

DEALING WITH INFECTIOUS DISEASES POLICY

The spread of infections in the education and care environment is facilitated by microbial contamination of the environment, as well as the greater exposure to young children who are still developing hygienic behaviours and habits. Our Out of School Hours Care (OSHC) Service will minimise children's exposure to infectious diseases by adhering to all recommended guidelines from relevant authorities regarding the prevention of infectious diseases, promoting practices that reduce the transmission of infection, ensuring the exclusion of sick children and educators, supporting child immunisation, and implementing effective hygiene practices.

Our Service will provide up-to-date information and advice to parents, families and educators sourced from the Australian Government Department of Health, Australian Health Protection Principal Committee (AHPPC) and state Ministry of Health about infectious diseases as required. Recommendations from the Health Department will be strictly adhered to at all times.

NATIONAL QUALITY STANDARD (NQS)

QUALITY AREA 2: CHILDREN'S HEALTH AND SAFETY		
2.1.1	Wellbeing and comfort	Each child's wellbeing and comfort is provided for, including appropriate opportunities to meet each child's needs for sleep, rest and relaxation.
2.1.2	Health practices and procedures	Effective illness and injury management and hygiene practices are promoted and implemented.
2.2	Safety	Each child is protected.

EDUCATION AND CARE SERVICES NATIONAL REGULATIONS	
77	Health, hygiene and safe food practices
85	Incident, injury, trauma and illness policies and procedures
86	Notification to parents of incident, injury, trauma and illness
87	Incident, injury, trauma and illness record
88	Infectious diseases
90	Medical conditions policy
93	Administration of medication
162	Health information to be kept in enrolment record

168	Education and care service must have policies and procedures
170	Policies and procedures to be followed
172(2)(g)	a notice stating that there has been an occurrence of an infectious disease at the premises
173	Prescribed information to be displayed
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
EDUCATION AND CARE SERVICES NATIONAL LAW	
172	Offence to fail to display prescribed information

PURPOSE

Children encounter many other children and adults within the OSHC Service environment which can result in the contraction of infectious illnesses. Our Service has a duty of care to ensure that children families, educators, and visitors of the Service are provided with a high level of protection during the hours of the Service's operation. We aim to manage illnesses and prevent the spread of infectious diseases throughout the Service.

Immunisation is a simple, safe, and effective way of protecting people against harmful diseases before they come into contact with them in the community. Immunisation not only protects individuals, but also others within the community, by reducing the spread of disease and illnesses.

SCOPE

This policy applies to children, families, staff, educators, Approved Provider, Nominated Supervisor and management of the OSHC Service.

IMPLEMENTATION

Under the Education and Care Services National Regulations, the approved provider must ensure policies and procedures are in place in relation to dealing with infectious diseases. (ACECQA, August 2021).

Our Service is committed to minimise the spread of infectious diseases and viruses by implementing recommendations as stated in the *Staying healthy: Preventing infectious diseases in early childhood education and care services* (Fifth Edition) developed by the Australian Government National Health and Medical Research Council and advice provided from the Australian Health Protection Principal Committee (AHPPC).

We are guided by decisions regarding exclusion periods and notification of infectious diseases by the *Australian Government- Department of Health* and local Public Health Units in our jurisdiction as per the Public Health Act. Recommendations for managing positive cases of COVID-19 in early education and care is provided by SA Health.

The need for exclusion and the length of time a person is excluded from the Service depends on:

- how easily the infection can spread
- how long the person is likely to be infectious and
- the severity of the infectious disease or illness.

This policy must be read in conjunction with our other Quality Area 2 policies:

- Immunisation Policy
- Sick Children Policy
- Incident, Illness, Accident and Trauma Policy and
- Medical Conditions Policy and

PREVENTING INFECTIOUS DISEASES

Children often enter school and education and care services when their immune systems are still developing. They have not been exposed to many common germs and therefore are susceptible to bacteria that may cause infections. Given the close physical contact children have with other children in OSHC it is very easy for infectious diseases and illnesses to spread through normal daily activities.

Our OSHC Service implements rigorous hygienic practices to limit the spread of illness and infectious diseases including:

- effective hand washing hygiene
- cough and sneeze etiquette
- use of gloves
- exclusion of children, educators or staff when they are unwell or displaying symptoms of an infectious disease or virus
- effective environmental cleaning
- requesting children, educators and visitors to wash their hands with soap and water or hand sanitiser upon arrival at the OSHC Service
- physical distancing (if recommended)
- use of face masks (as mandated by PHO- or Service decision)

- restricting parents and visitors from entering our service to reduce threat of spread of a community disease (e.g.: COVID-19)
- ensuring adequate ventilation
- encouraging children, educators or staff to seek medical attention and get tested if they show symptoms of an infectious disease or virus, including COVID-19.

IMMUNISATION REQUIREMENTS

Immunisation is a reliable way to prevent many childhood infectious diseases. Should a child not be fully immunised according to the National Immunisation Program Schedule, they will not be prevented from enrolling.

Only parents of children (less than 20 years of age) who are fully immunised or are on a recognised catch-up schedule can receive Child Care Subsidy (CCS).

Educators and other staff at our OSHC Service are highly recommended to keep up to date with all immunisations including yearly influenza vaccinations. These include vaccinations recommended by the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC).

REPORTING OUTBREAKS TO THE PUBLIC HEALTH UNIT AND REGULATORY AUTHORITY (Reg. 175 (2) (c))

Outbreaks of communicable diseases and contagious viruses represent a threat to public health. To help prevent outbreaks, the Department of Health monitors the number of people who contract certain infectious diseases and their characteristics, the recent travel or attendance of infected people in a public place or on public transport, and works with health specialists and doctors to help prevent the transmission of diseases to other people.

The Public Health Act 2010 lawfully requires and authorises doctors, hospitals, laboratories, school principals and childcare centre directors to confidentially notify the Public Health Unit of patients with certain conditions, and to provide the required information on the notification forms. Specialist trained public health staff review this information and if necessary, contact the patient's doctor, and sometimes the patient, to provide advice about disease control and to complete the collection of information.

All information is held confidentially in order to protect the patient's privacy. The Commonwealth Privacy Act only release/disclose patient information where it is lawfully required or authorised.

Approved Provider is required to 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 Service is suffering from one of the following vaccine preventable diseases:-

- Diphtheria
- Mumps
- Poliomyelitis
- Haemophilus influenzae Type b (Hib)
- Meningococcal disease
- Rubella ('German measles')
- Measles
- Pertussis ('whooping cough')
- Tetanus

Notification is also required for:

- an outbreak of 2 or more people with gastrointestinal or respiratory illness

Approved Provider will closely monitor health alerts and guidelines from Public Health Units and the Australian Government- Department of Health for any advice and emergency health management in the event of a contagious illness outbreak. The Approved Provider must also notify the Regulatory Authority of any incidence of a notifiable infectious disease or illness or when there is an outbreak of 5 or more people with COVID-19 within a 7-day period via the [NQA-ITS](#).

THE APPROVED PROVIDER WILL ENSURE

- safe health and hygiene practices are implemented at all times
- that all information regarding the prevention of infectious diseases is sourced from a recognised health authority [Australian Government Department of Health](#)
- exclusion periods for people with infectious diseases recommended by Government Authorities are implemented for all staff, children, parents, families and visitors
- children and adults with COVID-19 are excluded from attending the service while they are exhibiting symptoms
- the OSHC service implements recommendations from [Staying healthy: Preventing infectious diseases in early childhood education and care services](#) to maintain a healthy environment
- advice and recommendations from the Australian Health Protection Principal Committee (AHPPC) and Safe Work Australia will be implemented where reasonably possible

- children are protected from harm by ensuring relevant policies and procedures are followed regarding health and safety within the OSHC Service
- the Public Health Unit is notified as soon as possible after they are made aware that a child enrolled has a vaccinated preventable disease
- the Public Health Unit is notified as soon as possible after they are made aware that a child enrolled has a vaccinated preventable disease
- the Public Health Unit is notified in the event of an outbreak of viral gastroenteritis. Approved Provider must document the number of cases, dates of onset, duration of symptoms.
- a notification is lodged through the [NQA-ITS](#) of an outbreak of COVID-19 when there are 5 cases or more within a 7-day period
- a notice is clearly displayed stating that there has been an occurrence of an infectious disease at the OSHC service
- daily attendance records for staff, children and visitors are up to date at all times

MANAGING A POSITIVE CASE OF COVID-19 IN OSHC SETTINGS

Changes may occur to how our OSHC Service manages positive cases of COVID-19. We will be directed by our regulatory authority as to what procedures need to be followed to ensure the health and safety of all staff, children and families.

As COVID-19 is easily transmissible in education and care services, our Service has implemented a range of risk mitigation strategies to assist in protecting children, adults and visitors at the service.

Although it is no longer a legal requirement for a child or adult to self-isolate if diagnosed with COVID-19 our Service strongly recommends that any person who tests positive to COVID-19 informs their workplace/employer and education and care service as soon as possible. Children, educators and staff who test positive for COVID-19 will be required to be excluded whilst unwell.

If a child or staff member has attended the service while infectious, management will:

- identify the period of time that the positive case was in the service during the infectious period
- if this is part of an outbreak of 5 or more people with COVID-19 in a 7 day period the Nominated Supervisor/Responsible Person will notify the service community as soon as practicable
- undertake a thorough clean of the service.

The Approved Provider/Nominated Supervisor must notify families and the Regulatory Authority when an outbreak of COVID-19 has occurred at the Service. [5 or more cases within a 7-day period] (Reg 88, 175).

A NOMINATED SUPERVISOR/ RESPONSIBLE PERSON WILL ENSURE:

- a hygienic environment is promoted and maintained
- children are supported in their understanding of health and hygiene practices throughout the daily program and routine (hand washing, hand drying, cough and sneeze etiquette)
- educators and staff are aware of relevant immunisation guidelines for children and themselves
- families are provided with relevant sourced materials and information on infectious diseases, health, and hygiene including:
 - the National Immunisation Schedule
 - advice and information regarding any infectious diseases in general and information regarding any specific infectious illnesses that are suspected/present in the Service.
- families are provided with information about an infectious disease verbally and by displaying and emailing the Infectious Diseases Notification Form and details
- families are advised that they are requested to alert the OSHC Service if their child is diagnosed with an Infectious Illness, including COVID-19
- all educators are mindful and maintain confidentiality of individual children's medical circumstances
- that opportunities for educators to source pertinent up to date information from trusted sources on the prevention of infectious diseases and maintaining health and hygiene are provided
- families are advised to keep children at home if they are unwell. If a child has been sick, they must be well for 24hrs before returning to the Service
- to complete the register of *Incident, Injury, Trauma of Illness* and/or document incidents of infectious diseases no later than 24 hours of an illness or infectious disease occurring in the Service.
- educators or staff who have diarrhoea or an infectious disease do not handle food for others and are not to return to work until they have been symptom free for 48 hours
- any risk to a child or adult with complex medical needs is minimised in the event of an outbreak of an infectious disease or virus. This may require a risk assessment and decision-making regarding the suitability of attendance of the child or staff member during this time.

EDUCATORS WILL ENSURE:

- that any child suspected of having an infectious illness is responded to and their health and emotional needs supported at all times
- any child suspected of having an infectious illness is isolated from other children and supervised whilst waiting for collection by parents or guardian
- that appropriate health and safety procedures are implemented when treating ill children- wear disposable gloves, face mask or other PPE if needed

- families are aware of the need to collect their unwell child/ children as soon as practicable from the OSHC Service
- after confirmation that a child is suffering from an infectious disease, and as soon as practical, the family of each child must be notified whilst maintaining the privacy of the ill/infectious child.
Communication may be:
 - verbally
 - through a letter from the educator or Approved Provider
 - posting a note or sign at the entry of the residence
 - via electronic message- text message or email
- all resources or items touched by a child with a suspected illness are thoroughly cleaned and disinfected- (cushions, pillows, toys)
- opportunities are provided for children to participate in hygiene practices, including routine opportunities, and intentional practice such as hand washing, sneezing and cough etiquette
- they adhere to the OSHC Service's health and hygiene policy including:
 - hand washing
 - daily cleaning of the service
 - wearing gloves (particularly when in direct contact with bodily fluids)
 - appropriate and hygienic handling and preparation of food
 - wear face masks if mandated by PHU (or the Service)
- they maintain up-to-date knowledge with respect to Health and Safety through on-going professional development opportunities

PREVENTION STRATEGIES FOR MINIMISING THE SPREAD OF DISEASE WITHIN OUR SERVICE

INCLUDE ALL STAFF ENSURING:

- full adherence to the NHMRC childcare cleaning guidelines
- to clean surfaces first with detergent and water before using disinfectants. (Disinfectants cannot kill germs unless areas are clean)
- that a daily clean is carried out on other surfaces that may transmit germs such as high touch objects including doorknobs, tables, remotes, light switches, low shelving, etc. This will be increased, if an outbreak has been recorded in the Service or to minimise the risk of transmission of a virus such as COVID-19
- that if a child has a toileting accident, the items are placed in a plastic bag with the child's name on it
- cloths are colour coded so that a separate cloth is used to clean floors, bathroom, art and craft, and meal surfaces
- floor surfaces will be cleaned on a daily basis at the end of each day by the contracted cleaner

- toilets/bathrooms will be cleaned at the end of the day by the contracted cleaner
- when cleaning up spills of faeces, vomit or urine off floors, bathrooms etc. educators will use disinfectant on the surface after cleaning it with detergent and warm water
- pregnant staff members should not assist in toileting or cleaning up toileting accidents to prevent unexpected cross contamination and risk of contracting Cytomegalovirus (CMV).

FAMILIES WILL:

- adhere to the Service's policies regarding *Dealing with Infectious Diseases, Immunisation and Sick Children* and adhere to exclusion requirements
- adhere to the Service's restrictions of entry into the Service in the event of an outbreak of an infectious disease or virus
- exclude their child from care if they display symptoms of an infectious illness or disease or in the event of a vaccine preventable disease occurs in the OSHC Service and their child is not immunised fully
- alert the Service if their child is diagnosed with an infectious illness, including COVID-19
- 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.

Resources

Recommended exclusion periods - Poster *Staying Healthy: Preventing Infectious diseases in early childhood education and care services*

[Minimum periods of exclusion from childcare services \(South Australia\)](#)

[Time Out Keeping your child and other kids healthy!](#) (Queensland Government) Updated Nov 22

Time Out Brochure [Why do I need to keep my child at home?](#)

CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT/REFLECTION

Our *Dealing with Infectious Diseases Policy* will be reviewed on a regular basis in consultation with children, families, staff, educators and management.

SOURCE

Australian Children's Education & Care Quality Authority. (2014).

ACECQA. (2021). Policy and procedure guidelines. *Dealing with Infectious Diseases*.

Australian Government Department of Health Health Topics <https://www.health.gov.au/health-topics>

Australian Government. Department of Health (2019). *National Immunisation Strategy for Australia 2019-2024*

https://www.health.gov.au/sites/default/files/national-immunisation-strategy-for-australia-2019-2024_0.pdf

Australian Government Department of Health Australian Health Protection Principal Committee (AHPPC)

Department of Human Resources: National Immunisation Program Schedule: <https://beta.health.gov.au/initiatives-and-programs/national-immunisation-program>

Early Childhood Australia Code of Ethics. (2016).

Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010. (Amended 2018).

[Education and Care Services National Regulations](#). (2011).

Guide to the Education and Care Services National Law and the Education and Care Services National Regulations. (2017).

Guide to the National Quality Framework. (2017). (Amended 2020).

Guide to the National Quality Standard. (2020).

National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC): <https://www.nhmrc.gov.au/>

National Health and Medical Research Council. (2012). *Staying healthy: Preventing infectious diseases in early childhood education and care services*.

NSW Government. Department of Education. Managing COVID cases. <https://education.nsw.gov.au/early-childhood-education/coronavirus/managing-covid-cases>

NSW Government Department of Health. Vaccination requirements for child care. https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/immunisation/Pages/childcare_qa.aspx

NSW Public Health Unit: <https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/Infectious/Pages/phus.aspx>

Public Health Act 2010

Public Health Amendment Act 2017

Public Health Regulation 2012

Public Health and Wellbeing Regulations 2019 Victoria

Queensland Government. Department of Education. Information for early childhood service providers, Managing COVID-19 safely. <https://alt-qed.qed.qld.gov.au/covid19/early-childhood-service-operations/information-for-early-childhood-service-providers>

Revised National Quality Standard. (2018).

Safe Work Australia

[Western Australian Education and Care Services National Regulations](#)

REVIEW

POLICY REVIEWED BY	CATHY MORALLEE	NOMINATED SUPERVISOR AND OSHC DIRECTOR	NOVEMBER 2023
POLICY REVIEWED	DECEMBER 2022/MARCH 2023	NEXT REVIEW DATE	MARCH 2023
VERSION NUMBER	V12.03.23		
MODIFICATIONS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Change of name of policy from <i>Control of Infectious Diseases</i> to <i>Dealing With Infectious Diseases</i> • Edits to COVID-19 practices and references • removal of reference to the COVID-19 Management Policy • policy maintenance • hyperlinks checked and repaired as required • minor formatting edits within text • continuous improvement/reflection section added • link to Western Australian Education and Care Services National Regulations added in 'Sources' 		

POLICY REVIEWED	PREVIOUS MODIFICATIONS	NEXT REVIEW DATE
MARCH 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> deleted information about a confirmed COVID-19 case replaced by <i>Managing a positive case of COVID-19 in an OSHC Service</i> services must check with their state regulatory authority for current guidelines for managing a positive case of COVID-19 as definitions of close contacts and management of cases may change minor edits sources checked for currency 	MARCH 2023
OCTOBER 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Additional law/regulations added- ACECQA Guidelines to Policy and Procedures document- Dealing with Infectious Diseases (August 2021) additional related policies added Additional information added re: mandated COVID-19 vaccinations 	MARCH 2022
MARCH 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> review of policy changed to March each year in readiness for cold/flu season 'Information to be displayed at the Service' deleted (this is contained in Immunisation Policy) sources checked for currency and links updated where needed additional resources added for Queensland services 	MARCH 2022
SEPTEMBER 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> addition of use of detergent and water to clean surfaces before disinfecting as per Staying Healthy: Preventing infectious diseases in ECEC guidelines additional information related to procedures for a positive case of COVID-19 at the service 	MARCH 2021
MAY 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Additional information from Australian Health Protection Principal Committee and Safe Work Australia re: physical distancing, immunisation for staff, risk minimisation for vulnerable children/adults, additional cleaning Requirement of a doctor's certificate for suspected cases of infectious disease made editable for individual services to decide upon Pregnancy in Early Childhood reference and risks of CMV and pregnancy Inclusion of recommended exclusion periods Poster link – Staying Healthy: Preventing infectious diseases in ECEC 	JUNE 2021

MARCH 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementation information added regarding infectious illnesses • Added mandatory reporting to public health unit information • Rearranged some content into new headings- Prevention Strategies • deleted repeated items • New sources added 	JUNE 2021
JUNE 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some grammar, punctuation and spelling edited. • Additional information added to points. • Sources checked for currency. • Sources/references corrected, updated, and alphabetised. • Added a Related Policy. • Related policies alphabetised. 	JUNE 2020
JUNE 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Updated the opening statement, included the 'Related Policy' section and made minor adjustments to selected text 	JUNE 2019
OCTOBER 2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New policy created 	OCTOBER 2018