

INFECTIOUS

DISEASES POLICY

Quality Areas: NQS 2 – Children’s Health and Safety

Policy Owner: Safety

A light blue speech bubble with a white outline, containing the text 'Why this is important' in a dark blue, handwritten-style font.

1.0 Introduction and Purpose

We are committed to preventing the spread of infectious diseases through the implementation of strategies that aim to keep team members, children, and visitors safe and well. The guidance material we refer to includes Staying Healthy, Health Departments and other infectious disease recognised authorities.

We outline how someone displaying symptoms of an infectious disease or diagnosed with an infectious disease will be managed to minimise the risk to others e.g. exclusion periods, when you can return, and hygiene practices.

The purpose of this procedure is in three parts:

- to identify those vaccine-preventable infectious diseases and encourage or require children and team members to be vaccinated as a priority risk-minimisation strategy
- exclusion of suspected or confirmed infectious disease or transmissible conditions
- strategies to break the chain of infection through measures taken at the centre

2.0 Who does this policy apply to:

All Team Members, Children, Families, Students, Contractors, and Visitors

3.0 What is our Policy:

In the event of an infectious disease being present we will provide team members, families and visitors with accurate information about the illness, exposure period (if relevant) and exclusion periods. We aim to reduce the spread of disease by having effective policies and procedures in place.

If a child displays symptoms or becomes unwell while at the centre, the family/emergency contacts will be notified. If we suspect a child or team member may have an infectious disease, we will exclude them until all symptoms have resolved, they are no longer infectious.

If an infectious disease arises at the service, we will:

- Isolate the child from other children
- Ensure the child is comfortable and appropriately supervised by team members
- Contact the family or emergency contacts and provide details of the child’s condition and ask that the child be collected as soon as possible (expectations is within an hour)
- Ensure all bedding, towels and clothing which has been used by the child is washed separately and if possible, air dried in the sun
- Ensure all toys used by the child are disinfected
- Inform all families, team members and visitors of the presence of an infectious disease. This is usually by displaying an infectious disease sign in the foyer/reception area and if relevant having a specific fact sheet available

3.1 Preventing Infectious Diseases

Children attend our centres when their immune systems are still developing. They have been exposed to a limited number of viruses and diseases and are susceptible to the effects of those where they do not have sufficient immunity. Given the close physical contact children have with one another and the team members it is very easy for infectious diseases and illnesses to spread through normal daily interactions and activities.

The practices we implement to minimise the risk of infectious disease includes:

- cleaning and hygienic practices to limit the spread of illness and infectious diseases e.g., hand washing, twice daily cleaning of learning spaces and nightly cleaning of the centre, cough and sneeze etiquette, the use of gloves and other personal protective equipment
- the exclusion of children, team members and visitors when they are unwell or displaying symptoms of an infectious disease or virus
- regular and effective environmental cleaning including equipment, toys and resources (including bedding)

3.2 Limitations

A limitation is that some persons (both adults and children) have medically supported reasons why they cannot be vaccinated and we must determine how any increase in risk is to be managed on a case-by-case basis.

4.0 Immunisation

Immunisation is the process of developing immunity to an infectious agent by giving a vaccine, while vaccination is the term for the actual administration of a vaccine. If vaccination is successful, it results in immunity. Immunisation of the majority of people lowers the risk of infection for children who are too young to be immunised, or people whose immune systems did not respond to the vaccine.

4.1 Immunisation for children

The National Immunisation Program Schedule provides a list of the vaccines currently recommended for all children dependent on their age. Additional vaccines are recommended for Indigenous children in specific jurisdictions and for children with specific medical conditions. The Australian Technical Advisory Group on Immunisation (ATAGI) also recommends annual immunisation against influenza for all people over 6 months of age to prevent influenza infection and its complications

- Parents/Guardians are to provide proof of immunisation at the time of their child's enrolment and as changes occur – to meet the requirements of each state or territory.
- Immunisation requirements for each state or territory can be found at the National Centre for Immunisation Research and Surveillance: <http://www.ncirs.org.au/public/no-jab-no-play-no-jab-no-pay>
- A copy of the child's immunisation record will be retained with the child's enrolment records and details will be entered into relevant Guardian systems and updated as required.

All children must be fully immunised for their age or must be on a recognised catch-up schedule if the child has fallen behind their vaccinations or has recently moved to Australia from overseas. When an outbreak of a vaccine-preventable illness occurs (or suspected), all children and team members who have not received their vaccinations for that disease will be required to remain away until the centre is deemed clear of the illness and the minimum exclusion period has passed.

Some requirements will differ under State Government legislation. Please refer to your state specific legislation as outlined in the enrolment record. We recommend team members should be fully immunised, especially those working with infants.

4.2 Managing injection site discomfort

- Many vaccine injections can cause soreness, redness, itching, swelling or burning at the injection site for 1–2 days.

- Paracetamol can ease this discomfort.
- Sometimes a small, hard lump may persist for weeks or months. This should not cause concern and does not need treatment.

4.3 Medical Exemption

If you have a medical exemption for an immunisation, it must be shown on your Australian Immunisation Record (AIR).

5.0 Response by centre with a potential infectious disease

1. response may be required outside operating hours – CLT required to pre-plan accordingly
2. high risk diseases require a 24/7 response, being whooping cough, MMR, meningitis, hepatitis, TB
3. CLT to notify the Safety Team by phone, chat or by email safety@guardian.edu.au and make a BeSafe entry. After hours phone mobile or send text if no answer.
4. The Safety Team will contact the Centre to collect further information.
5. Safety Team will then notify the Public Health Unit of the infectious disease or illness (excluding gastroenteritis).
6. Safety Team will communicate any recommendations from Public Health to the centre.
7. CLT forward letters or fact sheets issued by Public Health for distribution first to the to the Safety Team to be checked for ease of understanding before the centre distributes the documents to families.
8. CLT to implement Public Health measures specifying cleaning and infection controls
9. CLT provides further information or documentation if required. Public Health will also advise which fact sheet needs to be displayed at the centre, and any letters that need to be distributed to families.
10. Specific recommendations may be implemented for any “at risk” children, Team Members, or persons in contact with the centre. This may include pregnant staff, unimmunised or immuno-suppressed persons. Recommendations may include exclusion from the centre.

5.1 Pregnant or immune-compromised Team Members

Once the infectious disease has been confirmed by pathology and Public Health the team member should contact their Registered Medical Practitioner (Doctor) to advise there has been a confirmed infectious disease or illness in the centre and to confirm that they may continue working in their room or in the centre. If the doctor advises against such work it should be in writing and include recommendations made (such as exclusion period).

The Centre Manager or Responsible Person will need to contact the Portfolio Manager and People and Culture Department to explore offering alternative work arrangements.

5.2 Where the disease or condition is not notifiable to Public Health

When a non-notifiable infectious disease or transmissible condition has been confirmed (form some conditions in writing by a Doctor), the relevant Fact Sheet from Staying Healthy should be made available to all families. The Centre Manager/Responsible Person should advise families via email and/or Story Park and also advise team members. Refer to the steps outlined in Staying Healthy to control the spread of infection or follow advice as directed by Public Health, paying particular attention to:

- daily infection control processes such as cleaning in practice procedures
- effective environmental cleaning with detergent and water, followed by sanitising and drying.
- hand hygiene
- cough and sneeze etiquette
- regular review of centre immunisation records to ensure they remain current

5.3 Exclusion

Persons who have or display signs of having, an infectious disease requiring exclusion will be excluded from the centre or Office for the exclusion period specified in Staying Healthy to minimise the spread of infectious diseases. Exhibiting symptoms of infectious disease may lead to exclusion as well as a confirmed or suspected diagnosis.

A doctor's certificate should not be accepted if the person's condition does not fulfil the criteria for returning to the centre. For example, following the guidelines in Staying Healthy a child with hand, foot and mouth disease cannot return to care until all blisters have dried, even where a Doctor's certificate for return has been obtained. Note: additional exclusion periods may be enforced by the Public Health Unit.

A person may return if either of the following requirements have been met:

- a medical practitioner has certified in writing that the displayed symptoms are not associated with an infectious disease, and that the individual poses no risk to other children, Team Members, contractors or visitors at the centre; or
- The exclusion period has been met and the individual is displaying no signs of the infectious disease; or
- Effective treatment has been undertaken

Public Health authorities or Guardian may exclude unimmunised children or staff (including pregnant Team Members) in the event of a vaccine preventable disease occurring at a centre or office. The Safety Team can provide guidance.

6.0 Covid19

6.1 Communication

If there has been exposure to a positive covid case within a centre or support office, they must display the infectious disease sign. The infectious disease sign for covid includes the dates of exposure, times of the day and room/s impacted. Centres may also choose to advise families via Storypark or email.

6.2 Requirement for a positive case - child

If a child experiences covid or flu like symptoms, they should undertake a covid test if negative retake covid19 test the following day and do not attend the centre while they have symptoms and are unwell. If the result is positive for covid19 undertake the following:

- Families should advise the centre as soon as possible
- The Centre will determine if they were at the centre during their infectious period. Did they attend the centre in the 48hrs hours before testing positive or developing symptoms (whichever came first)
- If yes - Log the case on BeSafe
- They are not able to attend the centre within first 5 days of testing positive, Day 0 is the day the person tests positive
- If they still have symptoms on day 6 they must remain away until they are symptom free, they can return to the centre if no symptoms from day 6 but must wear a mask for days 6 and 7 (if over 12 years of age)
- If the child has been infectious while at the centre display the infectious diseases sign for 7 days and it is optional for centres to send a letter to all families via email or Storypark if the wish

6.3 Requirement for a positive case – Team Member

If a Team Member experiences covid or flu like symptoms, they should undertake a covid test if negative retake covid19 test the following day and do not attend the centre while they have symptoms and are unwell. If the result is positive for covid19 undertake the following:

- The Team Member should advise the centre/office as soon as possible
- The centre/office will determine if they were at the centre/office during their infectious period. Did they attend the centre/office in the 48hrs hours before testing positive or developing symptoms (whichever came first)

- If yes - Log the case on BeSafe
- Day 0 is the day the person tests positive, or symptoms start (whichever comes first)
- Do not attend the centre/office when you have any symptoms or are unwell, symptoms usually resolve within 5 to 7 days
- You can return to the centre/office at any time after testing positive once symptoms have resolved and you are well
- If you are returning to the centre/office prior to the commencement of day 8 you must wear a mask up to and including day 7 to minimise possible transmission
- If the Team Member has been infectious while at the centre/office display the infectious diseases sign for 7 days and it is optional for centres to send a letter to all families via email or Storypark if the wish

6.4 Families and Carers attending the centre while symptomatic

Families or carers who are unwell or have tested positive for covid are required to undertake the following as we continue to provide access to care:

- find someone else to do drop off / pick up while they are unwell
- If someone else cannot be found and they need to attend the centre in the 7 days after testing positive or being unwell with covid/cold/flu like symptoms, please contact the centre prior to their first visit
- The family or carer will be required to wear a mask on entry to the centre for 7 days and the centre may make other modifications to drop off and pick up routines to reduce exposure to team members, children, and other visitors.

6.4 Please keep all unwell children at home

We ask families to ensure that they do not send their children to our Centres if they are unwell and showing any flu or COVID-19 like symptoms or have been administered medication in the previous 12 hours that mask symptoms. We will be ensuring that children that have any infectious disease continue to remain at home until they are well as per our illness policy.

<p>The most important documents I need are: Identifying the symptoms Infectious Disease Sign</p>	<p>Other supporting documents will include: Guardian Way page Coronavirus Family Communication</p>
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7.0 Responsibilities

7.1 The Approved Provider will:

- ensure that where there is an occurrence of an infectious disease at the centre, reasonable steps are taken to prevent the spread of that infectious disease
- ensure that centres have the current resources to support the notification and information sharing for families and team members
- remain up to date and informed about current legislation, information, research, and best practice regarding the management of infectious diseases
- ensure that any changes to the exclusion table or immunisation schedule are communicated to team members and families in a timely manner

7.2 The Centre Manager / Nominated Supervisor (NS) will:

- ensure that a child or team member who is not immunised against a vaccine-preventable disease does not attend the centre when an infectious disease is diagnosed and has been infectious while attending the centre. The Safety Team will provide advice regarding the exclusion timeframes
- ensure that information from the Department of Health about the recommended minimum exclusion periods is assessable at the centre, is available to all stakeholders and is adhered to in the event of an outbreak of an infectious disease

- c. ensure that a BeSafe event is logged for any suspected or confirmed case of a notifiable infectious disease and contact is made with the Safety Team on how the case will be managed. Notifiable Infectious Diseases most likely seen include; Chickenpox, Cryptosporidiosis, Haemophilus influenzae type b (Hib), Hepatitis, Measles, Meningococcal, Mumps, Pertussis (Whooping Cough), Pneumococcal disease, Respiratory syncytial virus (RSV), Rotavirus, Rubella, Shingles, and Tuberculosis (TB)
- d. ensure the exclusion requirements for infectious diseases are adhered to as per the recommended minimum exclusion periods
- e. ensure families, team members and visitors are advised of infectious disease outbreak where the case was infectious at the centre by displaying the infectious diseases sign in the foyer/reception area and may also communicate via storypark or email
- f. contact the family of a child who is unwell and displaying symptoms of an infectious or vaccine-preventable disease
- g. ensure that a minimum of one team member in attendance holds a current approved first aid qualification
- h. implement hygiene and infection control practices and ensure that they are adhered to by everyone at the centre including;
 - correct handwashing technique
 - using approved cleaning products
 - using standard precautions when handling blood and other bodily fluids
 - cleaning toys and other items that children are likely to put in their mouths
 - daily raking sandpits and securely covering them when not in use
 - disposing of soiled items in a container that is inaccessible to children
 - washing rubbish bins and nappy buckets regularly
 - actively promote handwashing and other hygiene practices with children and families.
- i. maintain up to date and accurate records of children's immunisation history
- j. request families to notify the centre if their child has or is suspected of having an infectious disease or infestation
- k. provide families with information and resources to assist in the identification and management of infectious diseases and infestations
- l. ensure illness records are completed and follow the other requirements of the Illness Policy
- m. if a child becomes unwell, isolate them from other children ensuring the child is comfortable and appropriately supervised and contact the child's family or nominated emergency contact to collect the child up as quickly as possible (within an hour).
- n. advise pregnant staff of infectious diseases that may affect an unborn child eg. chickenpox, cytomegalovirus, and rubella (German measles)
- o. seek advice from the Safety Team in complex or urgent matters related to infectious diseases

7.3 Team Members will:

- a. advise their manager of a child/team member who is unwell or displaying symptoms of an infectious disease respond to children's health needs and emotional needs at all times
- b. Implement appropriate health and safety procedures, when supporting an unwell child, team member or visitor
- c. contact the family or authorised emergency contact when someone is unwell or displaying symptoms of an illness or infectious disease
- d. implement and follow hygiene and infection control procedures to break the chain of infection
- e. maintain their own immunisation status, and advise the Approved Provider/ Nominated Supervisor of any updates to their immunisation status
- f. provide learning opportunities for children to engage in hygiene practices
- g. ensure hygiene stations are stocked with the required items and are available both inside and outside for children and team members to access
- h. observe the exclusion periods and not attend if they are unwell
- i. complete relevant records and notifications within the required timeframes

7.4 Families will:

- a. provide Immunisation documentation upon enrolment and updates are made in line with the state specific requirements
- b. comply with the requirement that all children have an Australian approved immunisation document as per state specific requirements
- c. keep their children at home if they are unwell or have symptoms / been diagnosed with an infectious disease
- d. follow the exclusion periods and information provided by the centre on when the child can return
- e. make alternative arrangements for drop off and pick up if they are unwell
- f. regularly check their child's hair for head lice or lice eggs, including inspecting all household members, and treating any infestations as necessary before attending the centre. Notifying the centre if head lice or lice eggs have been found in their child's hair and when treatment was commenced
- g. provide any documentation requested by the centre regarding the management of illness and infectious diseases/conditions

8.0 Definitions

Airborne transmission means disease organisms spread in the air in either droplet or mist form from one person breathing out (or coughing, blowing or sneezing) to another person's breathing zone where they may inhale the bacteria or viruses or they land on surfaces.

Antibiotic is a compound substance that kills bacteria or slows their growth, prescribed by a doctor to treat a bacterial infection. They are not effective against diseases caused by viruses.

Australian Immunisation Register (AIR) is a register that is kept under Section 46b of the Health Insurance Act 1973 (Cth)

Communicable Disease is a disease that is contagious, and which can be transmitted from one source to another by infectious bacteria or viral organisms

Exclusion is the period of time you cannot attend the centre / office

Gastroenteritis outbreak occurs when two or more cases happen a 24 hour period

Gastroenteritis case means a person has more than two episodes of diarrhoea and/or vomiting in a 24 hour period. This does not require a medical diagnosis.

Immunisation is the process of inducing immunity to a disease in a person by giving them a vaccine specifically for that disease.

National Immunisation Program Schedule is the Schedule attached to the Australian Immunisation Handbook

Notifiable Infectious Diseases most likely seen include Chickenpox, Cryptosporidiosis, Haemophilus influenzae type b (Hib), Hepatitis, Measles, Meningococcal, Mumps, Pertussis (Whooping Cough), Pneumococcal disease, Respiratory syncytial virus (RSV), Rotavirus, Rubella, Shingles, and Tuberculosis (TB) Full List can be found [here](#)

Registered Medical Practitioner means a person registered under the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law to practice in the medical profession.



Staying Healthy - Preventing infectious disease in early childhood education and care services is a handbook developed by the National Health and Medical Research Council. It provides staff in education and care services with simple and effective methods for minimising the spread of disease

Vaccine Preventable Disease is any disease that is specified in the current National Immunisation Program Schedule

Unimmunised children are children whom the centre does not have a complete or current immunisation record on file

9.0 Tools and Resources

<p>The most important documents I need are: Illness Policy Illness Form First Aid Policy Infectious Diseases Guardian Way page</p>	<p>Other supporting documents will include: Safe Environments Guardian Way page Health and Hygiene Guardian Way page</p>
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10.0 Additional Information

Australian Government. Department of Health (2019). National Immunisation Strategy for Australia 2019-2024
 Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011
 National Quality Standard
 Department of Health and Aged Care, National Immunisation Program Schedule
 Department of Health and Aged Care, List of nationally notifiable diseases
 NHMRC. Staying Healthy -Preventing Infectious Diseases in Early Childhood Education and Care Services 5th edition
 Public Health Act 2010
 Public Health Regulation 2012
 Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008
 Public Health and Wellbeing Regulations 2019
 Safe Work Australia

11.0 Source

Section 172	Offence to fail to display prescribed information
Section 174	Offence to fail to notify certain information to Regulatory Authority
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 103	Premises, furniture and equipment to be safe, clean and in good repair
Regulation 168	Education and care service must have policies and procedures
Regulation 170	Policies and procedures to be followed
Regulation 171	Policies and procedures to be kept available
Regulation 172	Notification of change to policies or procedures
Regulation 173	Prescribed information to be displayed
Regulation 175	Prescribed information to be notified to Regulatory Authority

Policy owner	Chief Quality and Curriculum Officer	Content author	National Health, Safety and Risk Manager
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