

Dealing with Infectious Diseases

QA2 Health & Safety

Policy Statement

The Service maintains high standards of hygiene to minimise the potential for the spread of infectious diseases to children, educators, and families. If there is an occurrence of an infectious illness a parent or authorised contact of each child is notified as soon as practicable.

An individual with a known infectious disease or with symptoms of an infectious illness is excluded from the Service for the period recommended in Department of Health Guidelines.

Rationale

All children have the right to experience quality education and care in an environment that provides for their health, safety, and comfort. By implementing strict exclusion guidelines, infection control and hygiene procedures, we reduce the incidence of ill health for children, staff, and families. In addition to improving physical safety and comfort, reducing the incidence, and spread of infectious diseases provides children with the greatest opportunity to participate fully in our program. It also reduces the number of days impacted by illness for educators and families of children attending the Service.

Procedures

A current copy of the Department of Health Communicable Diseases Guidelines is to be kept by the Service. This document is utilised to determine exclusion requirements for individuals with an infectious illness.

It is the responsibility of a parent to notify the Service should a child be diagnosed with an infectious illness and to ensure the child does not return to the Service until well, and the required exclusion period has been complied with.

A parent may be required to supply a medical clearance from a medical practitioner before a child is allowed to return to care.

Immunisation

A record of each child's immunisation status must be obtained upon enrolment and maintained by the Service. Non-immunised children may be excluded from the Service if there is an outbreak of an infectious disease.

All educators to be advised upon employment of the recommendation to maintain their immunity to common childhood diseases, tetanus, and hepatitis through immunisation with their local health professional.

Infection Control

Children and educators are encouraged to adopt good personal hygiene procedures including:

- regular handwashing using correct technique;

- cough and sneeze etiquette; and
- toilet hygiene.

To assist in minimising the risk of cross infection and to provide a high level of infection control, the following practices are implemented:

- Standard precautions when handling blood, all body fluids, secretions and excretions, dried blood, and other body substances
- Covering open wounds with a waterproof dressing
- Cleaning toys and other items that children are likely to put in their mouths, after use.
- Raking sandpits often and/or securely covering them when not in use
- Disposing of soiled items in a container that is inaccessible to children.
- Washing rubbish bins and buckets regularly

Notifications

If there is an occurrence of infectious disease at the Service, a parent or authorised emergency contact of any child with a compromised immune system will be notified by telephone as soon as practicable.

If there is an occurrence of an infectious disease at the Service, notifications will be displayed and information regarding the illness made available to parents and any other individual entering the Service.

The Department of Health will be notified if any child attending the Service contracts a vaccine-preventable disease. The Nominated Supervisor follows the recommendations as always outlined by the Department of Health.

Exclusion

Non-immune children and educators will be excluded from the Service when there is an outbreak of a vaccine-preventable illness and required to remain away until the Service is deemed clear of the illness and the minimum exclusion period has passed.

Children, including siblings of children who attend the Service, and staff with diarrhoea, or vomiting related to illness, will be excluded for 24 hours after the symptoms have ceased or, in the case of diarrhoea, after a normal stool.

The decision to exclude or re-admit a child or staff member will be the responsibility of the Nominated Supervisor or Responsible Person, based on the child's symptoms, medical opinion and Department of Health guidelines for children who have an infectious disease or who have been exposed to an infectious disease.

The Service has the right to refuse care if concerns are held about the child's health. 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.

When deciding whether to exclude an enrolled child or other person who is suspected of suffering from an infectious disease, the supervising officer will have regard to the guidelines set out in the document, *Communicable Disease – Guidelines for Teachers, Child Care Workers, Local Government Authorities and Medical Practitioners 2017*.

When a Child is Ill at the Service

Where symptoms of an infectious illness present while a child attends the Service, or while a child is on an excursion from the Service, the child will be made comfortable as per the Service's policy entitled *Children who are Unwell*, and a parent or emergency contact will be notified and required to collect the child immediately.

References

- Australian Children's Education & Care Quality Authority [ACECQA]. (2018). *National Quality Standard*. Retrieved from <https://www.acecqa.gov.au/nqf/national-quality-standard>.
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- Australian Government National Health and Medical Research Council. (2012). *Staying Healthy, Preventing infectious diseases in early childhood education and care services*. (5th ed). Canberra, ACT: Commonwealth of Australia
- Department of Health Western Australia. (2017). *Communicable Diseases Guidelines for Teachers, Child Care Workers, Local Government Authorities and Medical Practitioners*.
- Government of Western Australia Department of Justice Parliamentary Counsel's Office. (2012). *Education and Care Services National Law*.
- Ministerial Council for Education, Early Childhood Development and Youth Affairs. (2011). *Education and Care Services National Regulations*.

Document History

Document Title: Dealing with Infectious Diseases – Policy & Procedures		
Content Owner	Catholic Education Western Australia	Document Author
Date Published January 2015	DOCUMENT VERSION V1.0	Early Years Learning and Care Team
Reviewed January 2015	Reviewed and edited content to align with requirements under the national regulations	Early Years Learning and Care Team
Reviewed September 2017	Reviewed and edited content to align with requirements under the national regulations	Early Years Learning and Care Team
Reviewed October 2018	Reviewed and edited content to align with requirements under the new national regulations	Early Years Learning and Care Team
Reviewed October 2019	Reviewed and edited content to align with requirements under the new national regulations	Early Years Learning and Care Team
Reviewed October 2020	Reviewed and edited content to align with requirements under the new national regulations	Early Years Learning and Care Team
Reviewed October 2021	Reviewed and edited content to align with requirements under the new national regulations	Early Years Learning and Care Team
Reviewed October 2022	Reviewed and edited content to align with requirements under the new national regulations	Early Years Learning and Care Team
Reviewed April 2023	Reviewed and edited content to align with requirements under the new national regulations	Early Years Learning and Care Team

Review date: April 2024