

Background

Parents, staff and visitors to childcare Services need to cooperate to ensure anyone entering the Service is in good health so that the possibility of infections spreading to others is minimised.

Policy statement

The Policy details the Service's practices for managing unwell children and adults at the Service to minimise the spread of infection to others.

Strategies and practices

- The *Managing Infectious Diseases Policy* is explained to parents when they enrol their child in the Service, and their attention is specifically drawn to their responsibilities under the Policy. Information about infectious conditions and minimum exclusion periods for these conditions is included in the Parent Handbook provided to parents at enrolment.
- Educators are informed of the symptoms of excludable illnesses and disease and of infection control through policy information and staff meetings. 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. unusual low energy, crying, sleepy, being unable to participate in activities as usual).
- The Service's roster ensures sufficient educators with first aid qualifications are on site at all times children are being educated and cared for.
- 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. The Recommended Minimum Exclusion Periods Poster – NHMRC detailing these periods is displayed in the Services Policies Folder.
- 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.

Managing Infectious Diseases

- The Service will maintain a Non-Immunised Children - Register if applicable when children are enrolled and a Non-Immunised Staff – Register. 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. Refer to the Service's *Immunisation for Children and Staff Policy*.
- Children who are not immunised are not allowed to be enrolled at the service unless they have a medical exemption or are on a catch-up schedule although, If the child has a catch-up schedule and has a copy of their Immunisation History Form that has been filled out by their GP, the child can be enrolled.
- Families must provide the service with an AIR Immunisation History Statement along with their enrolment paperwork in order to finalise enrolment.
- Children must be immunised in order to receive Child Care Subsidy and Additional Child Care Subsidy as well as the full rate of FTB Part A.
- In the case of serious ill health or hospitalisation, the child or staff member may be asked to provide a medical certificate verifying that they are sufficiently recovered to return to the Service. However, the Nominated Supervisor has the final say on whether the child or a staff member may return.
- Parents are asked not to bring any unwell child into the Service, and not to enter the Service if they are unwell themselves. The Nominated Supervisor can refuse entry to any child or adult (including a staff member) who comes to the Service clearly unwell.
- Should a child become unwell during the day, the parents or authorised person are contacted immediately to collect the child.
- Staff who become ill during the day are sent home and replaced.
- To ensure the safety of other children, staff and visitors, parents are asked to inform the Service if their child has been exposed to any infectious disease.

Responsibilities of parents

- To keep the Service informed of their child's current immunisation status.
- To provide, if requested, a medical certificate verifying that the child who has been unwell has sufficiently recovered to return to the Service.
- To keep unwell children away from the Service.
- To remain away from the Service when they themselves are unwell.
- To arrange prompt collection of their unwell child if contacted by the Service.
- To inform the Service at any time their child has been exposed to an infectious disease.

Managing Infectious Diseases

Procedure and forms

- Illness and Infectious Diseases Register
- Incident, Injury, Illness and Trauma Record
- Recommended Minimum Exclusion Periods Poster – NHMRC
- Non-Immunised Children Register
- Non-Immunised Staff Register
- Parent/Doctor Report

Links to other policies

- Enrolment and Orientation Policy
- Immunisation for Children and Staff Policy
- Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Policy

Links Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011, National Quality Standard 2011

Regulation	77	Health, hygiene and safe food practices
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
Regulation	88	Infectious diseases
Regulation	90	Medical conditions policy
Regulation	162	Health information to be kept in enrolment record

NQS	QA2.1.1	Each child's wellbeing and comfort is provided for, including appropriate opportunities to meet each child's need for sleep, rest and relaxation
NQS	QA2.1.2	Effective illness and injury management and hygiene practices are promoted and implemented

Sources

- Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011
- Guide to the National Quality Framework 2018 (September 2020 Update): Section 4 – Operational Requirements <https://www.acecqa.gov.au/sites/default/files/2020-09/Guide-to-the-NQF-September-2020.pdf> accessed 30 December 2020
- National Health and Medical Research Council. (2012). *Staying Healthy: Preventing infectious diseases in early childhood education and care services*. 5th edition. <https://www.nhmrc.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/attachments/ch55-staying-healthy.pdf>
- National Health and Medical Research Council. (2013). *Recommended minimum exclusion periods*. <https://www.nhmrc.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/reports/clinical%20guidelines/ch55e-exclusion-period-poster.pdf> accessed 30 December 2020
- NSW Health - <https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/immunisation/Publications/parent-childcare-brochure.pdf>

Further reading and useful websites (Consistent with the approach of the National Quality Framework, the following references have prioritised efficacy and appropriateness to inform best practice, and legislative compliance over state or territory preferences.)

Managing Infectious Diseases

- Department of Health (Australian Government). National Immunisation Program. <https://www.health.gov.au/initiatives-and-programs/national-immunisation-program>
- National Health and Medical Research Council – <http://www.nhmrc.gov.au/>

Policy review

The Service encourages staff and parents to be actively involved in the annual review of each of its policies and procedures. In addition, the Service will accommodate any new legislative changes as they occur and any issues identified as part the Service's commitment to quality improvement. The Service consults with relevant recognised authorities as part of the annual review to ensure the policy contents are consistent with current research and contemporary views on best practice.

Version Control

Version	Date Reviewed	Approved By	Comments/Amendments	Next Review Date
1	8 January 2018	Dr Brenda Abbey (Author)	Updated to changed NQF requirements 1 February 2018. Service to modify policies to its specific needs.	
2	6 September 2019	Dr Brenda Abbey (Author)	Updated references.	
3	29 November 2020	Dr Brenda Abbey (Author)	Updated references.	
4	30 December 2020	Dr Brenda Abbey (Author)	Updated references.	
5	May 2022	ACA NSW	Updated References Added some points regarding immunisation requirements	January 2024