

# Routine Practices: Guide to Creating a Healthy Environment and Preventing Infections within Child Care Facilities and Schools

## Information Sheet

The following infection prevention and control (IP&C) guidelines have been developed to assist licensed early learning and child care facilities and schools in keeping children, students, and staff safe in situations where germs can spread. Although public health measures can significantly reduce the risk of spreading communicable diseases in child care facilities and schools, the risk is never zero. The best way to control the spread of disease is by continuing to follow applicable health and safety guidelines, including the implementation of Routine Practices and other IP&C measures, to ensure the safety, health, and well-being of children, students, and staff.

## The Role of Staff

It is the role of staff to minimize the risk of exposure to, and the spread of, germs within the child care facility or school. Guidelines outlined in *Routine Practices: Guide to Creating a Healthy Environment and Preventing Infections within Child Care Facilities and Schools* should be followed and implemented to reduce the risk of transmission.

## Infection Prevention and Control Measures

The following are the IP&C measures that have been identified and adapted for use in Manitoba child care facilities and schools.

### Elements of Routine Practices:

**Point of Care Risk Assessment (PCRA):** Before every interaction, staff should assess the risk posed to themselves and other staff, children, students, parents, or visitors by an individual, situation, or procedure.

**Hand Hygiene:** Hand hygiene is the single most important way to prevent the spread of germs. Child care facilities and schools should promote and facilitate proper hand hygiene procedures by children, students, staff, and visitors, either by cleaning hands with soap and water or by using alcohol-based hand sanitizer.

**Source Control:** Source control measures are used to contain and prevent germs from spreading. Policies and procedures should be developed and implemented for the management of potentially ill persons in a child care facility or school. These may include the following:

- signage indicating cough etiquette, hand hygiene, and to stay home when ill
- separate entrances and waiting areas, where possible
- early identification of infection
- staying home when ill
- respiratory hygiene (if needed, masks, tissues, hand hygiene products, and handwashing sinks)
- child/student support space
  - Staff should provide a space where children, students, and staff suspected of being ill may be required to wait until they are able to go home.
- cough etiquette

**Aseptic Technique:** Aseptic technique is a practice that helps prevent the transfer of germs from one person to another during a medical procedure or while performing first aid. It is important to promote adherence to aseptic technique when children, students, or staff require first aid or health care interventions outlined in a health care plan.

**Use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE):** PPE creates a physical barrier between individuals to minimize exposure and to prevent the spread of germs. It is important to ensure that PPE is appropriate for the child care or school setting and is available, sufficient, and located in convenient and accessible areas. To prevent transmission of germs during the use of PPE, staff are required to understand when and how to use and dispose of PPE.

**Sharps Safety:** Users of medical sharps should follow IP&C guidance on how to handle sharp devices safely to prevent and reduce needlestick injuries to themselves and to others. This would include the use of safety-engineered needles or syringes with safety features, not recapping used needles, and disposing of used needles and sharps in a designated puncture-resistant sharps container at point of use.

**Cleaning/Sanitizing/Disinfecting Learning Equipment and Environment:** Develop and implement the proper policies and procedures for cleaning, sanitizing, and disinfecting learning materials, equipment, and environments. Staff responsible for the cleaning of frequently touched items and for environmental cleaning must be properly trained on an ongoing basis. Child care facilities and schools must use detergent disinfectants with a Drug Identification Number (DIN) that are effective against the pathogens most likely to contaminate the child care facility or school environment (see <https://health-products.canada.ca/dpd-bdpp/>).

**Dishwashing:** Germs can be transferred when dishes are not properly washed and sanitized. Proper procedures for dishwashing should be implemented. Following proper dishwashing steps for washing and sanitizing reusable dishes is important in the prevention of food-borne illness.

**Laundering:** Germs can be transferred when in contact with dirty linens and when linens are improperly washed or handled. Proper procedures for laundering should be developed and implemented.

**Education of Children, Students, Family, and Visitors:** Children, students, families, and visitors should receive instructions regarding hand hygiene, respiratory hygiene, and other infection prevention control measures.

**Volunteer/Visitor Management:** Volunteers and visitors with symptoms of an illness should not visit the child care facility or school. If a parent who is sick is required to come to a child care facility or school, they will be supervised and instructed in the precautions to take that would minimize the spread of the illness.

## Additional Infection Prevention and Control Measures Relevant to Child Care Facilities and Schools

**Diapering and Toileting:** Germs are easily spread through contact with bodily fluids (e.g., stool, urine). To reduce the spread of germs, procedures that reduce contamination of hands and the surrounding surfaces should be in place.

**Safe Food Handling:** Proper food handling is important to ensure children, students, staff, and visitors do not become ill with a food-borne illness. Child care facilities and schools that provide full-menu meals in a cafeteria or canteen are required to follow all government food regulations (see [Food and Food Handling Establishments Regulation, M.R. 339/88 R \[gov.mb.ca\]](#)). It is recommended that, where there is a limited menu or food service, child care facilities and schools use safe food handling procedures as a guide and set standards for best practices.

**Pet and Animal Handling:** Staff should adhere to proper procedures when bringing pets and animals into the child care facility or school. Many animals carry infectious diseases in their intestines, on their bodies, or in their feces, which can be transferred to people.

**Policies and Procedures:** Child care facilities and schools should develop, implement, and/or adhere to policies and procedures related to the application of IP&C measures.

**The Workplace Safety and Health Act:** Child care facilities and schools must follow and adhere to The Workplace Health and Safety Act (see [www.gov.mb.ca/labour/safety/pdf/whs\\_workplace\\_safety\\_act\\_and\\_regs.pdf](http://www.gov.mb.ca/labour/safety/pdf/whs_workplace_safety_act_and_regs.pdf)).