

# Control of Infectious Disease Policy

The spread of infections in the early childhood environment is facilitated by crowding and microbial contamination of the environment, as well as the unhygienic behaviours and 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 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.

## National Quality Standard (NQS)

Quality Area 2: Children's Health and Safety		
2.1.1	<b>Wellbeing and comfort</b>	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	<b>Health practices and procedures</b>	Effective illness and injury management and hygiene practices are promoted and implemented.
2.2	<b>Safety</b>	Each child is protected

## Education and Care Services National Regulations

Children (Education and Care Services) National Law NSW	
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
162	Health information to be kept in enrolment record

## Related Policies

Nappy Change & Toileting Policy  
 Physical Environment Policy  
 Sleeping & Rest Requirement Policy  
 Incident, Illness, Accident & Trauma Policy  
 Immunisation Policy  
 Family Communication Policy  
 Administration of Medication Policy  
 Hand Washing Policy  
 Sick Children Policy  
 Work Health and Safety Policy  
 Medical Conditions Policy

## PURPOSE

Children encounter many other children and adults within the Service environment, which can result in the contraction of infectious illnesses. Our Service has a duty of care to ensure that children families, educators and visitors of 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 minimise 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.

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.

This policy must be read in conjunction with our other Quality Area 2 policies:

- Immunisation Policy
- Sick Children Policy
- Incident, Illness, Accident and Trauma Policy and
- Medical Conditions Policy and
- Handwashing Policy

## INFORMATION TO BE DISPLAYED AT THE SERVICE.

INFORMATION	WEBSITE	PHONE NUMBER
The National Immunisation Program (NIP) Service	<a href="https://beta.health.gov.au/initiatives-and-programs/national-immunisation-program">https://beta.health.gov.au/initiatives-and-programs/national-immunisation-program</a>	1800 020 103
QLD Health	<a href="https://www.health.qld.gov.au/">https://www.health.qld.gov.au/</a>	13HEALTH (13 43 25 84)

**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
- use of gloves
- exclusion of children, educators or staff when they are unwell or displaying symptoms of an infectious disease or virus
- effective cleaning of the environment, 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

### New Immunisation Requirements

- Only parents of children (less than 20 years of age) who are fully immunised or are on a recognised catch-up schedule can receive Child Care Subsidy (CCS) and the Family Tax Benefit Part A end of year supplement.
- The relevant vaccinations are those under the National Immunisation Program (NIP), which covers the vaccines usually administered before age five. These vaccinations must be recorded on the Australian Childhood Immunisation Register (AIR).
- Children with medical contraindications or natural immunity for certain diseases will continue to be exempt from the requirements.
- Conscientious objection and vaccination objection on non-medical grounds is no longer a valid exemption from immunisation requirements.
- Families eligible to receive family assistance payments and have children less than 20 years of age, who may not meet the new immunisation requirements, will be notified by Centrelink. (The details of vaccinations given to persons less than 20 years of age can be submitted for inclusion on the AIR by your local GP.)

Refer to Immunisation Policy for more information

### Reporting Outbreaks to the Public Health Unit

Outbreaks of communicable diseases and contagious viruses represent 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, the recent travel or attendance of infected people in a public place or on public transport, 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 [QLD Health](#) of patients with certain conditions, and to provide the required information on the notification forms. Specialist trained public health staff review this information and if necessary, contact the patient's doctor, and sometimes the patient, to provide advice about disease control and to complete the collection of information.

All information is held confidentially in order to protect the patient's privacy. Both the NSW and Commonwealth Privacy Acts only release/disclose patient information where it is lawfully required or authorised.

Management is required to notify the local Public Health Unit (PHU) by phone ((07) 4433 6900) 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:

- 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 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.

#### 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
- 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 when two or more children or staff have a sudden onset of diarrhoea or vomiting in a 2 day period. (NSW Government- Health 2019)

#### A Nominated Supervisor/ Responsible person will ensure:

- A hygienic environment is promoted and maintained.
- Cleaning charts are completed each day and signed by the Educators.
- Children are supported in their understanding of health and hygiene throughout the daily program and routine.
- Educators and Staff are aware of relevant immunisation guidelines for children and themselves.
- Information is collected on enrolment and maintained regarding each child's immunisation status, and any medical conditions.
- Families are provided with relevant sourced materials and information on infectious diseases, health and hygiene including:
  - The current QLD Immunisation Schedule.

- Exclusion guidelines in the event of an infectious illness at the Service for children that 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 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.
- That an illness record form is completed no later than 24 hours of an illness occurring.
- All educators are mindful and maintain confidentiality of individual children's medical circumstances.
- Children's enrolment records are updated with regards to immunisation as required, (i.e. as children reach age milestones for immunisation), or at least twice a year.
- Staff are advised of the recommended immunisations for people working with children.
- Current records of staff immunisation status are retained and educators are familiar with procedures for exclusion of educators as well as children in the event of an infectious illness.
- To provide opportunities for educators to source pertinent up to date information on the prevention of infectious diseases, and maintaining health and hygiene from trusted sources
- To notify and implement the advice of the health department, or local health unit regarding Infectious Diseases as required
- That opportunities for staff, children, and families to have access to health professionals by organising visits/guest speakers to attend the service to confirm best practice are provided.
- Children do not attend the Service if they are unwell. If a child has been sick they must be well for 24hrs before returning to the Service. For example, if a child is absent due to illness or is 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 if families provide a doctor's certificate/clearance certifying that the child is no longer contagious and is in good health.
- To complete the register of illness and/or document incidents of infectious diseases. Some diseases require your state authority to be notified.
- Cloths are colour coded so that a separate cloth is used for floors, bathroom, art and craft and meal surfaces.
- Toys and equipment that are hard to clean will be washed with detergent and air-dried in sunlight.
- 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 at the same time as dishes). All toys and equipment that have been cleaned will be recorded on the toy cleaning register.
- A 'Dummy Basket' is located by the sign in sheet that requires all children that use a dummy to place the dummy in the basket in a 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 Checklist.
- Furnishings, fabric tablecloths and pillowcases are to be laundered at the end of each week and hung out to dry. This will be increased to every Monday, Wednesday and Friday during winter months or during an outbreak of illness in the Service.
- Floor surfaces will be cleaned on a daily basis after each meal and at the end of each day.
- Toilets/bathrooms will be cleaned in the middle of the day, the end of the day and whenever needed throughout the day using disinfectant and paper towel.
- Disposable paper towel and disinfectant are used to clean bodily fluids off beds, floors, bathrooms, etc.
- Pregnant staff do not change nappies or assist in toileting or cleaning up toileting accidents to prevent unexpected cross contamination and risk to pregnancy.

#### 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.
- 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.
- Families are advised that they will must alert the Service if their child is diagnosed with an Infectious Illness.
- 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.
- Consideration is given to the combination of children to decrease the risk of attaining an infectious illness when planning the routines/program of the day.
- They adhere to the Services health and hygiene policy including:
  - Hand washing
  - Daily cleaning of the Service
  - Wearing gloves (particularly when in direct contact with bodily fluids)
  - Appropriate and hygienic handling and preparation of food
- They maintain up to date knowledge with respect to Health and Safety through on-going professional development opportunities.
- Children will rest 'head to toe' to avoid cross infection while resting or sleeping.
- Children are not to share beds at the same time
- Warm soapy water is used to clean the beds after each use
- Any toy that is mouthed by a child is to be placed immediately in the toys basket located on the top shelf in the nappy change area to be washed with warm soapy water at the end of the day. All washable toys out on display for the children are to be washed on a weekly basis to decrease the risk of cross contamination and recorded with the date and a signature as evidence.
- That all play dough is made fresh every week. If there is an outbreak of vomiting and/or diarrhoea, or any other contagious communicable disease, play dough is to be discarded at the end of each day and a new batch made each day for the duration of the outbreak. Children are to wash their hands before and after using the play dough.
- That mops used for toilet accidents are to be soaked in disinfectant in a bucket in the laundry sink and then air-dried.
- That a weekly clean will be carried out on other surfaces that may transmit germs such as doorknobs, low shelving, etc. This will be increased if an outbreak has been recorded in the Service
- That if a child has a toileting accident, the items will be 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.

#### Families will:

- exclude their child from care if they display symptoms of an infectious illness or disease or in the event of a vaccine preventable disease occurs in the Service and their child is not immunised fully.
- 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

## 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\\_0.pdf](https://www.health.gov.au/sites/default/files/national-immunisation-strategy-for-australia-2019-2024_0.pdf)

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.*

*Public Health Amendment Act 2017*

Public Health Regulation 2012

Public Health and Wellbeing Regulations 2019 Victoria

Revised National Quality Standard. (2018).

## Review

Policy Reviewed	Modifications	Next Review Date
May 2017	Minor changes made to policy and terminology to ensure best practice	June 2018
<b>October 2017</b>	Updated the references to comply with the revised National Quality Standard	August 2018
<b>January 2020</b>	Updated the opening statement, included the 'Related Policy' section and made general improvements to grammar to support further understanding and implementation.	January 2021
<b>March 2020</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Implementation information added regarding infectious illnesses</li> <li>Added mandatory reporting to public health unit information</li> <li>Rearranged some content into new headings- Prevention Strategies</li> <li>deleted repeated items</li> <li>New sources added</li> </ul>	January 2021