

# Infectious Diseases Policy and Procedure

## Introduction

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 and general hygiene;
- exclusion of ill children, educators and other staff; and
- immunisation.

## Policy

Our education and care service 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; and
- 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.

## Eligibility

The policy applies to all staff employed in Learning Links Education and Care Services.

## Responsible

Responsibilities for the policy are:

Who	Responsible for...
Approved Provider	<p>Ensure the service operates in line with the Education and Care Services National Law and National Regulations 2011 including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 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)).</li> <li>• 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)).</li> <li>• Ensuring that information from the Department of Health about the recommended minimum exclusion periods is available at the service, is available to all stakeholders and is adhered to in the event of an outbreak of an infectious disease.</li> <li>• 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 education and care service is suffering from one of the following vaccine preventable diseases:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Diphtheria</li> <li>- Mumps</li> <li>- Poliomyelitis</li> <li>- Haemophilus influenzae Type b (Hib)</li> <li>- Meningococcal disease</li> <li>- Rubella ("German measles")</li> <li>- Measles</li> <li>- Pertussis ("whooping cough")</li> <li>- Tetanus</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Ensuring that a child who is not immunised against a vaccine preventable disease does not attend the service when an infectious disease is diagnosed, does not return until there are no more occurrences of that disease at the service and the recommended minimum exclusion period (refer to Definitions)</li> </ul>

	<p>has ceased (Regulation 85(2) of the Public Health and Wellbeing Regulations 2009).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Notifying the Regulatory Authority within 24 hours of a serious incident including when a child becomes ill at the service and medical attention is sought while the child is attending the service.</li> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• Keep informed about current legislation, information, research and best practice.</li> <li>• Ensuring that any changes to the exclusion table or immunisation schedule are communicated to staff and parents/guardians in a timely manner.</li> </ul>
Nominated Supervisor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• Establishing good hygiene and infection control procedures and ensuring that they are adhered to by everyone at the service.</li> <li>• Ensuring the exclusion requirements for infectious diseases are adhered to as per the recommended minimum exclusion periods (refer to Definitions), notifying the Approved Provider and parents/guardians of any outbreak of infectious disease at the service, and displaying this information in a prominent position.</li> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• 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, until there are no more occurrences of that disease and the exclusion period has ceased.</li> <li>• Requesting that parents/guardians notify the service if their child has, or is suspected of having, an infectious disease or infestation.</li> <li>• Providing information and resources to families to assist in the identification and management of infectious diseases and infestations.</li> <li>• Maintaining confidentiality.</li> <li>• 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.</li> </ul>
Educators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure that any children that are suspected of having an infectious illness are responded to and their health and emotional needs are supported at all times.</li> <li>• Implement appropriate health and safety procedures, when tending to ill children.</li> <li>• Ensure that families are aware of the need to collect their children as soon as practicable to ensure the child's comfort and wellbeing.</li> <li>• Maintain their own immunisation status and advise the Approved Provider/Nominated Supervisor of any updates to their immunisation status.</li> <li>• Provide varied opportunities for children to engage in learning experiences about hygiene practices, including routine opportunities and intentional practice.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Observing signs and symptoms of children who may appear unwell and informing the Nominated Supervisor.</li> <li>• Monitoring any symptoms in children that may indicate the presence of an infectious disease.</li> <li>• Maintaining confidentiality at all times.</li> </ul>
Families	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Providing immunisation documentation upon enrolment and as administered.</li> <li>• Keep their children at home if they are unwell or have an excludable infectious disease.</li> <li>• Keep 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.</li> <li>• Inform the service if their child has an infectious disease or has been in contact with a person who has an infectious disease.</li> </ul>

### 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 toys and other items that children are likely to put in their mouths, after use;
- raking sandpits regularly and securely covering them when not in use;
- disposing of soiled items in a container that is inaccessible to children;
- washing rubbish bins and nappy bins regularly; and
- actively promote handwashing and other hygiene practices with children and families.

### Exclusion of Ill Children, Educators and Other Staff

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 [www.nhmrc.gov.au](http://www.nhmrc.gov.au)

### 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 vaccinated 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.

Refer to the Immunisation Policy for further details.

### Fever

For children, a temperature over 38°C 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.

In order to prevent the spread of infection and ensure wellbeing, children with a temperature above 38°C will be excluded from the service.

### Procedure for responding to a suspected infectious disease

Step	Action
1	Educators to respond to any child that is suspected of having an infectious disease/illness by following the first aid response procedure (see First Aid Policy).
2	Follow appropriate health, hygiene and infection control procedures.
3	Contact the child's family and advise them to collect their child as soon as practicable to ensure the child's comfort and to seek medical advice about their child's illness.
4	Notify the nominated supervisor and/or responsible person of the nature of the suspected illness or infectious disease.
5	Document the observed symptoms of the suspected infectious disease on an Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Record. Provide a copy of this record for parents/guardians to review/ask any questions. Request parents/guardians sign and date the original copy of the record. The original signed copy will be retained by the service and stored on the child's file.
6	A copy of the Medication Administration Record will be provided to the child's family to review, sign and date (if medication was administered to the child) as a first aid response.
7	Document the illness on the Illness/Incident Register.

### Procedure for reporting a confirmed infectious disease

Step	Action
1	Notify all parents/guardians of each child at the service as soon as is practicable that there has been an occurrence of an infectious disease (Regulation 88(2)).
2	Display and distribute information from the Department of Health about the recommended minimum exclusion periods for the infectious disease, and risk management strategies ensuring it is available to all families/stakeholders and is adhered to.
3	Notify families with unimmunized children, to ensure they follow the guidelines in this policy for children who are not immunized.
4	Notify the local public health unit (PHU) by phone (call 1300 066 055) as soon as possible if a child enrolled is suffering from <b>one of the vaccine preventable diseases</b> (detailed above).
5	Notify the Regulatory Authority within 24 hours of a serious incident including when a child becomes ill at the service and medical attention is sought for the illness while the child is attending the service.

### Related documents and resources

#### Links to National Quality Standards

Quality Area 2: Children's Health and Safety – Standards 2.1, 2.1.1, 2.1.2, 2.2  
 Quality Area 6: Collaborative Partnerships with Families and Communities – Standard 6.1, 6.2

#### Links to Early Years Learning Framework

- 3.2 Children take increasing responsibility for their own health and physical wellbeing
- 4.3 Children transfer and adapt what they have learned from one context to another

#### Related Legislation

Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010: Section 167  
 Education and Care Services National Regulations: Regulations 78-80  
 Work Health and Safety Act 2011  
 Public Health Regulation 2012  
 Public Health Act 2010  
 Public Health Amendment (Vaccination of Children Attending Child Care Facilities) Bill 2013  
 Australian New Zealand Food Standards Code (FSANZ)

### References and Resources

Immunisation Toolkit – [www.health.nsw.gov.au/immunisation/Publications/immunisation-enrolment-toolkit.pdf](http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/immunisation/Publications/immunisation-enrolment-toolkit.pdf)

◁ NSW Immunisation Schedule 1 July 2018 – [www.health.nsw.gov.au/immunisation/Pages/schedule-changes.aspx](http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/immunisation/Pages/schedule-changes.aspx)

◁ Immunisation - [www.humanservices.gov.au/individuals/enablers/immunisation-requirements/35396](http://www.humanservices.gov.au/individuals/enablers/immunisation-requirements/35396)

◁ Vaccination Q&A – [www.health.nsw.gov.au/immunisation/pages/provider\\_qa.aspx](http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/immunisation/pages/provider_qa.aspx)

◁ Staying Healthy: Preventing infectious diseases in early childhood education and care services 5th edition July 2015 - [www.nhmrc.gov.au](http://www.nhmrc.gov.au)

◁ Exclusion period for infectious diseases table – [www.nhmrc.gov.au](http://www.nhmrc.gov.au)

◁ AIR-Immunisation History Statement - Australian Immunisation Register

◁ Public Health Amendment (Vaccination of Children Attending Child Care Facilities) Bill 2013; Public Health regulation 2012; Public Health Act 2010 - Parliament of NSW - [www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/bills/Pages/bill-details.aspx?pk=737](http://www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/bills/Pages/bill-details.aspx?pk=737)

◁ Public health and Wellbeing Amendment (No Jab, no Play) Act, 2015 - [www.legislation.vic.gov.au/Domino/Web\\_Notes/LDMS/PubStatbook.nsf/51dea49770555ea6ca256da4001b90cd/57107BCF7DB93B04CA257EEB000B924A/\\$FILE/15-055aa%20authorised.pdf](http://www.legislation.vic.gov.au/Domino/Web_Notes/LDMS/PubStatbook.nsf/51dea49770555ea6ca256da4001b90cd/57107BCF7DB93B04CA257EEB000B924A/$FILE/15-055aa%20authorised.pdf)

NSW Health Disease Notification  
<https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/infectious/pages/notification.aspx#3>

### Links to:

- Cleaning and Maintaining the Environment Policy & Procedure
- Hygiene and Infection Control Policy & Procedure
- Immunisation Policy
- Nappy Changing and Toileting Policy and Procedure
- Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Policy and Procedure
- First Aid Policy and Procedure
- Medication Administration Policy and Procedure

### Document control

This table outlines the control details for this document.

Element	Details
Document Name	Infectious Diseases Policy and Procedure
Document Owner	Melissa Murphy
Version Number	1.0
Effective Date	28 February 2019
Review Date	28 February 2021
Authorisation	Di Peacock-Smith