

CONTROL OF INFECTIOUS DISEASES POLICY

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 infection transmission, 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 families and Educators. Recommendations from the Health Department will be strictly adhered to.

NATIONAL QUALITY STANDARD (NQS)

QA2 CHILDREN'S HEALTH AND SAFETY		
Element 2.1.1	Wellbeing and comfort	Each child’s wellbeing and comfort is provided for, including appropriate opportunities to meet each child’s need for sleep, rest and relaxation.
Element 2.1.2	Health practices and procedures	Effective illness and injury management and hygiene practices are promoted and implemented.
Standard 2.2	Safety	Each child is protected.

RELATED NATIONAL LAW AND REGULATIONS

Regulation 77	Health, hygiene and safe food practices
Regulation 85	Incident, injury, trauma and illness policies and procedures
Regulation 86	Notification to parents of incident, injury, trauma and illness
Regulation 87	Incident, injury, trauma and illness record
Regulation 88	Infectious diseases
Regulation 93	Administration of medication
Regulation 160	Child enrolment records to be kept by approved provider and family day care educator
Regulation 162	Health information to be kept in enrolment record
Regulation 168	Education and care service must have policies and procedures
Regulation 174	Time to notify certain circumstances to Regulatory Authority

RELATED POLICIES

Child Safe Environment Policy - New South Wales	168 Policies
Rest Time and Safe Sleeping Policy	168 Policies
Administration of Medication Policy	168 Policies
Administration of First Aid Policy	168 Policies
Child Safe Environment Policy - Queensland	168 Policies
Hand Hygiene and Use of Gloves Policy	Ancillary Policies
Immunisation Policy	168 Policies
Nappy Changing Policy	Ancillary Policies
Child Safe Environment Policy - Victoria	168 Policies

PURPOSE

Our service has a duty of care to ensure that children, families, educators, and visitors are provided with high levels of protection during the hours of the service's operation. We aim to minimise and manage illnesses and prevent the spread of infectious diseases. Immunisation is a simple, safe, and effective way to protect people against harmful diseases before they encounter them in the community. Immunisation not only protects individuals, but also others within the community, and our service advocates for immunisation where it is safe for a person to do so.

SCOPE

This policy applies to children, families, staff, management, and visitors of the service.

IMPLEMENTATION

We will implement recommendations as stated in the *Staying Healthy: Preventing infectious diseases in early childhood education and care services* (Fifth Edition). We are guided by decisions regarding exclusion periods and notification of infectious diseases by the Australian Government- Department of Health and local Public Health Units in our jurisdiction as per the Public Health Act. The need for exclusion and the length of time a person is excluded from the service depends on:

- How easily the infection can spread.
- How long the person is likely to be infectious and
- The severity of the infectious disease or illness.

PREVENTING INFECTIOUS DISEASES

Children enter education and care services when their immune systems are still developing. They may not have been exposed to many common germs, and therefore may be more susceptible to infection and illness. Given the close physical contact children have with other children in childcare, it is very easy for infectious diseases and illnesses to spread through normal daily activities. Our service implements rigorous hygienic practices to limit the spread of illness and infectious diseases, including:

- Effective hand washing hygiene.
- Cough and sneeze etiquette.
- Appropriate use of gloves.

- Exclusion of children, Educators or staff when they are unwell or displaying symptoms of an infectious disease or virus.
- Effective environmental cleaning, including toys and resources (including bedding).
- Requesting parents and visitors to wash their hands with soap and water or hand sanitiser upon arrival and departure.
- Physical distancing (if recommended).

Reporting Outbreaks to the Public Health Unit

Outbreaks of communicable diseases and contagious viruses pose a threat to public health. To help prevent outbreaks, the Department of Health monitors the number of people who contract certain infectious diseases and their characteristics, and works with health specialists and doctors to help prevent the transmission of diseases to other people. The Public Health Act 2010 lawfully requires and authorises doctors, hospitals, laboratories, school principals and childcare centre directors to confidentially notify Public Health Units of patients with certain conditions, and to provide the required information on the notification forms. All information is confidentially held to protect the patient's privacy. The Commonwealth Privacy Act only allows the release/disclosure of patient information where it is lawfully required or authorised. Management is required to notify the local [Public Health Unit \(PHU\)](#) by phone as soon as possible, after they are informed that a child enrolled at the Service suffers from one of the following vaccine preventable diseases or any confirmed case of COVID-19.

- Diphtheria.
- Mumps.
- Poliomyelitis.
- Haemophilus influenzae Type b (Hib).
- Meningococcal disease.
- Rubella ('German measles').
- Measles.
- Pertussis ('whooping cough').
- Tetanus.
- An outbreak of 2 or more people with gastrointestinal or respiratory illness.
- Management will closely monitor health alerts and guidelines from the Public Health Unit and the Australian Government- Department of Health for any advice and emergency health management in the event of a contagious illness outbreak - e.g. (COVID-19).

Management will ensure

that all information regarding the prevention and transmission of infectious diseases is sourced from a recognised Government Health Authority, [Australian Government Department of Health](#)

- Exclusion periods for people with infectious diseases recommended by Government Authorities are implemented for all staff, children, parents, families and visitors.
- The service implements recommendations from [Staying Healthy: Preventing infectious diseases in early childhood education \(5th Edition\) and care services](#) to maintain a healthy environment.
- Children are protected from harm by ensuring relevant policies and procedures are followed regarding health and safety within the service.
- Required enrolment information, including health and immunisation records of enrolled children, is collected, maintained, and appropriately and securely stored.
- A staff immunisation record that documents each staff member's previous infection or immunisations (including dates) is developed and maintained.
- The Public Health Unit is notified in the event of an outbreak of viral gastroenteritis. Management must document the number of cases, dates of onset, duration of symptoms. An outbreak is generally considered when two or more children or staff suddenly onset diarrhoea or vomiting in a 2-day period.

The Nominated Supervisor/Responsible Person will ensure

- A hygienic environment is promoted and maintained.
- Children are supported in understanding health and hygiene practices throughout the daily program and routine (hand washing, hand drying, cough and sneeze etiquette).
- Educators and staff are aware of relevant immunisation guidelines for children and themselves.
- Wall charts about immunisation are displayed at the centre.
- An Immunisation History Statement for each child is collected on enrolment and maintained/updated regarding the child's immunisation status (AIR) and any medical conditions.
- Families are provided with relevant sourced materials and information on infectious diseases, health, and hygiene, including:



- The current Immunisation Schedule.

- Exclusion guidelines in the event of a vaccine preventable illness at the Service for children who are not immunised or have not yet received all their immunisations.
- Advice and information regarding any infectious diseases in general, and information regarding any specific infectious illnesses suspected/present in the Service.
- Families are provided with information about an infectious disease by displaying and emailing the relevant details.
- Families are advised to alert the service if their child is diagnosed with an infectious illness.
- All Educators are mindful and maintain confidentiality of individual children's medical circumstances.
- Families are advised to keep children at home if they are unwell. If a child has been sick, they must be well for 24 hours before returning to the Service. For example, if a child is absent due to illness or sent home due to illness, they will be unable to attend the next day as a minimum. The Nominated Supervisor may approve the child's return to the service. The parent/guardian provides a doctor's certificate/clearance certifying that the child is no longer contagious and can attend the service. The decision to approve a child's return is up to the Approved Provider/Nominated Supervisor.
- To complete the register of Illness, Accident or Trauma and/or document incidents of infectious diseases no later than 24 hours of an illness or infectious disease occurring in the service.
- Educators or staff with diarrhoea or an infectious disease do not handle food for others and are not to return to work until they have been symptom free for 48 hours.
- Any risk to a child or adult with complex medical needs is minimised in the event of an infectious disease or virus outbreak. This may require a risk assessment and decision-making regarding the suitability of attendance of the child or staff member during this time.

Educators will ensure

- That any child suspected of having an infectious illness is responded to, and their health and emotional needs are always supported.
- Any child suspected of having an infectious illness is isolated from other children and supervised while waiting for collection by parents or guardians.
- That appropriate health and safety procedures are implemented when treating ill children.
- Families are aware that they need to collect their unwell child/children as soon as possible from the service.
- All resources or items touched by a child with a suspected illness are thoroughly cleaned and disinfected (cushions, pillows, toys).
- Their own immunisation status is maintained, and the Approved Provider/Nominated Supervisor is advised of any updates to their immunisation status.
- Opportunities are provided for children to participate in hygiene practices, including routine opportunities, and intentional practice such as hand washing, sneezing and cough etiquette.
- Consideration is given to the combination of children to decrease the risk of infectious illness when planning the routines/program of the day.
- They adhere to the service's health and hygiene policy, including:
 - Hand washing.
 - Regular cleaning.
 - Wear gloves (particularly when in direct contact with bodily fluids - nappy changing and toileting).
 - Appropriate and hygienic handling and preparation of food.
- They maintain up-to-date knowledge of health and safety through ongoing professional development opportunities and research
- Children do not want to share beds simultaneously.
- Paper towel and disinfectant are used to clean beds after each use.
- That all play dough is freshly made every week. If there is an outbreak of vomiting and/or diarrhoea, or any other contagious communicable disease, Educators may reduce or remove the use of play dough within the program.

Prevention strategies include

- Full adherence to the NHMRC childcare cleaning guidelines.
- Mops used for toilet accidents must be soaked in disinfectant in a bucket in the laundry sink, and then air-dried.
- A daily clean is carried out on other surfaces that may transmit germs, such as high touch objects including doorknobs, tables, light switches, handles, remotes, play gyms, low shelving, etc. This will be increased several times a day if an outbreak of an infectious disease/virus has been recorded in the service, or to minimise the risk of transmission of a virus.
- If a child has a toileting accident, the items are placed in a plastic bag with the child's name on it. The plastic bag will be stored in a sealed container labelled 'soiled/wet clothing' for parents to take home.
- Cloths are colour coded so that a separate cloth is used to clean floors, bathrooms, art and craft, and meal surfaces.
- Any toy mouthed by a child is placed immediately in the 'washing' basket and washed with warm soapy water at the end of the day. All washable toys on display for the children must be washed regularly to decrease the risk of cross contamination, and recorded with the date and a signature as evidence.

- Washable toys and equipment will be washed in detergent and hot water or the dishwasher and aired to dry (toys will not be washed in the dishwasher simultaneously with dishes). All toys and equipment cleaned will be recorded on the toy cleaning register.
- All children who use a dummy must have their dummy stored in an individual container, small zip locked plastic bag, or a protector with the child's name clearly stated to reduce the risk of cross contamination.

- All cleaning procedures will be recorded on the service's Cleaning Checklists.
- Furnishings, fabric tablecloths and pillowcases will be laundered at the end of each week and hung out to dry.
- Floor surfaces will be cleaned daily after each meal and at the end of each day.
- Toilets/bathrooms will be cleaned in the middle of the day, at the end of the day, and whenever needed throughout the day using disinfectant and paper towel.
- Disposable paper towels and disinfectants are used to clean bodily fluids off beds, floors, bathrooms, etc.
- Pregnant staff members should not change nappies or assist in toileting or cleaning up toileting accidents to prevent unexpected cross contamination and risk of contracting Cytomegalovirus (CMV).

Families will

- Adhere to the service's policy regarding unwell children and exclusion requirements.
- Adhere to the service's restrictions of entry in the event of an outbreak of an infectious disease or virus.
- Adhere to the service's policy regarding Hand Washing.
- Exclude their child from care if they display symptoms of an infectious illness or disease, or if a vaccine is used, preventable disease occurs in the service and their child is not fully immunised.
- Advise the service of their child's immunisation status, by providing a current Immunisation History Statement recorded on the Australian Immunisation Register (AIR) for the child's file.
- Advise the service when their child's medical action plan is updated.
- Provide sufficient spare clothing, particularly if the child is toilet training.
- Adhere to the service's risk minimisation strategies if their child has complex medical needs in the event of an infectious disease or virus outbreak.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS REFERENCES

[ECA Code of Ethics - Early Childhood Australia](#)

[Education & Care Services National Law Act 2010](#)

[Medicare Australia](#)

[Privacy Act 1988 \(Cth\)](#)

[Safe Work Australia](#)

[This Staying healthy: Preventing infectious diseases in early childhood education and care services](#)

[Australian Children's Education & Care Quality Authority \(2014\)](#)

[Guide to the National Quality Framework \(2020\)](#)

[Public Health Amendment Act 2017](#)

[Public Health Regulation 2012](#)

[Department of Human Resources: National Immunisation Program Schedule](#)

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


[Australia Childhood Immunisation Register](#)

[Australian Government – Department of Human Services - How to get an immunisation history statement](#)

[Exclusion Periods](#)



ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

In the spirit of reconciliation, our Early Learning Service acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of country throughout Australia and their connections to land, sea, and community. We pay our respect to their Elders past and present, and extend that respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples today. 

CONTINUOUS REVIEW

Our policies and procedures reflect current best practice, recommended guidelines, and the requirements of the Education and Care Services National Law and Regulations. The policies and procedures are developed and reviewed through a consultative process, with input from families, Educators, and relevant agencies, including government departments. Families are encouraged to contribute to policy review by contacting the Nominated Supervisor, and encouraged to contact the Nominated Supervisor if they have a policy question. 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 actively participate. All changes to the policy will be documented, displayed in the Service, and made available to all stakeholders.

DISCLAIMER WARNING

Warning! - Uncontrolled when printed! This document is current at the time of printing, but may change with 14 days' notice per Education and Care Services National Regulations - Regulation 172 - Notification of Change to Policies or Procedures. A compliance direction may be issued for failure to comply with sub regulation (1)(b). The current version of this document is held in Early Learning Management's Document Management System. © Copyright: Early Learning Management ABN 19 632 288 713.

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