

2.36 INFECTIOUS DISEASES

INTRODUCTION

Our school is committed to providing a safe 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
- 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 immunisation programs.

PURPOSE

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 (Staying Healthy: Preventing infectious diseases in early childhood education and care services 5th edition 2013)

STRATEGIES

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 items that children are likely to put in their mouths, after use
- actively promote handwashing and other hygiene practices with children and families

Exclusion periods of ill Children and 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 Health.

<https://www.nhmrc.gov.au/about-us/publications/staying-healthy-preventing-infectious-diseases-early-childhood-education-and-care-services>

Fever

In children, a temperature over 38 degrees Celsius 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 <https://www.schn.health.nsw.gov.au/fact-sheets/fever>
- 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

The NSW Government Immunisation Toolkit for early childhood education and care services guides our practice and provides resources and information to support families in accessing information regarding immunisation.

Under the Public Health Act 2010, education and care services cannot enrol a child unless approved documentation has been provided that shows the child:

- is fully immunised for their age, or;
- has a medical reason not to be vaccinated, or;
- is on a recognised catch-up schedule if the child has fallen behind with their vaccinations.

Prior to enrolment, families must provide a copy of one or more of the following documents:

- an AIR Immunisation History Statement which shows that the child is up to date with their scheduled vaccinations or
- an AIR Immunisation History Form on which the immunisation provider has certified that the child is on a recognised catch-up schedule (temporary for 6 months only) or
- an AIR Immunisation Medical Exemption Form which has been certified by an immunisation provider.

Immunisation Exempt Children

- Non-immunised children will be added to the service non-immunised register.
- When a vaccine-preventable disease is present or suspected at the service, children for whom the centre does not have a completed immunisation record will be treated as unimmunised.
- Non-immune children and educators will be excluded from the service when there is an outbreak of a vaccine-preventable illness and required to remain away until the service is deemed clear of the illness and the minimum exclusion period has passed.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Approved Provider and Principal will:

Ensure the service operates in line with the Education and Care Services National Law and National Regulations 2011 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 available to all stakeholders and is adhered to in the event of an outbreak of an infectious disease.
- ensuring that the parent/guardian is 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 when an infectious disease is diagnosed and does not return until there are no more occurrences of that disease at the service and the recommended minimum exclusion period has ceased.
- 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 (Early Childhood Directorate, NSW Department of Education 1800 619 113 ececd@det.nsw.edu.au).
- 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 and information.
- ensuring that any changes to the exclusion table or immunisation schedule are communicated to staff and parents/guardians in a timely manner.

Nominated Supervisor

- 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, 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.
- Requesting that parents/guardians notify the service if their child has, or is suspected of having, an infectious disease or infestation.
- Providing information and resources to families to assist in the identification and management of infectious diseases and infestations.
- Maintaining confidentiality at all times.
- Ensuring that an "Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness" record is completed as soon as practicable or no later than 24 hours of the illness occurring.

Staff and Educators

- Ensuring that any children that are suspected of having an infectious illness are responded to and their health and emotional needs supported at all times.
- Implementing appropriate health and safety procedures, when tending to ill children.
- Ensuring that families are aware of the need to collect their children as soon as practicable to ensure the child's comfort.
- Maintaining their own immunisation status and advise the Approved Provider/ Nominated Supervisor of any updates to their immunisation status.
- Providing varied opportunities for children to engage in hygiene practices, including routine opportunities, and intentional practice.
- Observing signs and symptoms of children who may appear unwell and informing the Nominated Supervisor.
- Providing access to information and resources for parents/guardians to assist in the identification and management of infectious diseases and infestations.
- Monitoring any symptoms in children that may indicate the presence of an infectious disease.

- Maintaining confidentiality at all times.

Families

- Providing immunisation documentation upon enrolment and as administered.
- Keeping their children at home if they are unwell or have an excludable infectious disease.
- Keeping 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.
- Informing the service if their child has an infectious disease or has been in contact with a person who has an infectious disease.

MONITORING, EVALUATION AND REVIEW

This policy will be monitored to ensure compliance with legislative requirements and unless deemed necessary through the identification of practice gaps, the service will review this Policy every two years.

Families and staff are essential stakeholders in the policy review process and will be given opportunity and encouragement to be actively involved.

In accordance with R. 172 of the Education and Care Services National Regulations, the service will ensure that families of children enrolled at the service are notified at least 14 days before making any change to a policy or procedure that may have significant impact on the provision of education and care to any child enrolled at the service; a family's ability to utilise the service; the fees charged or the way in which fees are collected.

Relevant Legislation	Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011. Reg. 88 Children (Education and Care Services National Law Application) Act 2010 Section 167 Work, Health and Safety Act 2011 Public Health Regulation 2012 Public Health Act 2010 Public Health Amendment (Vaccination of Children attending Childcare Facilities) Bill 2013 and Public Health Amendment (Review) Bill 2017 Australian New Zealand Food Standards Code (FSANZ)
Related to NQS QA	2.1.2, 2.2.2, 6 (collaboratively) 6.2.2
Sources & Further Reading	Adapted from Community Early Learning Australia Immunisation Toolkit 2017 www.health.nsw.gov.au/immunisation/publications/immunisation-enrolment-toolkit.pdf NSW Immunisation Schedule 23 April 2018 www.health.nsw.gov.au/immunisation/publications/a3-childhood-schedule.pdf Staying Healthy: Providing infectious diseases in early childhood education and care services 5 th edition June 2013 (pages 17-19) https://www.nhmrc.gov.au/about-us/publications/staying-healthy-preventing-infectious-diseases-early-childhood-education-and-care-services#block-views-block-file-attachments-content-block-1

POLICY REVIEWED	MODIFICATIONS	NEXT REVIEW DATE
April 2021	Checked regulations, updated copy	2023