaching model of service delivery.

Vaccination Requirements

- All Playful Connections Speech Pathology staff and contractors are required to vaccinated against Covid-19 in line with current SA Health directives.