



## Dealing with Infectious Diseases Policy

### Quality Area 2: Children's Health and Safety

#### Purpose

This policy will provide clear guidelines and procedures to follow when:

- A child attending Great Start Kindergarten shows symptoms of an infectious disease
- A child at Great Start Kindergarten has been diagnosed with an infectious disease
- Managing and minimising the spread of infectious diseases, illnesses and infestations (including head lice)
- Managing and minimising infections relating to blood-borne viruses.

**Note: This policy includes information on child immunisation.**

#### Policy and Procedure Overview

##### Immunisation Policy

The State Government has introduced a 'No Jab No Play' policy. To confirm your child's enrolment, we are required to sight the original and keep a copy of your child's current Immunisation History Statement. The statement must show that your child is up to date with all vaccinations that are due for their age, or that they are able to receive.

The Immunisation History Statement from the Australian Immunisation Register is the only document accepted. Letters from GPs or local councils are not accepted.

If you do not already have an up-to-date Immunisation History Statement they can be obtained through Medicare using one of the following methods:

- Obtain a copy from your myGov account online, for more information or to register visit: [www.humanservices.gov.au/customer/services/medicare/medicare-online-accounts](http://www.humanservices.gov.au/customer/services/medicare/medicare-online-accounts)
- By telephone on 1800 653 809
- In person at your local Medicare or Centrelink office

Under state law children will not be able to attend the service unless their immunization is up to date and we have a current copy of their Immunisation History Statement. This is part of state regulations under the 'No Jab, No Play' policy.

#### Principles

GSK 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

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- Complying with current exclusion schedules and guidelines set by the Department of Health
- Providing up-to-date information and resources for families and staff regarding protection of all children from infectious diseases and blood-borne viruses, management of infestations and immunisation programs.

Great Start Kindergarten supports the Immunise Australia Program and National Immunisation Program (NIP), which is currently recommended by the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) and supported by the Commonwealth Government. All educators/staff at Great Start Kindergarten are committed to preventing the spread of vaccine-preventable diseases through simple hygiene practices such as hand washing, effective cleaning procedures and assessing acceptable immunisation documentation and complying with recommended exclusion guidelines and timeframes for children and educators/staff.

## Scope

This policy applies to the Approved Provider, Persons with Management or Control, Nominated Supervisor, Persons in day-to-day Charge staff, students on placement, volunteers, parents/guardians, children and others attending the programs and activities of Great Start Kindergarten, including during offsite excursions and activities.

## Background and Legislation standards

### Background

Infectious diseases are common in children. 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 large number of other children. Infectious diseases are divided into four categories (A, B, C, D) on the basis of the method of notification and the information required. The Department of Health publishes the Minimum Period of Exclusion from Primary Schools and Children’s Services Centres for Infectious Diseases Cases and Contacts, to assist in protecting the public by preventing, or containing, outbreaks of infectious conditions common in schools and other children’s services and is regulated by the Public Health and Wellbeing Regulations 2009.

An approved service must take reasonable steps to prevent the spread of infectious diseases at the service, and ensure that the parent/guardian, authorised nominee or emergency contact of each child enrolled at the service is notified of the occurrence of an infectious disease as soon as possible. The service must have policies and procedures in place for dealing with infectious diseases (Regulation 88). The service has a duty of care to ensure that everyone attending the service is provided with a high level of protection during all hours that the service is in operation. Protection can include:

- Notifying children, families and educators/staff when an excludable illness/disease is detected at the service
- Complying with relevant health department exclusion guidelines
- Increasing educator/staff awareness of cross-infection through physical contact with others.

The Victorian Government offers an immunisation program for children to assist in preventing the spread of infectious diseases. Early childhood education and care services that are regulated under the Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010 have legislative responsibilities under the Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008 to only offer a confirmed place in their programs to children with acceptable immunisation documentation (refer to Definitions).

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## Legislation and standards

Relevant legislation and standards include but are not limited to:

- Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010
- Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011: Regulation 88
- Family Assistance Legislation Amendment (Child Care Rebate) Act 2011
- Health Records Act 2001
- Information Privacy Act 2000 (Vic)
- National Quality Standard, Quality Area 2: Children’s Health and Safety
- National Quality Standard, Quality Area 6: Collaborative Partnerships with Families and Communities
- Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004
- Privacy Act 1988 (Cth)
- Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008
- Public Health and Wellbeing Amendment (No Jab, No Play) Regulations 2015 (Vic)
- Public Health and Wellbeing Regulations 2009

## Sources and Related Policies

### Sources

- Communicable Diseases Section, Public Health Group, Victorian Department of Human Services (2011), The Blue Book: Guidelines for the control of infectious diseases. Available at: <https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/about/publications/researchandreports/The-blue-book>
- Communicable Disease Prevention and Control Unit, Victorian Department of Health & Human Services (2019), A guide to the management and control of gastroenteritis outbreaks in children’s centres. Victorian Government, Melbourne: <https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/about/publications/researchandreports/A-guide-to-the-managementand-control-of-gastroenteritis-outbreaks-in-childrens-centres>
- Immunise Australia Program, Department of Health, Australian Government: [www.immunise.health.gov.au](http://www.immunise.health.gov.au)
- Department of Health & Human Services, Victoria (2012) Head lice management guidelines: <https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/about/publications/policiesandguidelines/Head-lice-managementguidelines>
- Immunisation Enrolment Toolkit for early childhood services: <https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/publichealth/immunisation/vaccination-children/no-jab-no-play/immunisation-enrolment-toolkit>
- Guide to the Education and Care Services National Law and the Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011 (2017), ACECQA: <http://files.acecqa.gov.au/files/National-QualityFramework-Resources-Kit/NQF-Resource-02-Guide-to-ECS-Law-Regs.pdf>
- Guide to the National Quality Standard (2017), ACECQA: <http://files.acecqa.gov.au/files/NationalQuality-Framework-Resources-Kit/NQF-Resource-03-Guide-to-NQS.pdf>
- National Health and Medical Research Council (2013) Staying Healthy: Preventing infectious diseases in early childhood education and care services (5th edition): <https://www.nhmrc.gov.au/about-us/publications/staying-healthy-preventing-infectious-diseasesearly-childhood-education-and-care-services>

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- Information about immunisations, including immunisation schedule, Victorian Department of Health: [www.health.vic.gov.au/immunisation](http://www.health.vic.gov.au/immunisation)
- WorkSafe, Victoria (2008) Compliance code: First aid in the workplace: <https://www.worksafe.vic.gov.au/resources/compliance-code-first-aid-workplace>

### Related GSK policies

- Administration of First Aid Policy
- Administration of Medication Policy
- Dealing with Medical Conditions Policy
- Enrolment and Orientation Policy
- Hygiene Policy
- Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Policy
- Inclusion and Equity Policy
- Occupational Health and Safety Policy
- Privacy and Confidentiality Policy

### Roles and Responsibilities

#### The Approved Provider and Persons with Management or Control is responsible for:

- Ensuring that where there is an occurrence of an infectious disease at the service, reasonable steps are taken to prevent the spread of that infectious disease (Regulation 88(1))
- Ensuring that where there is an occurrence of an infectious disease at the service, a parent/guardian or authorised emergency contact of each child at the service is notified of the occurrence as soon as is practicable (Regulation 88(2))
- Ensuring that information from the Department of Health about the recommended minimum exclusion periods (refer to Definitions) is displayed at the service and is available to all stakeholders including staff, parents/guardians, students and volunteers
- Contacting the parent/guardian and Communicable Disease Prevention and Control Unit (refer to Definitions) within 24 hours if on reasonable grounds, the Approved Provider believes that a child enrolled at the service is suffering from a vaccine-preventable disease being:
  1. Pertussis, or
  2. Poliomyelitis, or
  3. Measles, or
  4. Mumps, or
  5. Rubella, or
  6. Meningococcal C,

As required under Regulation 84(2) of the Public Health and Wellbeing Regulations 2009

- Ensuring that a child is excluded from the service in accordance with the recommended minimum exclusion periods (refer to Definitions) when informed that the child is infected with an infectious disease (refer to Definitions) or has been in contact with a person who is infected with an infectious disease (refer to Definitions) as required under Regulation 85(1) of the Public Health and Wellbeing Regulations 2009

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- Contacting the Communicable Disease Prevention and Control Unit (refer to Definitions) if there is an outbreak of two or more cases of gastrointestinal illness in a 48-hour period
- Ensuring children who are offered a confirmed place have acceptable immunisation documentation (refer to Definitions)
- Ensuring when directed by the Secretary, that a child who is not immunised against a vaccine-preventable disease does not attend the service until the Communicable Disease Prevention and Control Unit (refer to Definitions) directs that such attendance can be resumed (Regulation 85(2) of the Public Health and Wellbeing Regulations 2009)
- Notifying DET within 24 hours of a serious incident (refer to Definitions)
- Supporting the Nominated Supervisor and the educators/staff at the service to implement the requirements of the recommended minimum exclusion periods
- Ensuring information about immunisation legislation is displayed and is available to all stakeholders (refer to: [www.health.vic.gov.au/immunisation/factsheets/schedule-victoria.htm](http://www.health.vic.gov.au/immunisation/factsheets/schedule-victoria.htm))
- Conducting a thorough inspection of the service on a regular basis, and consulting with educators/staff to assess any risks by identifying the hazards and potential sources of infection
- Ensuring that the Nominated Supervisor, staff and everyone at the service adheres to the Hygiene Policy and the procedures for infection control relating to blood-borne viruses (refer to Attachment 4)
- Ensuring that appropriate and current information and resources are provided to educators/staff and parents/guardians regarding the identification and management of infectious diseases, blood-borne viruses and infestations
- Keeping informed about current legislation, information, research and best practice
- Ensuring that any changes to the exclusion table or immunisation laws are communicated to educators/staff and parents/guardians in a timely manner.

**The Nominated Supervisor and Persons in Day to Day Charge is responsible for:**

- Ensuring that where there is an occurrence of an infectious disease at the service, reasonable steps are taken to prevent the spread of that infectious disease (Regulation 88(1))
- Ensuring that where there is an occurrence of an infectious disease at the service, a parent/guardian or authorised emergency contact of each child at the service is notified of the occurrence as soon as is practicable (Regulation 88(2))
- Ensuring that information from the Department of Health Services about the recommended minimum exclusion periods (refer to Definitions) is displayed at the service and is available to all stakeholders including staff, parents/guardians, students and volunteers
- Contacting the parent/guardian and Communicable Disease Prevention and Control Unit (refer to Definitions) within 24 hours if on reasonable grounds, the Approved Provider believes that a child enrolled at the services is suffering from a vaccine-preventable disease being:
  7. Pertussis, or
  8. Poliomyelitis, or
  9. Measles, or
  10. Mumps, or
  11. Rubella, or
  12. Meningococcal C,

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As required under Regulation 84(2) of the Public Health and Wellbeing Regulations 2009

- Ensuring that a child is excluded from the service in accordance with the recommended minimum exclusion periods (refer to Definitions) when informed that the child is infected with an infectious disease (refer to Definitions) or has been in contact with a person who is infected with an infectious disease (refer to Definitions) as required under Regulation 85(1) of the Public Health and Wellbeing Regulations 2009
- Contacting the Communicable Disease Prevention and Control Unit (refer to Definitions) if there is an outbreak of two or more cases of gastrointestinal illness in a 48 hour period
- Ensuring that a minimum of one educator with current approved first aid qualifications is in attendance and immediately available at all times the service is in operation (refer to Administration of First Aid Policy). (As a demonstration of duty of care and best practice, ELAA recommends that all educators have current approved first aid qualifications and anaphylaxis management training and asthma management training.)
- Establishing good hygiene and infection control procedures, and ensuring that they are adhered to by everyone at the service (refer to Hygiene Policy and Attachment 4 – Procedures for infection control relating to blood-borne viruses)
- Ensuring the exclusion requirements for infectious diseases are adhered to as per the recommended minimum exclusion periods (refer to Definitions), notifying the Approved Provider and parents/guardians of any outbreak of infectious disease at the service, and displaying this information in a prominent position
- Contacting the advising parents/guardians on enrolment that the recommended minimum exclusion periods will be observed in regard to the outbreak of any infectious diseases or infestations (refer to: <https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/public-health/infectious-diseases/school-exclusion/school-exclusiontable>).
- Advising the parents/guardians of a child who is not fully immunised on enrolment that they will be required to keep their child at home when an infectious disease is diagnosed at the service, and until there are no more occurrences of that disease and the exclusion period has ceased
- Requesting that parents/guardians notify the service if their child has, or is suspected of having, an infectious disease or infestation
- Providing information and resources to parents/guardians to assist in the identification and management of infectious diseases and infestations
- Ensuring all families have completed a Consent form to conduct head lice inspections (Attachment 1) on enrolment
- Conducting regular head lice inspections, at least once per term and whenever an infestation is suspected, which involves visually checking children’s hair and notifying the Approved Provider and parents/guardians of the child if an infestation of head lice is suspected
- Providing a Head lice action form (Attachment 2) to the parents/guardians of a child suspected of having head lice
- Providing a head lice notification letter (Attachment 3) to all parents/guardians when an infestation of head lice has been detected at the service
- Maintaining confidentiality at all times (refer to Privacy and Confidentiality Policy)

**All educators and other staff are responsible for:**

- Encouraging parents/guardians to notify the service if their child has an infectious disease or infestation

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- Observing signs and symptoms of children who may appear unwell, and informing the Nominated Supervisor
- Providing access to information and resources for parents/guardians to assist in the identification and management of infectious diseases and infestations
- Monitoring that all parents/guardians have completed a Consent form to conduct head lice inspections (Attachment 1) on enrolment
- Monitoring any symptoms in children that may indicate the presence of an infectious disease and taking appropriate measures to minimise cross-infection
- Complying with the Hygiene Policy of the service and the procedures for infection control relating to blood-borne viruses (refer to Attachment 4)
- Maintaining confidentiality at all times (refer to Privacy and Confidentiality Policy).

**Parents/guardians are responsible for:**

- Keeping their child/ren at home if they are unwell or have an excludable infectious disease (refer to Definitions)
- Informing the Approved Provider, Nominated Supervisor or Persons in Day-to-Day Charge as soon as practicable if their child has an infectious disease (refer to Definitions) or has been in contact with a person who has an infectious disease (Regulation 84(1) of the Public Health and Wellbeing Regulations 2009) and providing acceptable immunisation documentation for their child
- Complying with the recommended minimum exclusion periods (refer to Definitions) or as directed by the Approved Provider or Nominated Supervisor in consultation with the Communicable Disease Prevention and Control Unit (refer to Definitions)
- Where a child is on an immunisation catch-up schedule, ensuring that the child’s immunisations are updated in line with the schedule and providing acceptable immunisation documentation to the service
- Regularly checking their child’s hair for head lice or lice eggs, regularly inspecting all household members, and treating any infestations as necessary
- Notifying the service if head lice or lice eggs have been found in their child’s hair and when treatment was commenced
- Complying with the Hygiene Policy and the procedures for infection control relating to blood-borne viruses (refer to Attachment 4) when in attendance at the service.

**Volunteers and students:**

Volunteers and students are responsible for following this policy whilst attending the service.

**Evaluations**

In order to assess whether the values and purposes of the policy have been achieved, the Approved Provider will:

- Regularly seek feedback from educators, staff, parents/guardians, children, management and all affected by the policy regarding its effectiveness
- Monitor the implementation, compliance, complaints and incidents in relation to this policy
- Ensure that all information related to infectious diseases on display and supplied to parents/guardians is current
- Keep the policy up to date with current legislation, research, policy and best practice

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- Revise the policy and procedures as part of the service’s policy review cycle, or as required
- Notify parents/guardians at least 14 days before making any change to this policy or its procedures, unless a lesser period is necessary because of a risk.

**Attachments**

- Attachment 1: Consent form to conduct head lice inspections
- Attachment 2: Head lice action form
- Attachment 3: Head lice notification letter
- Attachment 4: Procedures for infection control relating to blood-borne viruses

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## Attachment 1

### Consent form to conduct head lice inspections

Dear parents/guardians,

Great Start Kindergarten is aware that head lice infestation can be a sensitive issue, and is committed to maintaining children's confidentiality and avoiding stigmatisation at all times. However, management of head lice infestation is most effective when all children and their families actively support our policy and participate in our screening program.

All inspections will be conducted in a culturally-appropriate and sensitive manner, and information about why the inspections are conducted and the benefits of preventing infestations will be explained to children prior to conducting the inspections.

Only the Nominated Supervisor or an external person approved by the service, such as a nurse employed by the local council, will be permitted to carry out inspections on children at the service. Each child's hair will be inspected for the presence of head lice or lice eggs.

Where live head lice are found, Great Start Kindergarten will notify the parents/guardians and will provide them with relevant information about the treatment of head lice. Other families will be provided with a notice to inform them that head lice have been detected in the group and to encourage them to be vigilant and carry out regular inspections of their own child.

Please note that while head lice do not spread disease, they are included in the Minimum Period of Exclusion from Primary Schools and Children's Services Centres for Infectious Diseases Cases and Contacts published by the Department of Health which defines the minimum period of exclusion from a children's service for children with infectious diseases. According to this table, where a child has head lice, that child must be excluded until the day after appropriate treatment has commenced.

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Child's name: \_\_\_\_\_ Group: \_\_\_\_\_

I hereby give my consent Great Start Kindergarten, or a person approved by Great Start Kindergarten, to inspect my child's head once per term or when an infestation of head lice is suspected in the service.

Full name of parent/guardian: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of parent/guardian: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

I do not give consent for my child's head to be inspected. I request that staff contact me when an infestation of head lice is suspected at the service, and I agree to come to the service to complete the inspection myself.

Full name of parent/guardian: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of parent/guardian: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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## Attachment 2

### Head lice action form

Dear parents/guardians,

We have detected head lice or lice eggs on your child and it is very important for you to treat your child as soon as possible, using safe treatment practices. Please read the attached pamphlet Treating and controlling head lice from the Department of Health. This contains guidelines regarding detecting and treating head lice and lice eggs.

Please note that while head lice do not spread disease, they are included in the Minimum Period of Exclusion from Primary Schools and Children's Services Centres for Infectious Diseases Cases and Contacts published by the Department of Health which defines the minimum period of exclusion from a children's service for children with infectious diseases. According to this table, where a child has head lice, that child must be excluded until the day after appropriate treatment has commenced.

Please keep your child at home until appropriate treatment has commenced and use the form provided below to notify Great Start Kindergarten, when your child returns to the service, of the action taken by you to treat the head lice/eggs.

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### Head lice treatment – action taken

#### Parent/guardian response form

To Great Start Kindergarten

CONFIDENTIAL

Child's name: \_\_\_\_\_ Group: \_\_\_\_\_

I understand that my child must not attend the service with untreated head lice or lice eggs. I have used the following recommended treatment for head lice or lice eggs for my child:

\_\_\_\_\_ "[write name of treatment used]"

Treatment commenced on: \_\_\_\_\_ [write date treatment was first used].

Signature of parent/guardian: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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### **Attachment 3**

#### **Head lice notification**

Dear parents/guardians,

It has come to our attention that head lice or lice eggs have been detected in your child's group at Great Start Kindergarten and we seek your co-operation in checking your child's hair regularly throughout this week, [Date].

Head lice are common in children and are transmitted by having head-to-head contact with someone who has head lice, but they do not transmit infectious diseases.

#### **What can you do?**

We seek your co-operation in checking your child's hair and, in instances where head lice or lice eggs are found, treating your child's hair.

While head lice do not spread disease, they are included in the Department of Health's exclusion table which defines the minimum period of exclusion from a children's service for children with infectious diseases. According to this table, where a child has head lice, that child must be excluded until the day after appropriate treatment has commenced.

We request that you observe these exclusion periods if head lice or lice eggs are detected on your child.

#### **How do I treat my child for head lice?**

Please read the attached pamphlet Treating and controlling head lice from the Department of Health. This contains guidelines regarding detecting and treating head lice and lice eggs. Additional information is also available by contacting the service.

#### **Who do I contact if my child has head lice?**

If head lice or lice eggs are found in your child's hair, you must inform:

- The service, and use the attached form to advise when treatment has commenced
- Parents/guardians and carers of your child's friends so that they can also check these children for head lice or lice eggs and commence treatment if necessary.

#### **When can my child return to the service?**

Department of Health regulations require that where a child has head lice, that child must be excluded until the day after appropriate treatment has commenced.

Great Start Kindergarten is aware that head lice can be a sensitive issue and is committed to maintaining your confidentiality.

Kind regards,

"[Signature of Nominated Supervisor]"

"[Name of Nominated Supervisor]"

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## Attachment 4

### Procedures for infection control relating to blood-borne viruses

This procedure is based on information available from the Department of Education and Training (DET), the Victorian Government's Better Health Channel and the National Health and Medical Research Council.

#### Important note on blood spills

A person responding to an incident involving blood at the service must first cover any cuts, sores or abrasions on their own hands and arms with waterproof dressings.

### Equipment and procedures for responding to incidents that present blood-borne virus hazards

#### Providing first aid for children who are bleeding

##### Equipment (label clearly and keep in an easily accessible location)

- Disposable plastic bags/zip lock bags/bio hazard container (if available)
- Disposable gloves
- Waterproof dressings
- Disposable towels
- Detergent
- Access to warm water

##### Procedure

1. Put on disposable gloves.
2. When cleaning or treating a child's face that has blood on it, ensure you are not at eye level with the child as blood can enter your eyes/mouth if the child cries or coughs. If a child's blood enters your eyes, rinse them while open, gently but thoroughly for at least 30 seconds. If a child's blood enters your mouth, spit it out and then rinse the mouth several times with water.
3. Raise the injured part of the child's body above the level of the heart (if this is possible) unless you suspect a broken bone.
4. Clean the affected area and cover the wound with waterproof dressing.
5. Remove and place gloves in an appropriate disposable plastic bag/zip lock bag/bio hazard container, seal and place it in a rubbish bin inaccessible to children.
6. Wash hands in warm, soapy water and dry (follow the Handwashing guidelines in the Hygiene Policy).
7. Remove contaminated clothing and store in leak-proof disposable plastic bags. Give these bags to the parent/guardian for washing when the child is collected from the service.

#### Cleaning and removal of blood spills

##### Equipment (label clearly and keep in an easily accessible location)

- Disposable gloves
- Disposable plastic bags/zip lock bags/bio hazard container (if available)
- Detergent/bleach
- Disposable towels
- Access to warm water

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## Procedure

1. Put on disposable gloves. A person responding to an incident involving blood at the service must first cover any cuts, sores or abrasions on their own hands and arms with waterproof dressings.
2. Cover the spill with paper towels.
3. Carefully remove the paper towel and contents.
4. Place the paper towels in an appropriate disposable plastic bag/zip lock bag/bio hazard container.
5. Clean the area with warm water and detergent/bleach, then rinse and dry.
6. Remove and place gloves in an appropriate disposable plastic bag/zip lock bag/bio hazard container, seal and place it in a rubbish bin inaccessible to children.
7. Wash hands in warm, soapy water and dry (follow the Handwashing guidelines in the Hygiene Policy).

## Safe disposal of discarded needles and syringes

### Equipment (label clearly and keep in an easily accessible location)

- Disposable gloves
- Long-handled tongs
- Disposable plastic bags
- 'Sharps' syringe disposal container, or rigid-walled, screw-top, puncture-resistant container available for free from local council, who may also provide free training to staff on the collection of sharps
- Detergent/bleach

## Procedure

1. Put on disposable gloves.
2. Do not try to re-cap the needle or to break the needle from the syringe.
3. Place the 'sharps' syringe disposal container on the ground next to the needle/syringe and open the lid.
4. Using tongs, pick the syringe up from the middle, keeping the sharp end away from you at all times.
5. Place the syringe, needle point down, in the 'sharps' syringe disposal container and close the lid securely on the container.
6. Repeat steps 3 to 5 to pick up all syringes and/or unattached needles.
7. Remove and place gloves in a disposable plastic bag, seal and place it in a rubbish bin inaccessible to children.
8. Clean the area with warm water and detergent/bleach, then rinse and dry.
9. Wash hands in warm, soapy water and dry (follow the Handwashing guidelines in the Hygiene Policy).

Under no circumstances should children, work-experience students or volunteers be asked or encouraged to pick up needles/syringes.

If the needle/syringe is not accessible and cannot be collected, mark and supervise the area so that others are not at risk, and contact the Syringe Disposal Helpline on 1800 552 355.

Advice on the handling and disposal of needles/syringes can be accessed from:

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- The Syringe Disposal Helpline on 1800 552 355 (24 hours a day, 7 days a week) for the location of the nearest needle exchange outlet or public disposal bin
- The environmental officer (health surveyor) at your local municipal/council offices
- Local general practitioners
- Local hospitals.

Note: 'Sharps' syringe disposal containers and/or needles/syringes must not be put in normal waste disposal bins.

### **Needle Stick Injuries**

The risk of transmission of a blood-borne virus from a needle stick injury is low and should not cause alarm. The following procedure should be observed in the case of a needle stick injury.

#### **Procedure**

1. Flush the injured area with flowing water.
2. Wash the affected area with warm soapy water and then pat dry.
3. Cover the wound with a waterproof dressing.
4. Report the injury to the Approved Provider or Nominated Supervisor as soon as possible.
5. Document needle stick injuries involving a staff member or child in the incident report book maintained at the service under OHS laws, and report to WorkSafe Victoria.
6. For incidents involving a child, contact the parents/guardians as soon as is practicable and provide a report to DET within 24 hours (refer to 'serious incident' in the Definitions section of this policy).
7. See a doctor as soon as possible and discuss the circumstances of the injury

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