

The Blackwater Suite
Paediatric Emergency Medicine Pathway

Operation Blackwater

Objective:

- 1. Minimise the risk of nosocomial spread of COVID and other infectious diseases to staff members and patients through the appropriate use of available isolation bays within the Blackwater suite and Emergency Department.**
- 2. Maximise the use of space in both the Blackwater Suite and the Children's Emergency Department (ED) through the use of flexible streaming processes that enables the timely assessment of the patients and the efficient use of staff.**
- 3. Maintain and support the function of the Paediatric Assessment Unit (PAU) during the hours of 09:00 – 14:00.**

Contact Numbers:

Children's ED Nurse Lead phone:	0876494566
Blackwater Nurse Lead phone:	0876494275
Children's ED landline:	20202
Blackwater Suite Landline:	22451

Background:

Emergency care provided to children presenting to CUH has been extensively reconfigured since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic. Children have been isolated either in the ED or the Blackwater suite if deemed to be at high risk of having COVID-19. In the new COVID-19 era, expectations around isolating suspected COVID-19 patients and those who may be immunocompromised coupled with social distancing requirements imposed by the government, has created a demand for a new standard of care in how we move our patients through the acute floor and the hospital.

The previous iteration of the "Blackwater Pathway" was limited to children with either cough and / or fever with a triage category of 3,4 or 5. While creating excellent flow for this group of patients, there remained a significant unmet need for children who required isolation for a variety of other reasons including those with gastrointestinal symptoms, those who had another complaint with co-existing fever or those who were relatively immunocompromised eg newborns. The ED as it is currently configured is unable to safely isolate all children presenting, thus creating a need for a separate pathway to cope with this increased demand.

Pathway Overview:

The Blackwater Suite will be serving two functions over the coming months; firstly, managing children presenting for emergency care that cannot be safely provided in the ED because of capacity constraints. Secondly, managing those children referred to the paediatric assessment unit (PAU). Once the PAU closes, the ED can then use the cubicles in the Blackwater for assessing children as it sees fit. Prior to PAU closure there is scope for sending children to the Blackwater when the isolation capacity in the ED is exceeded.

Paediatric Assessment Unit:

The PAU will be operating 09:00 to 14:00 Monday to Friday. The PAU will be staffed and operated by the general paediatrics team. During these hours it is expected that the demand for isolation space in the ED will be less. There will be occasions when the isolation capacity in the ED is exceeded during the PAU's opening hours. The Blackwater suite will then be used as an ED overflow area for children who require isolation and deemed to be medically stable by the triage nurse. Every child going to the Blackwater prior to 14:00 will need to be discussed with paediatric emergency team located within the ED prior to transfer to the Blackwater suite. The child's details will then be placed in the Paediatric Emergency Department Log Book so that the team can track all children presenting for unscheduled care at CUH. It is the responsibility of the Paediatric Emergency Medicine (PEM) doctors to assess and manage the child in the Blackwater suite. During particularly busy times it is hoped that the Blackwater paediatric nurses will be supported by the PEM nursing team. On occasion the PAU's function will extend beyond 14:00. When this occurs, the PEM will support the PAU in this function.

Blackwater PEM Pathway – 14:00-20:00, 12:00-22:00 weekends (Times subject to change)

During the hours of operation, the Blackwater suite should be considered to be an extension of the ED.

All children who require isolation and are deemed to be suitable by the triage nurse are to be streamed to the Blackwater suite during the hours of operation of this pathway. Once the child is triaged at either the front door, isolation booth or in the ED triage bay they are escorted into an isolation room in the Blackwater. It is important that a sticker is placed in the paediatric ED log book and the fact the child is in the Blackwater is highlighted in the book. It is expected that there will be regular communication between the ED and the Blackwater Suite using the phone numbers provided above.

A PEM doctor will be assigned to the Blackwater to assess all children presenting there. During periods of surge, doctors from the main department should be contacted to help this doctor assess patients in the Blackwater. Similarly, if the doctor assigned to the Children's ED is experiencing a surge in patient presentations, some of the less acutely unwell patients should be re-diverted to the Blackwater suite for the Blackwater team to take over care.

Furthermore, it is hoped that the Blackwater Suite will be used as an observation area for children who have been initially assessed in the ED but require a period of observation prior to discharge.

The Blackwater Suite will no longer accept new patients within 1 hour of closing time. It is expected that the Blackwater doctor will present to the ED to help out for the duration of their shift once the suite is closed to further patients.

Clinical Governance:

PEM Pathway: The clinical governance of all patients presenting for unscheduled emergency care is under the Emergency Medicine consultant group. Rory O'Brien, as the lead in Paediatric Emergency Medicine, should be the first point of contact for any issues or questions. For issues out of hours, the Consultant in Emergency Medicine should be contacted.

PAU: The clinical governance for the PAU is under the Paediatric Department. David Mullane as Clinical Director for Paediatrics should be contacted for any issues or questions.

Blackwater Paediatric Emergency Medicine (PEM) Pathway

After 14:00 Weekdays, 12:00-22:00 Weekends

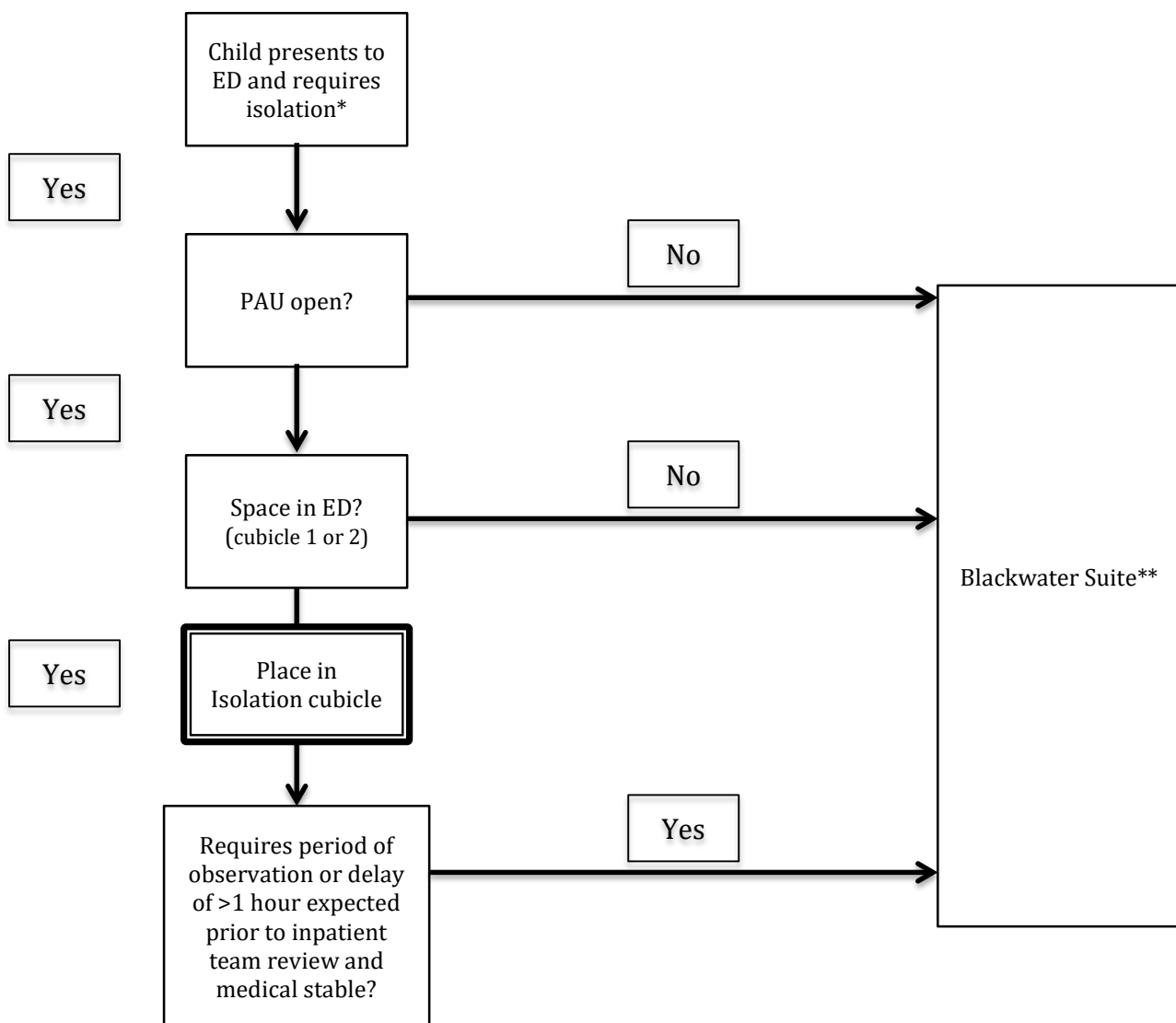
PAU hours: 09:00-14:00 Weekdays

Key Contacts: (If in doubt ring the following numbers)

Children's ED Nurse Lead phone: 0876494566

Blackwater Nurse Lead phone: 0876494275

All children presenting to the ED without a PAU appointment are to be triaged



*Threshold for isolation is low; fever past 24 hours, respiratory symptoms, GI symptoms including abdominal pain, <3 months old, lethargy, myalgia, anosmia, unexplained rash, parent has COVID or suspected.

**Child to be immediately transferred back to ED if deemed clinically unsafe by Blackwater medical / nursing team. The Blackwater Doctor is to present to the ED if no patients waiting to be reviewed in the Blackwater Suite. PEM Doctor to initially assess patients on this pathway