

# DEALING WITH INFECTIOUS DISEASES POLICY



## INTRODUCTION

Ensuring the health and safety of children, and staff, and supporting children's ongoing wellbeing, is a very core focus of the delivery of an Education and Care Service. Educators in services need to be aware of the likelihood of young children being exposed to infectious illness whilst in care. Maintaining hygiene practices within the service and teaching young children about health and hygiene will assist in the prevention of infectious diseases. Providing families with information will further support this process.

We are committed to providing a child safe environment and healthy environment for all children, staff and any other persons attending the service by;

- responding to the needs of the child or adult who presents with symptoms of an infectious disease or infestation while attending the service;
- complying with current exclusion schedules and guidelines set by the Department of Health NSW; and
- Providing up to date information and resources for families and staff regarding protection of all children from infectious diseases and blood-borne viruses, management of infestations and immunization programs.

## PURPOSE

Our service will follow all recommended guidelines from relevant authorities regarding the prevention of infectious diseases;

Our service is also aware that the way that children interact with each other and with adults in education and care services means that diseases can quickly spread in a variety of ways. Whilst it is not possible to prevent the spread of all infections and diseases, minimising the risk is enhanced through:

- effective hand hygiene;
- exclusion of ill children, educators and other staff;
- immunisation.
- promotion of practices that reduce the transmission of infection;

## SCOPE

This policy applies to children, families, educators, staff, visitors, Approved Provider, Nominated Supervisor and management of the Service.

## NATIONAL QUALITY STANDARD (NQS)

QUALITY AREA 2: CHILDREN'S HEALTH AND SAFETY

2.1.1	Wellbeing and comfort	Each child's wellbeing and comfort is provided for, including appropriate opportunities to meet each child's needs for sleep, rest and relaxation.
2.1.2	Health practices and procedures	Effective illness and injury management and hygiene practices are promoted and implemented.
2.2	Safety	Each child is protected.

EDUCATION AND CARE SERVICES NATIONAL REGULATIONS	
77	Health, hygiene and safe food practices
85	Incident, injury, trauma and illness policies and procedures
86	Notification to parents of incident, injury, trauma and illness
87	Incident, injury, trauma and illness record
88	Infectious diseases
90	Medical conditions policy
93	Administration of medication
162	Health information to be kept in enrolment record
168	Education and care service must have policies and procedures
170	Policies and procedures to be followed
172(2)(g)	a notice stating that there has been an occurrence of an infectious disease at the premises
173	Prescribed information to be displayed
175(2)(c)	Prescribed information to be notified to the Regulatory Authority- (2) any circumstance arising at the service that poses a risk to the health, safety or wellbeing of a child or children attending the service
EDUCATION AND CARE SERVICES NATIONAL LAW	
172	Offence to fail to display prescribed information

## RELATED POLICIES

Administration of Medication Policy Providing a Child Safe Environment Policy Dental Health Policy Enrolment and Orientation Policy Communication Policy	Immunisation Policy Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Policy Medical Conditions Policy Nappy Change and Toileting Policy Safe Sleep and/or Rest Policy
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Governance Policy Hand Washing Policy Hygiene Policy	Work Health and Safety Policy
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## IMPLEMENTATION

### EFFECTIVE HYGIENE

Our service will maintain and promote effective hygiene practices, including:

- correct handwashing technique;
- using standard precautions when handling blood, all body fluids, secretions and excretions, dried blood and other body substances.
- cleaning toys and other items that children are likely to put in their mouths, after use.
- raking sandpits often and/or securely covering them when not in use.
- disposing of soiled items in a container that is inaccessible to children.
- washing rubbish bins regularly; and
- Actively promote handwashing and other hygiene practices with children and families
- Adhering to the Centres Hygiene Policy.

### EXCLUSION OF ILL CHILDREN, EDUCATORS AND OTHER STAFF

#### Infectious Diseases

In order to prevent the spread of infectious diseases through interpersonal contact, our service will adhere to the exclusion period table, published by the Department of NSW Health [www.nhmrc.gov.au](http://www.nhmrc.gov.au)

#### Fever

- In children, a temperature over 38°C indicates a fever.
- A fever is usually caused by an infection somewhere in the body. Some types of infections that lead to fever include:
  - Viral (caused by a virus) – around nine out of ten children with a fever will have a viral illness, such as cold, flu or gastroenteritis
  - Bacterial (caused by bacteria) – such as some ear infections, pneumonia or urine infections.

[www.health.vic.gov.au/edfactsheets/downloads/fever-in-children.pdf](http://www.health.vic.gov.au/edfactsheets/downloads/fever-in-children.pdf)

[http://raisingchildren.net.au/articles/fever\\_a.html](http://raisingchildren.net.au/articles/fever_a.html)

In order to prevent the spread of infection and ensure wellbeing, children with a temperature above 38°C will be excluded from the service.

### IMMUNISATION

Refer to the Centre's Immunisation Policy

## THE APPROVED PROVIDER/MANAGEMENT WILL ENSURE:

Ensure that all information regarding the prevention of infectious diseases are sourced from a recognised health authority, such as Staying Healthy in Child Care, NSW Ministry of Health or NSW public hospitals websites.

- Implement the recommendations from Staying Healthy in Child Care to prevent the spread of infectious diseases.
- Ensure that children are reasonably protected from harm by working with the Nominated Supervisor and Educators on developing, implementing and reviewing policy that will guide health and safety procedures.
- Collect, maintain and store appropriately the required enrolment documents and enrolment information of children in the service.
- Ensure the service operates in line with the Education and Care Services National Law and National Regulations including:
  - Ensuring that where there is an occurrence of an infectious disease at the service, reasonable steps are taken to prevent the spread of that infectious disease (Regulation 88(1))
  - Ensuring that where there is an occurrence of an infectious disease at the service, a parent/guardian or authorised emergency contact of each child at the service is notified of the occurrence as soon as is practicable (Regulation 88(2)).
  - Ensuring that information from the Department of Health about the recommended minimum exclusion periods is displayed at the service, is available to all stakeholders and is adhered to in the event of an outbreak of an infectious disease (as designated by the Department of Health – refer to Definitions).
  - Ensuring that the parent/guardian are informed within 24 hours of becoming aware that an enrolled child is suffering from:
    - Pertussis,
    - Poliomyelitis,
    - Measles,
    - Mumps,
    - Rubella,
    - Meningococcal C,
- Ensuring that a child who is not immunised against a vaccine-preventable disease does not attend the service
- Notifying the Regulatory Authority within 24 hours of a serious incident including when a child becomes ill at the service or medical attention is sought while the child is attending the service. This is done on the NQAITS website.
- Ensuring that appropriate and current information and resources are provided to staff and parents/guardians regarding the identification and management of infectious diseases, blood-borne viruses and infestations.
- Keeping informed about current legislation, information, research and best practice.
- Ensuring that any changes to the exclusion table or immunisation schedule are communicated to staff and parents/guardians in a timely manner.

### **A NOMINATED SUPERVISOR/ RESPONSIBLE PERSON WILL ENSURE:**

- Contacting the parents/guardians of a child suspected of suffering from an infectious or vaccine-preventable disease, or of a child not immunised against a vaccine-preventable disease that has been detected at the service, and requesting the child be collected as soon as possible.
- Notifying a parent/guardian or authorised emergency contact person when a symptom of an excludable infectious illness or disease has been observed.
- Ensuring that a minimum of one staff with current approved first aid qualifications is in attendance and immediately available at all times the service is in operation.
- Establishing good hygiene and infection control procedures, and ensuring that they are adhered to by everyone at the service.
- Ensuring the exclusion requirements for infectious diseases are adhered to as per the recommended minimum exclusion periods (refer to Definitions), notifying the Approved Provider and parents/guardians of any outbreak of infectious disease at the service, and displaying this information in a prominent position.
- Advising parents/guardians on enrolment that the recommended minimum exclusion periods will be observed in regard to the outbreak of any infectious diseases or infestations.
- Advising the parents/guardians of a child who is not fully immunised on enrolment that they will be required to keep their child at home when an infectious disease is diagnosed at the service, and until there are no more occurrences of that disease and the exclusion period has ceased. See Immunisation Policy.

### **EDUCATORS WILL ENSURE:**

- Ensure that any children who are suspected of having an infectious illness are responded to and their health and emotional needs are supported at all times;
- Implement appropriate health and safety procedures, when tending to ill children;
- Ensure that families are aware of the need to collect their children as soon as practicable to ensure the child's comfort;
- Advise families that they will need to alert the service if their child is diagnosed with an infectious illness;
- Maintain and be responsible for their own immunisation status, and advise the Approved Provider/Nominated Supervisor of any updates to their immunisation status;
- Provide varied opportunities for children to engage in hygiene practices, including routine opportunities and intentional practices;
- Taking into consideration the grouping of children to reduce the risk of acquiring an infectious illness when planning the routines/program of the day;
- Implement the services health and hygiene policy including;
  - Hand washing – washing and drying thoroughly
  - Routine and daily cleaning of the service
  - Nappy changing & Toileting procedures
  - Maintaining a child safe environment
  - Hygiene Policy
- Wearing gloves (particularly when in direct contact with bodily fluids); and
- Proper handling and preparation of food.
- Maintain current health and safety procedures by attending appropriate professional development opportunities, and
- Maintain confidentiality at all times.

## **FAMILIES WILL ENSURE:**

- Advise the service of their child's immunisation status and provide written documentation of this for the service to copy and keep with the Immunisation Records. This must be provided when applying for enrolment;
- Advise the service when their child's immunisations/medical conditions are updated and provide this information to the service to ensure that enrolment records are up to date; and
- Have the opportunity to provide input into the review and effectiveness of policies and procedures of the service via the Management Committee.
- Keep their children at home if they are unwell or have an excludable infectious disease.
- Keep their children at home when an infectious disease has been diagnosed at the service and their child is not fully immunised against that infectious disease, until there are no more occurrences of that disease and the exclusion period has ceased;
- Inform the service if their child has an infectious disease or has been in contact with a person who has an infectious disease.

## **CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT/REFLECTION**

Our *Dealing with Infectious Diseases Policy* will be reviewed on an three yearly basis in consultation with children, families, staff, educators and management or if legislation changes.

## **RESOURCES USEFUL LINKS**

Staying Healthy: Preventing infectious diseases in early childhood education and care services 5th edition July 2015 - [www.nhmrc.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/attachments/ch55-staying-healthy.pdf](http://www.nhmrc.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/attachments/ch55-staying-healthy.pdf)

NSW Department of Health - Stopping the spread of childhood infections factsheet - [www.health.nsw.gov.au/Infectious/factsheets/Pages/childhood.aspx](http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/Infectious/factsheets/Pages/childhood.aspx)

National Immunisation Program Schedule - [www.health.gov.au/sites/default/files/2023-07/national-immunisation-program-schedule.pdf](http://www.health.gov.au/sites/default/files/2023-07/national-immunisation-program-schedule.pdf)

Australian Government Department of Health: Immunisation [www.health.gov.au/health-topics/immunisation](http://www.health.gov.au/health-topics/immunisation)

National Centre for Immunisation Research and Surveillance (NCIRS): National and state legislation in relation to immunisation requirements for child care [www.ncirs.org.au/public/no-jab-no-play-no-jab-no-pay](http://www.ncirs.org.au/public/no-jab-no-play-no-jab-no-pay)

Australian Children's Education & Care Quality Authority. (2014).

ACECQA. (2021). Policy and procedure guidelines. *Dealing with Infectious Diseases*.

Australian Government. Department of Health (2019). *National Immunisation Strategy for Australia 2019-2024* [https://www.health.gov.au/sites/default/files/national-immunisation-strategy-for-australia-2019-2024\\_0.pdf](https://www.health.gov.au/sites/default/files/national-immunisation-strategy-for-australia-2019-2024_0.pdf)

Early Childhood Australia Code of Ethics. (2016).

Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010. (Amended 2018).

[Education and Care Services National Regulations](http://www.education.gov.au/education-and-care-services-national-regulations). (2011).

Guide to the Education and Care Services National Law and the Education and Care Services National Regulations. (2017).

Guide to the National Quality Framework. (2017). (Amended 2020).

Guide to the National Quality Standard. (2020).

National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC): <https://www.nhmrc.gov.au/>

National Health and Medical Research Council. (2012). *Staying healthy: Preventing infectious diseases in early childhood education and care services*.

NSW Public Health Unit: <https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/Infectious/Pages/plus.aspx>

*Public Health Act 2010*

*Public Health Amendment Act 2017*

Revised National Quality Standard. (2018).

Safe Work Australia

**REVIEW**

POLICY REVIEWED BY	NOMINATED SUPERVISOR	NARELLE BLACHFORD	APRIL 2022
POLICY REVIEWED	APRIL 2022	NEXT REVIEW DATE	APRIL 2025
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POLICY REVIEWED	PREVIOUS MODIFICATIONS		NEXT REVIEW DATE
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