

Dealing with Infectious Diseases Policy

Policy Statement

We aim to provide a safe and hygienic environment that will promote the health of the children. As the care needs of a sick child cannot be met without dramatically reducing the general level of supervision of the other children, or risking other children's health, parents will be asked not to bring sick children to the service and to collect children who are unwell. All care and consideration will be given to the child who becomes ill while at the service. Children with infectious diseases will be excluded from the service for the period recommended by the Department of Health.

Links Education and Care Centres National Regulations 2018, National Quality Standard 2018

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NQS	Quality Area 2 – Children Health and Safety

Procedure

- A child or adult will be considered sick and unfit to attend the service if he/she:
 - has a fever over 38 degrees
 - is crying constantly from discomfort
 - vomits or has diarrhoea
 - is in need of one to one care
 - has an infectious disease
 - Has extreme, continuous bouts of coughing
 - His unable to participate in the activities of the day.
- If a child is unwell at home parents will be asked not to bring the child to the service.
- If a staff member is unwell then they should refrain from coming to work. Staff should contact the service as soon as possible to inform them that they are unable to attend work.
- If a child becomes ill or develops symptoms at the centre the parents will be contacted to collect the child. If parents are unable to be contacted then the emergency contacts will be contacted.
- If a staff member becomes ill or develops symptoms at the service they can return home if able or organise for someone to take them home. The Staff will organise a suitable replacement as soon as possible.
- The child who is ill will be comforted, cared for and placed in a quiet isolated area with adult supervision until the child's parent or other authorised adult takes them home.
- During a fever other methods will be employed to bring the child's temperature down until the parents arrive or help is sought. Such methods include: provision of fluids, tepid sponges administered. If a child's temperature is very high, cannot be brought down and parents cannot be contacted, the child's doctor will be contacted and permission sought to give paracetamol. If the situation becomes serious for the child an ambulance will be called.

Infectious Diseases

- Educators are informed of the symptoms of excludable illnesses and disease and of infection control through staff meetings and professional development, and are provided with educational materials. They are alert to the signs of illness in children and respond accordingly. The signs include:
 - severe, persistent or prolonged coughing
 - breathing difficulties (e.g. noisy, wheezy)
 - yellowish skin or eyes
 - irritated eyes, eye lining red, pus from eyes
 - unusual spots or rashes
 - vomiting and/or diarrhoea
 - temperature over 38 degrees Celsius
 - behaviour exhibited that is not 'normal' for the child (e.g. sleeping, being unable to participate in the daily activities as usual).

- The service's roster ensures sufficient educators with first aid qualifications are on site at all times children are present.

- All instances of illnesses and infectious diseases (children and staff) are recorded in the Illness and Infectious Disease Register so that they may be tracked and any spread minimised. The Register is kept in the main office.

- Educators intentionally teach children health and safety practices to prevent the spread of contagious diseases.

- The service strictly adheres to the National Health and Medical Research Council's recommended minimum exclusion periods for infectious conditions. See attachment. This will also include the exclusion of siblings from coming into the service when unwell with an infectious disease. If a child arrives at the service unwell the family will be asked to leave the centre with the unwell child. Educators can assist with escorting the enrolled child out of the service to a family member if required.

- If an outbreak of an infectious disease occurs in the service, parents are informed verbally and by notices displayed throughout the service. Information given to parents will include the nature of the illness, symptoms, incubation and infectious periods and the service's exclusion requirements for the illness.

- The service maintains a Register of Non-Immunised Children and a Register of Non-Immunised Staff. Where an outbreak is a vaccine preventable disease, the service will notify the relevant health authority, and will follow that authority's recommended guidelines and directives. Children and staff who are not immunised may be excluded from the service for the duration of the outbreak.

- A doctor's clearance certificate will be required for all infectious diseases such as measles, mumps diphtheria, hepatitis A, polio, tuberculosis, typhoid and paratyphoid before returning to the service.

- The Co-ordinator will follow the recommendations as outlined in the NSW Public Health Department document. See attachment for exclusion periods

- Parents will be informed about the occurrence of an infectious disease in the service ensuring that the individual rights of staff or children are not infringed upon.

- All staff will ensure proper hygiene practices are carried out as outlined in the Hygiene policy.

- Under the provisions of the Public Health Act 1991 and Regulation, doctors, hospital chief executives (or general managers), pathology laboratories, directors of childcare centres and school principals are required to notify the following diseases:
 - Diphtheria
 - Mumps
 - Poliomyelitis
 - Tetanus

- Measles
- Pertussis (whooping cough)
- Rubella (german measles)

Notification requested by phone, if possible.

Notification Mechanisms

Infectious diseases:

- Infectious diseases should be directed to the local Public Health Unit, and should be notified within 24 hours of diagnosis.
- All infectious diseases notification forms are available from Public Health Units.

COVID-19

COVID-19 is transmitted from someone who is infected with the virus to others in close contact through contaminated droplets spread by coughing or sneezing or by contact with contaminated hands or surfaces. According to the Department of Health, the time of exposure to the virus and when symptoms first occur is anywhere from 2-14 days.

Symptoms can range from a mild illness, similar to a cold or flu, to pneumonia. People with COVID-19 may experience:

- fever
- flu-like symptoms such as coughing, sore throat and fatigue
- shortness of breath

Hygiene practices

Our Service will ensure signs and posters remind employees and visitors of the risks of COVID-19 and the measures that are necessary to stop its spread including hand washing and hand rub procedures and information about COVID-19. These will also be communicated to families through email, newsletters and social media. Alcohol-based hand sanitiser will be kept out of reach of young children and only available for adults to use. If parents decide to apply this to their child, they must supervise the child to avoid rubbing it into their eyes or a child swallowing the gel/liquid. Our Service will supply disposable tissues and have bins with plastic liners available in several locations for disposing used items.

Implement effective hygiene measures

The national campaign *Help Stop The Spread and Stay Healthy*, launched by the Australian Government has emphasised that effective handwashing is a vital strategy to help reduce the spread of the COVID-19 virus. Handwashing with soap and water for at least 20 seconds whenever you cough, sneeze or blow your nose, prepare food or eat, touch your face or use the toilet is recommended.

Our Service will adhere to National Regulation requirements and Government guidelines to ensure all educators, children, families and visitors to the Service implement best practice.

Our Service will ensure:

- all employees, parents, children and visitors must wash their hands with soap and water or use the alcohol-based hand sanitiser provided upon arrival to the Service
- hands must be thoroughly dried using disposal paper and disposed of in the bin provided
- disposable tissues must be used to wipe noses, eyes or mouths and disposed of in the bin provided immediately after use
- hands must be washed following the use of tissues
- hands must be washed thoroughly using soap and water before and after using the toilet

- cough and sneeze etiquette must be used- cover your cough and sneeze with your hand or elbow
- educators and staff must adhere to our *Handwashing Policy* at all times
- children are supervised when washing hands
- educators and staff must adhere to effective food preparation and food handling procedures
- educators will wash their hands or use alcohol-based sanitiser, before wearing gloves and wash their hands after wearing gloves
- educators and staff must adhere to our *Health and Safety Policy* for cleaning and disinfecting surfaces and equipment:-
 - (such as toys, puzzles, outdoor toys, bedding, playdough etc) as per *Staying healthy: Preventing infectious diseases in early childhood education and care services* recommendations
 - equipment, resources and surfaces including high-touch surfaces- taps, door handles, light switches, toys, keyboards and laptops/iPads will be cleaned more frequently as required using detergent and water followed by disinfectant.

Suspected cases of COVID-19 at our Service

As per our *Illness Policy* we reserve the right to refuse a child into care if they:

- are unwell and unable to participate in normal activities or require additional attention
- have had a temperature/fever, or vomiting in the last 24 hours
- have had diarrhoea in the last 48 hours
- have been given medication for a temperature prior to arriving at the Service
- if we have reasonable grounds to believe that a child has a contagious or infectious disease (this includes COVID-19)

If your child becomes ill whilst at the Service, educators/staff will respond to their individual symptoms of illness and provide comfort and care. The child will be cared for in an area that is separated from other children in the service to await pick up from their parent/carer.

Educators will take your child's temperature. If the temperature is above 38°C you will be contacted immediately and required to collect your child within 30 minutes. If you are unable to collect your child, an emergency contact person will be contacted, and they must collect your child within 30 minutes.

Educators will attempt to lower your child's temperature by:

- removing excessive clothing (shoes, socks, jumpers)
- encourage your child to take small sips of water
- move your child to a quiet area where they can rest whilst being supervised

Educators will wear disposable gloves and a face mask to avoid possible contamination. All items/resources touched by the child will be cleaned and disinfected to avoid possible cross contamination.

Educators will keep accurate records of the child's temperature, time taken, time parent/s were contacted, staff member's name and time of collection.

All information will be recorded in our *Incident, Illness, Accident Record*. Parents will be required to sign this record upon collection of their child.

Parents are reminded to ensure their contact details are current and emergency contact details are updated if required.

Our Service also reserves the right to prevent employees, parents, family members or visitors to enter our premises if the Approved Provider or Nominated Supervisor suspects instances of COVID-19.

Notification

The Approved Provider or Nominated Supervisor is mandated by law to notify the Public Health Unit or Health Information hotline on 1800 020 080 of any confirmed or suspected cases of COVID-19. In addition, the Approved Provider must also notify the Regulatory Authority in their state or territory within 24 hours.

Comments:

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