

Infectious Illness Policy

Preschool



Introduction	<p>Learning Links Preschool is committed to the safety and wellbeing of staff and clients. The Preschool has established infection control protocols and ways of working to reduce the risk of any outbreaks of infectious disease/s including COVID-19 in our service.</p>
Outcome Area	<p>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</p>
Eligibility	<p>This Policy applies to all Preschool staff employed by Learning Links. The term staff also applies to students, and volunteers.</p>
Policy	<p>The Preschool is committed to providing a safe and healthy environment for all children, staff, families and any external stakeholders.</p> <p>This policy provides staff and families with information on our infection control strategies including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responding to the needs of the child or adult who presents with symptoms of an infectious disease • Complying with NSW Department of Health guidance in relation to infectious diseases; • Providing up-to-date information and resources for families and staff regarding protection of all children from infectious diseases.
Strategies	<p>Whilst it is not possible to prevent the spread of all infections and diseases, minimising the risk is managed by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effective hygiene practices; • Exclusion of children, educators and staff with an infectious illness; and • Immunisation. <p><u>Effective Hygiene</u></p> <p>Our service maintains and promotes effective hygiene practices including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Correct handwashing technique; • Using standard precautions when handling blood, all body fluids, dried blood and other body substances. • Cleaning toys and other items after use that children are likely to put in their mouths, • Raking sandpits daily and securely covering them when not in use; • Disposing of soiled items in a container that is inaccessible to children; • Actively promoting handwashing and other hygiene practices with children and families. <p><u>Exclusions of ill children, educators and other staff</u></p> <p>To prevent the spread of infectious diseases through contact, Preschool adheres to , the exclusion period table, published by the National Health and Medical Research Council www.nhmrc.gov.au, please also refer to: www.healthdirect.gov.au/schoolexclusion-for-health-reasons</p> <p><u>Immunisation</u></p> <p>Our service's practice is guided by our state/territory's department of health in relation to child immunisations. We will share resources and information from government bodies and recognised authorities to support families access information regarding immunisations.</p>

Strategies

Parents who wish to enrol their child are required to provide at the time of enrolment their child's immunisation status. This may be an AIR Immunisation History Statement or Form based on regulatory requirements of NSW Public Health Act.

Preschool cannot enrol children that do not have the following;

- Proof of vaccination for their age,
- Has a medical exemption form or
- Has a catch up schedule using the Centrelink Form

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 for a minimum of 24 hours following staff recording a temperature reading that is over 38°C.

Types of infections that lead to fever include:

- Viral illness such as cold, flu, COVID-19 or gastroenteritis
- Bacterial illness such as ear infections, pneumonia, or urine infections.

For further information please refer to:

http://raisingchildren.net.au/articles/fever_a.html

Vomiting or Diarrhoea

There are many causes of diarrhoea and vomiting, the most common being viral. Other symptoms such as headache, fever, generalised aches and pains and tiredness may also be present.

Often this is referred to as [gastroenteritis or gastro](#).

Symptoms usually begin about one to two days after exposure to the source of the infection.

Gastro is also highly infectious. Gastroenteritis causing germs can survive on contaminated surfaces for up to 24 hours or longer. Vomiting usually settles quickly but diarrhoea may last up to seven days.

In order to prevent the spread of infection and ensure wellbeing, children who have 2 incidents of vomiting or diarrhoea at preschool on the same day, will be excluded from the service for a minimum of 24 hours.

Covid 19 Virus

Early Childhood Education and Care settings at a higher risk of COVID-19 transmission due to the close interactions between people and the amount of time spent in settings that are often indoors.

Children are less likely to have serious illness from COVID-19, but they can still transmit the virus to others and therefore it is important to follow the health advice and consider your individual circumstances.

If a child attending the preschool contracts covid 19 virus or comes into contact with a person with the virus, Preschool will follow the NSW Department of Health process and guidelines.

Families, educators and NSW Department of Education will be notified as per any other infectious illness notification process.

Strategy for responding to a suspected infectious illness.

Educators must respond to a child that is suspected of having an infectious illness.

Children who have 2 or more symptoms e.g. Vomiting, fever and blisters/fever and green runny nose/ diarrhoea and lethargy. Parents are required to collect their child from the preschool ASAP.

<p>Strategies</p>	<p>Parents with children with 2 or more symptoms will be required to obtain a medical certificate to return to the preschool.</p> <p>Once a medical practitioner has confirmed an infectious illness, the preschool must be notified ASAP and advise all preschool families.</p> <p>If the infectious illness is one of the following notifiable illnesses, parents are required to advise the Preschool immediately. Legislation states that the Preschool must contact the NSW Public Health Unit (9382 8333) immediately to advise them of the illness:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whooping Cough • Polio • Measles • Mumps • Rubella • Meningococcal B OR C • Diphtheria • Influenza Type b (Hib) • Tetanus <p>Preschool also required to contact the NSW Public Health Unit if a child is suspected of having come into contact with a person who has one of these vaccine preventable diseases.</p> <p>Notify the Regulatory Authority within 24 hours of a Notifiable Illness via the NQAT Portal.</p> <p><u>Exclusion Periods</u></p> <p>The Public Health Unit will be advised as soon as the Preschool is aware that a child or educator has contracted a vaccine-preventable disease and any directions will be followed accordingly. Any child or educator that is not fully immunised may be excluded for a period of time if there is a case of a vaccine preventable disease at the Preschool, or if the child or educator has been in contact with someone outside the Service who has a vaccine preventable disease. We will respond to the Exclusion Periods recommended by the National Health and Medical Research Council and act on any directions provided by Public Health Unit.</p> <p>It is the responsibility of families to inform the Service that their child has come into contact with someone with a vaccine preventable or infectious disease.</p>
<p>Roles and Responsibilities</p>	<p><u>Approved Provider</u></p> <p>Ensure the service operates in line with the Education and Care Services National Law and National Regulations including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 any directions provided by Public Health Unit are followed regarding the possible exclusion of a child or educator who is not immunised against a vaccine preventable disease. • Confirm the regulatory authority has been contacted within 24 hours of a notifiable illness. • Keeping informed about current legislation, information, research and best practice. • Ensuring that any changes to the exclusion table or immunisation schedule have been communicated to preschool stakeholders <p><u>Nominated Supervisor or Responsible Person</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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

Roles and Responsibilities

the service is notified of the occurrence as soon as is possible (Regulation 88(2)).

- Ensuring that the parent/ guardian and Public Health Unit are notified as soon as possible, after being made aware that an enrolled child has one of the following vaccine preventable diseases, or is reasonably suspected of having come into contact with a person who has one of these vaccine preventable diseases:
 - a) Pertussis, or
 - b) Poliomyelitis, or
 - c) Measles, or
 - d) Mumps, or
 - e) Rubella, or
 - f) Meningococcal B&C, or
 - g) Diphtheria, or
 - h) Haemophilus influenza Type b (Hib), or
 - i) Tetanus.
- Ensuring that information from the Public Health Unit about the recommended minimum exclusion periods is displayed at the service.
- Ensuring that appropriate and current information and resources are provided to staff and parents/guardians regarding the identification and management of infectious illness.
- Contacting the parents/guardians of a child suspected of suffering from an infectious or vaccine- preventable disease, and requesting the child be collected as soon as possible.
- Notifying a parent/guardian or authorised emergency contact person when a symptom/s 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 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
- Advising the parents/guardians of a child who is not fully immunised on enrolment that they may be required to keep their child at home when an infectious disease is diagnosed at the service, dependent on directions from the Public Health Unit.
- Maintaining confidentiality at all times.
- Providing relevant sourced materials to families.
- Ensuring that an Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness record is completed or no later than 24 hours of the illness occurring.

Early Childhood 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 procedure daily
- Providing varied opportunities for children to engage in hygiene practices,
- Observing signs and symptoms of children who may appear unwell, and informing the Nominated Supervisor/ Responsible Person.
- Maintaining confidentiality at all times.

Families

- Providing Immunisation documentation upon enrolment
- Keeping children at home if they are unwell
- Keeping children at home when an infectious disease has been diagnosed at the service if their child is not fully immunised.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Informing the service if their child has an infectious disease or has been in contact with a person who has an infectious disease.
Related Legislation, Standards, Documents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education and Care Services National Law Act: Section 167 • Education and Care Services National Regulations: Regulations 85-87, 88, 162, 168(2)(c) • Work Health and Safety Act • National Quality Framework
Review	<p>This policy and guidelines will be reviewed every two years and will incorporate current information, legislation and feedback as required.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>This policy is owned by: Preschool</p> <p>Policy updated on: 17 August 2023 Policy updated by: Director, Preschool Version number: 2.0 This version approved by: GM, Service Quality, Risk and Compliance This document can be viewed on: Learning Links Intranet, Learning Links Preschool Website</p> <p>Policy due for review: 17 August 2025</p>