

Dealing with Infectious Diseases Policy and Procedure

Quality Area 2



Purpose

The service is committed to providing an environment that fosters the growth, independence and development of children while protecting their health, safety and well-being. This includes the implementation of policies and procedures for dealing with infectious diseases.

The purpose of this policy is to protect children, staff, volunteers, visitors and families that attend the service by preventing and minimising the spread of infectious diseases.

Scope

This policy applies to children, families, staff, volunteers and visitors at this service.

Background

Infectious diseases are common in children and adults may also be susceptible. Children are at a greater risk of exposure to infections in a children's service than at home due to the amount of time spent with a higher number of children.

Principles

The Service is committed to:

- providing a safe and healthy environment for all children, staff and any other persons attending the service.
- responding to the needs of the child or adult who presents with symptoms of an infectious disease or infestation while attending the service.
- adhering to evidence-based practice in infection prevention and control procedures.
- preventing the spread of infectious and vaccine-preventable diseases.
- complying with the current exclusion schedules and guidelines set by the Department of Health (DH), and the advice of the Australian Health Protection Principal Committee (AHPPC), the Victorian Chief Health Officer and DH
- providing up-to-date information and resources to families and staff regarding the protection of all children from infectious diseases and blood-borne viruses, management of infestations and immunisation programs.

Roles and responsibilities

The Approved Provider will:

- ensure compliance with any requirements or advice from the DH regarding infectious diseases.
- ensure the implementation of rigorous hygienic practices at the service, such as effective hand washing, cough and sneeze etiquette, appropriate use of gloves, the exclusion of children and staff when they are unwell or displaying symptoms of an infectious disease or virus, effective environmental cleaning, requesting parents/guardians and visitors wash their hands upon arrival and departure at the service, adequate ventilation, and encouraging children and staff to see medical attention and testing if they show symptoms of an infectious disease or virus.
- ensure children being enrolled in sessional kindergarten are up to date with all vaccinations in line with the 'No Jab, No Play' legislation. Grace period provision of up to 16 weeks is available to families who meet the set criteria as outlined here <https://www.vic.gov.au/child-immunisation>
- recommend that children being enrolled in outside school hours care are up to date with all vaccinations.
- strongly recommend to staff that they keep up to date with all immunisations including yearly influenza vaccinations.
- collect on enrolment an Immunisation History Statement for each child, and then ensure the record is maintained regarding the child's immunisation status (AIR) and any medical conditions.

- follow all advice and instructions from DH regarding recommended exclusion periods for children and staff who have been diagnosed with an infectious disease
- display at the front of the service, appropriate documentation and alerts for families in the case of a diagnosed infection disease at the centre, including information on the illness/disease, symptoms, infectious period and the exclusion period for those infected.
- in the case of a vaccine-preventable disease occurring in the service, exclude children who have not been fully immunised from care, and staff who have not been vaccinated from the workplace.
- request that children suffering from diarrhea stay away from the service for 48 hours after symptoms have ceased.
- report to the Public Health Unit (PHU) of DH as soon as possible if they are aware that a child enrolled at the service is suffering from diphtheria, mumps, poliomyelitis, haemophilus influenza, meningococcal disease, rubella (german measles), measles, pertussis (whooping cough) or tetanus, or any outbreak of 2 or more people with gastrointestinal or respiratory illness.
- display wall charts on recommended immunisation schedules inside the service.
- ensure daily attendance records for staff, children and visitors are up to date at all times.
- ensure children are supported in their understanding of appropriate health and hygiene practices throughout the daily program and routine and have access to resources and tools to support this.
- provide families with access to relevant sourced materials and information on infectious diseases, health and hygiene, including the current National Immunisation Schedule, exclusion guidelines for infectious diseases and vaccine-preventable illnesses, and general advice and information regarding infectious diseases.
- ensure the confidentiality of an individual child's medical circumstances is maintained.
- provide opportunities for staff to source up-to-date information from relevant sources on the prevention of infectious diseases and maintaining health and hygiene
- facilitate opportunities for staff, children and families to have access to health professionals to visit the service to promote and confirm best practice.
- ensure completion of the register of Incident, Injury, Trauma, or Illness and document incidents of infectious diseases no later than 24 hours after an illness or infectious disease is confirmed in the service.
- ensure staff with either an infectious disease or diarrhea do not handle food for others or return to work until they have been free of symptoms for 48 hours.
- minimise any risk to any child or adult at the service with complex medical needs in the event of an outbreak of an infectious disease or virus, including making a risk assessment regarding the suitability of attendance at the service of the child or adult at this time.
- In the event an outbreak of headlice is suspected ensure the confidentiality, dignity and rights of the child are upheld and judgements are withheld.
- ensure parents/guardians are supported in the management and treatment of any outbreak of infestation, illness or virus with dignity, respect and without judgment.

Educators of the Service will:

- ensure that any child suspected of having an infectious disease is responded to with dignity and respect and that their health and emotional needs are supported at all times.
- ensure that any child suspected of having an infectious disease is isolated from other children and supervised whilst waiting for collection by a parent/guardian.
- ensure that appropriate health and safety procedures are implemented when treating unwell children.
- inform parents/guardians that their unwell child will need to be collected from the service as soon as practicable.
- ensure thorough cleaning and disinfection of all resources, equipment or items that may have been in contact with the child with a suspected illness.
- maintain their own immunisation status, health and wellbeing and inform the approved provider of any changes to their immunisation status, health and well-being.
- Notify the Approved Provider or Nominated Supervisor of any known pregnancy to provide support or reduce any potential exposure to outbreaks of disease that may cause harm to the baby or the pregnant person.
- Role model appropriate best practices of health and hygiene practices.
- Adhere to the health and hygiene policy

Families will:

- adhere to the service's restrictions or exclusion periods in the event of an outbreak of an infectious disease, virus or epidemic.
- adhere to the service's requirements on appropriate hand washing and health and hygiene procedures when attending the service.
- exclude their child from care if they display symptoms of an infectious disease, or in the event of a vaccine-preventable disease occurs in the service and their child is not fully immunised.

- Notify the service if their child is diagnosed with an infectious illness and adheres to the Staying Healthy in Child Care recommended exclusion period or if symptoms are no longer present.
- advise the service of their child's immunisation status by providing a current Immunisation History Statement for the service to copy and place in the child's file.
- advise the service when their child's medical management plan has been updated.
- adhere to the service's risk minimisation strategies if their child has complex medical needs in the event of an outbreak of an infectious disease or virus.

Induction and ongoing training

This policy will be accessible by service staff via the intranet and by families via the website. A hard copy of the policy will be available through the Service. Nominated supervisors are responsible for ensuring staff access to the policy and any supporting documents and undertake induction training prior to the policy being implemented. All service staff are responsible for understanding and complying with this policy and ongoing training will be provided using a range of learning platforms.

Monitoring, evaluation and review

Monitoring of compliance with this policy and the related procedure will be overseen by the policy owner. The review process for this policy will begin eight (8) weeks prior to the scheduled review date and include a consultation period with families, educators, compliance team and any other relevant stakeholders and will be facilitated by the Policy Officer.

All service staff will receive communication about any changes in or review of the policy or procedure. Training will be provided where required to ensure an understanding of the changes. Families will be notified of any changes 14 days prior to the implementation. Breaches of this policy will be dealt with in line with the MACSEYE Code of Conduct.

Related policies

- Administration of First Aid Policy
- Medical Conditions and Administration of Medication Policy
- Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy
- Enrolment and Orientation Policy
- Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Policy
- Emergency and Evacuation Policy

Legislative requirements

NATIONAL QUALITY STANDARDS (NQS)

Quality Area 2	Children's Health And Safety
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EDUCATION AND CARE SERVICES NATIONAL LAW ACT

Section 172	Offence to fail to display prescribed information
Section 174(2)(a)	Serious incident - any emergency for which emergency services attended

EDUCATION AND CARE SERVICES NATIONAL LAW REGULATIONS

Regulation 12	Meaning of serious incident
Regulation 77	Health, hygiene and safe food practices
Regulation 83	Staff members and family day care educators not to be affected by alcohol or drugs
Regulation 85	Incident, injury, trauma and illness policies and procedures
Regulation 86	Notification to parents of incident, injury, trauma and illness
Regulation 87	Incident, injury, trauma and illness record

EDUCATION AND CARE SERVICES NATIONAL LAW REGULATIONS

Regulation 88	Infectious diseases
Regulation 89	First aid kits
Regulation 90	Medical conditions policy
Regulation 92	Medication record
Regulation 93	Administration of medication
Regulation 162	Health information to be kept in enrolment record
Regulation 168	Education and care service must have policies and procedures
Regulation 170	Policies and procedures to be followed
Regulation 172(2)(g)	a notice stating that there has been an occurrence of an infectious disease at the premises
Regulation 173	Prescribed information to be displayed
Regulation 175(2)(c)	Prescribed information to be notified to the Regulatory Authority- (2) any circumstance arising at the service that poses a risk to the health, safety or wellbeing of a child or children attending the service

RELATED LEGISLATIONS

Family Assistance Legislation Amendment (Jobs for Families Child Care Package) Act 2017 (Cth)
Health Records Act 2001 (Vic)
Public Health & Wellbeing Amendment (No Jab No Play) Act 2015 (Vic)
Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004 (Vic)
Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014 (Vic)
Privacy Act 1988 (Cth)
Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008 (Vic)

Definitions

Term	Meaning
Adequate supervision	Means: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> an educator can respond immediately, particularly when a child is distressed or in a hazardous situation knowing where children are at all times and monitoring their activities actively and diligently.
Approved first aid qualifications	A qualification that includes training in the matters set out below, that relates to and is appropriate to children, and has been approved by ACECQA and published on the list of ACECQA's approved first aid qualifications and training. Matters are likely to include: emergency life support and cardiopulmonary resuscitation; convulsions; poisoning; respiratory difficulties; management of severe bleeding; injury and basic wound care; and administration of an auto-immune adrenalin device.
Approved provider	A person who holds a provider approval (National Law). A provider approval authorises a person to apply for one or more service approvals and is valid in all jurisdictions.
Education and care service premises	In relation to a centre-based service, means each place at which an education and care service operates or is to operate.
Infectious disease	A disease that is designated under a law of a relevant jurisdiction or by a health authority as a disease that would require a person with the disease to be excluded from an education and care service.
MACSEYE	Melbourne Archdiocese Catholic Early Years Education Ltd, a subsidiary of Melbourne Archdiocese Catholic Schools Ltd established to conduct early childhood education and care services.
National Law	Unless otherwise specified, the Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010 or, in Western Australia, the Education and Care Services National Law (WA) Act 2012. This applied

Term	Meaning
	law system sets a national standard for children’s education and care across Australia. See the ACECQA website for the Application Act or legislation that applies in each jurisdiction.
National Regulations	The Education and Care National Regulations. The National Regulations support the National Law by providing detail on a range of operational requirements for an education and care service.
Nominated supervisor	In relation to an education and care service, means a person who: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> is nominated by the approved provider of the service under Part 3 to be a nominated supervisor of that service; and unless the individual is the approved provider, has provided written consent to that nomination (National Law).
Person in day-to-day charge	A person is in day-to-day charge of an education and care service if: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the person is placed in day-to-day charge by the approved provider or a nominated supervisor of the service; and the person consents to the placement in writing (National Regulations). There are minimum requirements for the person in day-to-day charge.
Person with management or control	In relation to an education and care service, means: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> if the provider or intended provider of the service is a body corporate, an officer of the body corporate within the meaning of the Corporations Act 2001 of the Commonwealth who is responsible for managing the delivery of the education and care service; or if the provider of the service is an eligible association, each member of the executive committee of the association who has the responsibility, alone or with others, for managing the delivery of the education and care service; or if the provider of the service is a partnership, each partner who has the responsibility, alone or with others, for managing the delivery of the education and care service; or in any other case, a person who has the responsibility, alone or with others, for managing the delivery of the education and care service (National Law).

Policy information

Policy information			
Policy title:	Dealing with Infectious Diseases Policy	Version:	1.0
Authorised Executive:	Director, Quality, Safety and Compliance	Responsible Manager:	General Manager, OHS, Wellbeing and Child Safety
Approving authority:	Managing Director	Approval date:	6/9/2024
Effective date:	6/9/2024	Review date:	6/9/2025

Version control		
Version	Date	Changes
1.0	6/9/2024	Policy developed