

Infectious Illness and Exclusion Policy

Rationale

The spread of infections in the early childhood environment is facilitated by microbial contamination of the environment, as well as the greater exposure to young children who are still developing hygienic behaviours and habits. Our Service will minimise children's exposure to infectious diseases by adhering to all recommended guidelines from relevant government authorities regarding the prevention of infectious diseases, promoting practices that reduce the transmission of infection, ensuring the exclusion of sick children and educators, supporting child immunisation, and implementing effective hygiene practices.

Our Service will provide up-to-date information and advice to parents, families and educators sourced from the Australian Government, Department of Health and state Ministry of Health about infectious diseases as required. Recommendations from the Health Department will be strictly adhered to at all times.

Legislative Requirement

Quality Area 2 - Health and Safety	
Education and Care Services National Regulations	Regulation 88 – Infectious diseases
National Quality Standards	Standard 2.1 - Each child's health and physical activity is supported and promoted Standard 2.1.2 - Health practices and procedures

Implementation of Practices

- Educators, children & Parents/Guardians must be aware of and follow the three most important ways of preventing the spread of infectious diseases, which are:
 - Effective hand washing and use of tissues
 - Exclusion of sick children and Educators
 - Timely Immunisation

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Children who appear unwell at the Service will be closely monitored and if any symptoms described below are noticed, or the child is not well enough to participate in normal activities, parents or an emergency contact person will be contacted to collect the child as soon as possible.

A child who is displaying symptoms of a contagious illness (vomiting, diarrhoea) will be moved away from the rest of the group and supervised until he/she is collected by a parent or emergency contact person.

Children, Educators, volunteers & students will be excluded from the Service in the event of the following

- Symptoms indicating illness may include:
- Behaviour that is unusual for the individual child
- High temperature or fevers
- Loose bowels
- Faeces that are grey, pale or contains blood
- Vomiting
- Discharge from the eye or ear
- Skin that display rashes, blisters, spots, crusty or weeping sores
- Loss of appetite
- Dark urine
- Headaches
- Stiff muscles or joint pain
- Continuous scratching of scalp or skin
- Difficulty in swallowing or complaining of a sore throat'
- Persistent, prolonged or severe coughing
- Difficulty breathing
- A stiff neck or sensitivity to light
- thick, yellow/green discharge from the nose;
- clear discharge from a constantly running nose;

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In relation to the Service

- When a child is diagnosed with an infection or illness, the Service will exclude children for the period specified in the Staying Healthy in Child Care, Preventing infectious diseases in child care 5th edition and the state Health Department.
- The Service will send home an information fact sheet with the excluded child outlining the required action and exclusion timeframe or unless the child obtains a clearance from a medical practitioner. In case of illness, the child must be collected within 1 hour of parents being contacted.
- The Service will notify Parents/Guardians of any non reportable infectious diseases that have occurred in the Service, along with guidelines on the exclusion period and symptoms of the disease.
- The Service will display generalised information in a prominent, visible location. This information should state “We have a suspected illness / infection in our Service. Please be alert for the following signs or symptoms: In the event that the illness / infection is confirmed, we will provide further specific information to all Parents or Guardians. This information may be provided to families in a variety of ways including, signs, emails, text messages, posting on Storypark, OWNA, Kidsoft or Facebook closed groups.
- The local public health department will be advised by phone and or writing by the Nominated Supervisor or Management, as soon as the Service is aware that a child has contracted a vaccine preventable disease or in the case of
- an outbreak of an infectious illness as per Staying Healthy in Childcare Preventing Infectious Diseases in Child Care 5th edition. The local public health department will directly guide the Service for all actions taken.
- Regulations require the Approved Provider or Nominated Supervisor to notify Regulatory Authorities **within 24 hours of any serious incident /illness at the Service** through the [NQA IT System](#).

In relation to the Nominated Supervisor and Educators

- Educators must act as role models and encourage children to use tissues and wash their hands effectively, with the use of water, liquid soap and paper towels to dry hands, or the use of antibacterial sanitiser if this is appropriate.
- Educators are to encourage appropriate hygienic practices to children and their families, for example to wash their hands on arrival and departure of the Service or use antibacterial sanitiser. Educators, students, and visitors must also follow this procedure for themselves.

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In relation to Parents or Guardians

- In the event that a child shows signs or symptoms of infection or illness, the Parent/Guardian must make suitable arrangements for the child to be collected from the Service within 1 hour where possible.
- Parents will be advised upon collection if your child has been sent home for any of the above mentioned there is an immediate 24hr exclusion, if the symptoms continue, they must stay away from the centre until the symptoms clear.
- The Parent/Guardian must provide a written clearance from a medical practitioner stating that the child is clear to attend the Service or exclusion period has been concluded.
- All exclusion periods are available from the Nominated Supervisor.

In the event of a Notifiable Disease

Staying Healthy in Child Care, preventing infectious diseases in child care 5th edition provides detailed information on infections and diseases which are required to be notified to the local public health department.

- In the event that a parent or guardian informs the service that the child has an infectious illness, the Service will contact the local public health department immediately.
- The local public health department will guide the service from this point on all actions to be taken.
- Regulations require the Approved Provider or Nominated Supervisor to notify Regulatory Authorities **within 24 hours of any serious incident at the Service** through the [NQA IT System](#)
- Management will closely monitor health alerts and guidelines from Public Health Units and the Australian Government- Department of Health for any advice and emergency health management in the event of a contagious illness outbreak
- Ensure exclusion periods for people with infectious diseases recommended by Government Authorities are implemented for all staff, children, parents, families and visitors
- All Educators must enforce the Confidentiality Policy, however, the Public Health Act of 2010 allows for personal information to be provided to Public Health Units to investigate infectious disease notifications.
- the Service implements recommendations from [Staying healthy: Preventing infectious diseases in early childhood education and care services](#) to maintain a healthy environment

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COVID – 19 Management

COVID-19 is a new strain of coronavirus that was originally identified in Wuhan, Hubei Province, China in December 2019. The World Health Organization (WHO), has declared that COVID-19 outbreak as a 'pandemic' - a Public Health Emergency of International Concern (effective 11 March 2020). This is mainly due to the speed and scale of transmission of the virus in countries around the world, including Australia.

COVID-19 is transmitted from someone who is infected with the virus to others in close contact through contaminated droplets spread by coughing or sneezing or by contact with contaminated hands or surfaces. According to Department of Health, the time of exposure to the virus and when symptoms first occur is anywhere from 2-14 days.

Symptoms can range from a mild illness, similar to a cold or flu, to pneumonia. People with COVID-19 may experience:

- fever
- flu-like symptoms such as coughing, sore throat and fatigue
- shortness of breath

We are guided by explicit decisions regarding exclusion periods and notification of any infectious disease by the *Australian Government- Department of Health* and local Public Health Units in our jurisdiction under the **Public Health Act**. COVID-19 is a notifiable condition in all states and territories of Australia

In the event of any child, educator, staff member or visitor attending our Service who is suspected or confirmed to have the infection, the Approved Provider will contact their Public Health Unit.

National Coronavirus (COVID-19) Health Information Line
1800 020 080 Call 131 450 for translating and interpreting service
Health Direct 1800 022 222
Public Health Unit- Local state and territory health departments

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Minimising the transmission of COVID-19

Our Service has implemented risk management planning to identify any possible risks and hazards to our learning environment and practices.

Effective 15 March 2020, the *Australian Health Protection Principal Committee* has made recommendations to the general public to help manage the spread of COVID-19. These measures include implementing good hygiene, self-isolation and social distancing

Whilst there is no vaccination for COVID-19, we strongly recommend that all staff, children and families receive the seasonal influenza vaccination

The Approved Provider, Nominated Supervisor, educators, staff, families and visitors will comply with the following:

Exclusion/ Self-isolation/ Self-quarantine

- any person employed or visiting our Service must confirm that they have not returned from overseas travel in the past 14 days prior to entering the Service, travelled from interstate in the past 14 days and that they have not come into close contact with anyone with a positive diagnosis of COVID-19 in the past 14 days.
- effective 28 March 2020, **any person** entering Australia from any destination will be required to undertake 14 day quarantine at designated facilities (Australian Government 28 March 2020).
- agree to have their child's temperature taken by a staff member upon entry to the Service
- agree to have their child excluded if their child's temperature is above 37.5
- any person who has been in close contact with someone who has a positive diagnosis, or suspected diagnosis of the virus, must self-isolate for 14 days
- household members of a person who has a **confirmed case** (including children) of COVID-19 must also be isolated from the childcare Service and general public
- the Public Health Unit will provide further information on a case-by-case basis as to the length and place of isolation. see: [COVID-19 home isolation](#)
- families must immediately advise the Service if they, or anyone in their family, develops any symptoms of the virus or receives a positive result of the virus whilst in isolation
- any person (employee, enrolled child, parent, caregiver, visitor or contractor) who is displaying symptoms such as:
 - have had a temperature/fever, or vomiting in the last 24 hours
 - have had diarrhoea in the last 48 hours

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- Runny nose
- Coughing and shortness of breath
- have been given medication for a temperature prior to arriving at the Service
- have started a course of anti-biotics in the last 24 hours or
- if we have reasonable grounds to believe that a child has a contagious or infectious disease (this includes COVID-19) they must seek urgent medical attention to determine if they need to be tested for COVID-19 and not attend our Service **under any circumstance**
- **depending on the reason for isolation, a doctor's clearance may be required.**
- If your child becomes ill whilst at the Service, educators/staff will respond to their individual symptoms of illness and provide comfort and care.
- Educators will take your child's temperature. If the temperature is above **37.5°C** you will be contacted immediately and required to collect your child within 30 minutes. If you are unable to collect your child, an emergency contact person will be contacted, and they must collect your child within 30 minutes.

Educators will attempt to lower your child's temperature by:

- removing excessive clothing (shoes, socks, jumpers)
- encourage your child to take small sips of water
- move your child to a quiet area where they can rest whilst being supervised

Educators will wear disposable gloves and a face mask to avoid possible contamination.

Educators will keep accurate records of the child's temperature, time taken, time parent/s were contacted, staff member's name and time of collection.

All information will be recorded in our *Incident, Illness, Accident and Trauma* Record. Parents will be required to sign this record upon collection of their child.

Parents will be advised upon collection, if your child has been sent home for any of the above mentioned there is an immediate 24hr exclusion, if the symptoms continue, they must stay away from the centre until the symptoms clear.

Parents are reminded to ensure their contact details are current and emergency contact details are updated if required.

Our Service also reserves the right to prevent employees, parents, family members or visitors to enter our premises if the Approved Provider or Nominated Supervisor suspects instances of COVID-19.

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Notification

The Approved Provider or Nominated Supervisor is mandated by law to notify the Public Health Unit or [Health Information hotline](#) on 1800 020 080 of any confirmed or suspected cases of COVID-19. In addition, the Approved Provider must also notify the [Regulatory Authority](#) in their state or territory within 24 hours.

Management reserves the right to request employees to self-isolate if they suspect they have come into contact with someone who has a confirmed COVID-19 infection.

Other Relevant Documents/Links

- Service Hand Washing Procedure
- Illness Log
- Enrolment Form
- Temperature procedure
- Exclusion Action Chart

Sourcing Acknowledgements

Consultation with Management, Educators and Families.

This Policy incorporates the requirements reflected in the Education and Care National Regulations and Law

- Australian Early Childhood Association – AECA’s Policies and Working Positions –Children’s Services: Control of Infection
 - <http://www.earlychildhoodaustralia.org.au/>
- Staying Healthy in Child Care – 5th Edition
 - <http://www.nhmrc.gov.au/publications/synopses/ch43syn.htm>
- Public Health Act 2010
 - <http://www.legislation.nsw.gov.au/sessionalview/sessional/act/2010-127.pdf>
- [*Staying healthy: Preventing infectious diseases in early childhood education and care services*](#)
- [*Australian Government Department of Health Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) advice for travellers*](#)
<https://www.health.gov.au/resources/apps-and-tools/covid-19-infection-control-training>
- [*Australian Government Department of Health Topics*](#) [Health Topics Coronavirus COVID-19](#)

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Policy Review

- The Service will review the Infectious Illness and Exclusion Policy and related procedures every twelve months.
- Children and families are encouraged to collaborate with the service to review the policy and procedures.
- Educators are essential stakeholders in the policy review process and will be encouraged to be actively involved.
- All Changes to the Policy will be documented, displayed in the Service and made available to all stakeholders.

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