

INFECTIOUS DISEASES POLICY

Our centre 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, Australian Health Protection Principal Committee (AHPPC) and state Ministry of Health about infectious diseases as required. Recommendations from the Health Department will be strictly adhered to at all times.

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

PURPOSE

Our Service has a duty of care to ensure that children, families, educators, and visitors to the Service are provided with a high level of protection during the hours of the Service's operation. We aim to manage illnesses and prevent the spread of infectious diseases throughout the Service.

Immunisation is a simple, safe, and effective way of protecting people against harmful diseases before they come into contact with them in the community. Immunisation not only protects individuals, but also others within the community, by reducing the spread of disease and illnesses.

SCOPE

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

IMPLEMENTATION

Our Service is committed to minimising the spread of infectious diseases and viruses by implementing recommendations as stated in the *Staying healthy: Preventing infectious diseases in early childhood education and care services* (Fifth Edition) developed by the Australian Government National Health and Medical Research Council and advice provided from the Australian Health Protection Principal Committee (AHPPC).

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.

INFORMATION TO BE DISPLAYED AT THE SERVICE.

INFORMATION	WEBSITE	PHONE NUMBER
The National Immunisation Program (NIP) Service	https://beta.health.gov.au/initiatives-and-programs/national-immunisation-program	1800 020 103
The NSW Immunisation Schedule (March 2020)	http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/immunisation/Pages/nsw-immunisation-schedule.aspx	
NSW Health Local NSW Public Health Unit Contact Details	https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/Infectious/pages/phus.aspx	1300 066 055
Department of Health	In the event of a community spread virus- (COVID-19) publications from Government agencies will be displayed https://www.health.gov.au/resources/collection/s/coronavirus-covid-19-campaign-resources	1800 020 080

Note homeopathic immunisation is not recognised.

PREVENTING INFECTIOUS DISEASES

Children enter education and care services when their immune systems are still developing. They have not been exposed to many common germs and therefore are susceptible to bacteria that may cause infections. Given the close physical contact children have with other children in early childhood and care, 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
- cleaning including toys and resources (including bedding)

- requesting parents and visitors to wash their hands with soap and water or hand sanitizer upon arrival and departure at the Service
- physical distancing (if recommended)
- Wearing of masks (when recommended)

Immunisation requirements

Immunisation is a reliable way to prevent many childhood infectious diseases. As of January 2018, unvaccinated children due to their parent's conscientious objection are no longer able to be enrolled in childcare. Children who cannot be fully vaccinated due to a medical condition or who are on a recognised catch-up schedule may still be enrolled upon presentation of the appropriate form signed by a medical practitioner who meets the criteria stated by the Australian Government.

Reporting Outbreaks to the Public Health Unit

The Public Health Act 2010 lawfully requires management is required to notify the local **Public Health Unit** (PHU) by phone (call 1300 066 055) as soon as possible after they are made aware that a child enrolled at the Service is suffering 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

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- eg (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 and care services](#) to maintain a healthy environment
- required enrolment information, including health and immunisation records of enrolled children is collected, maintained and appropriately and securely stored
- the Public Health Unit is notified in the event of an outbreak of viral gastroenteritis. The director must document the number of cases, dates of onset, duration of symptoms. An outbreak is when two or more children or staff have a sudden onset of diarrhoea/vomiting in a 2-day period. (NSW Gov.- Health 2019)

A NOMINATED SUPERVISOR/ RESPONSIBLE PERSON WILL ENSURE:

- a hygienic environment is promoted and maintained
- children are supported in their understanding of 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
- wall charts about immunisation are displayed in our 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 NSW Immunisation Schedule
 - advice and information regarding any infectious diseases in general and information regarding any specific infectious illnesses that are suspected/present in the Service.
- families are provided with information about an infectious disease by displaying and emailing the Infectious Diseases Notification Form and details
- families are advised that they must 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
- that opportunities for educators to source pertinent up to date information from trusted sources on the prevention of infectious diseases and maintaining health and hygiene are provided
- families are advised to keep children at home if they are unwell.
- to complete the *Illness, Accident or Trauma* Form no later than 24 hours of an illness or infectious disease occurring in the Service.
- educators or staff who have diarrhoea or an infectious disease do not handle food for others for 48 hours and are not to return to work until they have been symptom free for 24 hours

EDUCATORS WILL ENSURE:

- that any child suspected of having an infectious illness is responded to and their health and emotional needs supported at all times
- any child suspected of having an infectious illness is isolated from other children and supervised whilst waiting for collection by parents or guardian
- that appropriate health and safety procedures are implemented when treating ill children
- families are aware of the need to collect their unwell child/ children as soon as practicable from the Service
- all resources or items touched by a child with a suspected illness are thoroughly cleaned
- opportunities are provided for children to participate in hygiene practices, including routine opportunities, and intentional practice such as hand washing, sneezing and cough etiquette
- they adhere to the Service's health and hygiene policy including:
 - hand washing
 - daily cleaning of the Service
 - wearing gloves (particularly when in direct contact with bodily fluids- nappy changing and toileting)
 - appropriate and hygienic handling and preparation of food
- that cots or mattresses are placed at least 1.5m away from each other if physical distancing measures are required to be implemented
- warm soapy water is used to clean beds after each use
- that all play dough is freshly made every day. If there is an outbreak of vomiting and/or diarrhoea, or any other contagious communicable disease, play dough is not offered.

Prevention strategies for minimising the spread of disease within our Service include all staff ensuring:

- that 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 to 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 such as COVID-19
- that 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, bathroom, art and craft, and meal surfaces
- that any toy that is mouthed by a child is placed immediately in the sink and washed with warm soapy water at the end of the day. All washable toys out on display for the children are to be washed after use on the room (or when mouthed) , prior to being returned to storerooms.

- 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 *Sick Children* and exclusion requirements
- exclude their child from care if they display symptoms of an infectious illness or disease.
- 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 Service to copy and place in 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

Resources

[Recommended exclusion periods- Poster Staying Healthy: Preventing Infectious diseases in early childhood education and care services](#)

SOURCE

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

Australian Government Department of Health *Health Topics* <https://www.health.gov.au/health-topics>

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_o.pdf

Australian Government Department of Health Australian Health Protection Principal Committee (AHPPC)

Department of Human Resources: National Immunisation Program Schedule:

<https://beta.health.gov.au/initiatives-and-programs/national-immunisation-program>

Early Childhood Australia Code of Ethics. (2016).

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

Guide to the National Quality Standard. (2020)

Medicare Australia (Department of Human Services):

<https://www.humanservices.gov.au/individuals/medicare>

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 Government Department of Health. Vaccination requirements for child care.

https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/immunisation/Pages/childcare_qa.aspx

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

Public Health Act 2010

Public Health Amendment Act 2017

Public Health Regulation 2012

Public Health and Wellbeing Regulations 2019 Victoria

Revised National Quality Standard. (2018).

Safe Work Australia

Reviewed: 25.6.21