



Wangaratta Children's Services Centre

Dealing With Infectious Diseases Policy

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Department	Children's Services
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Responsible Officer	Family & Early Childhood Centre Services Coordinator
Authorising Officer	Director Community and Infrastructure
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National Quality Standard

2.1.1	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	Effective illness and injury management and hygiene practices are promoted and implemented.
2.2	Each child is protected.

National Regulations

Regulation	Description
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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
Regulation 172(2)(g)	a notice stating that there has been an occurrence of an infectious disease at the premises
Regulation 174(2)(a)	Notification to the Regulatory Authority- (a) any serious incident at the approved education and care service

Statement and Purpose

The Rural City of Wangaratta's (RCoW) Children's Services 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.

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. 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.

Policy and Procedures

Children might be brought to care with symptoms or signs of illness or while in care suddenly develop an illness that has not been diagnosed by a doctor and that might be potentially infectious or potentially life-threatening for the child. Symptoms may not clearly fit those listed in exclusion diseases making it difficult for educators to decide whether to accept or exclude the child.

Parents must advise educators on arrival verbally and in writing of any symptoms requiring administration of medication to their child in the past 24 hours and the cause of the symptoms if known. When this information is provided verbally, educators will document this in the room's communication tool for other educators to be aware of.

Many illnesses, while not fitting exclusion criteria, can transmit disease to other children in care, and can make a child too ill to participate in normal activities. All children who are unwell should not attend the Service and educators will ask parents of children who are unwell to collect the child from the service preferably within **one hour** or to make alternative arrangements for their child's care.

Reporting Outbreaks to the Public Health Unit and Regulatory Authority

The *Public Health Act 2010* requires and authorises childcare centre directors to confidentially notify the Public Health Unit (PHU) of children with certain conditions and to provide the required information on the notification forms. Management 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.

Prevention strategies for minimising the spread of disease within our service include all staff ensuring:

- mops used for toilet accidents are to be soaked in disinfectant in a bucket in the laundry sink and then air-dried.
- That a daily clean is carried out on other surfaces that may transmit germs such as high touch objects including doorknobs, tables, light switches, handles, remotes, play gyms, low shelving, etc.
- That if a child has a toileting accident, the items are placed in a plastic bag with the child's name on it. The plastic bag will be stored in a sealed container labelled 'soiled/wet clothing' for parents to take home.
- Cloths are colour coded so that a separate cloth is used to clean floors, bathroom, art and craft, and meal surfaces.
- Any toy that is mouthed by a child is placed immediately in the 'toys to be washed' basket.
- All washable toys out on display for the children are to be washed on a weekly basis to decrease the risk of cross contamination.
- Toys and equipment (that are difficult to wash) will be washed with detergent (or soap and water) and air-dried.
- Furnishings, fabric tablecloths and pillowcases will be laundered at the end of each week and hung out to dry.
- Bathrooms will be cleaned in the middle of the day, the end of the day and whenever needed throughout the day using detergent and water followed by disinfectant and paper towel.

Roles and Responsibilities

Management will ensure:

- Information regarding the prevention and transmission of infectious diseases is sourced from a recognised Government 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;

- The service implements recommendations from Staying healthy: Preventing infectious diseases in early childhood education and care services to maintain a healthy environment;
- Children are protected from harm by ensuring relevant policies and procedures are followed regarding health and safety within the Service;
- Required enrolment information, including health and immunisation records of enrolled children is collected, maintained and appropriately and securely stored;
- Staff immunisation record that documents each staff member's previous infection or immunisations (including dates) is developed and maintained; and
- the Public Health Unit is notified in the event of an outbreak of viral gastroenteritis. Management must document the number of cases, dates of onset, duration of symptoms. An outbreak is when two or more children or staff have a sudden onset of diarrhoea or vomiting in a 2-day period.

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;
- Educators and staff are aware of relevant immunisation guidelines for children and themselves;
- The Immunisation History Statement for each child is collected on enrolment and maintained/updated regarding the child's immunisation status (AIR) and any medical conditions;
- Families are provided with information about an infectious disease;
- Families are advised that they must alert the Service if their child is diagnosed with an Infectious Illness;
- All educators are mindful and maintain confidentiality of individual children's medical circumstances;
- Families are advised to keep children at home if they are unwell. If a child has been sick, they must be well for (see exclusion table) before returning to the Service;
- the register of Incident, Injury, Trauma, or Illness and/or document incidents of infectious diseases is completed no later than 24 hours of an illness or infectious disease occurs in the Service.

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Educators will ensure:

- That any child suspected of having an infectious illness is responded to and their health and emotional needs always supported;
- Any child suspected of having an infectious illness is isolated from other children and supervised whilst waiting for collection by parents or guardian;
- Families are aware of the need to collect their unwell child/ children as soon as practicable from the Service;
- The family of each child must be notified of any infectious diseases whilst maintaining the privacy of the ill/infectious child;
- All resources or items touched by a child with a suspected illness are thoroughly cleaned and disinfected;
- Opportunities are provided for children to participate in hygiene practices, including routine opportunities, and intentional practice such as hand washing;
- That cots or mattresses are placed at least 1.5m away from each other if physical distancing measures are required to be implemented;
- Children do not to share beds at the same time;
- Children rest 'head to toe' to avoid cross infection while resting or sleeping
- Bedding is cleaned using detergent and water after each use and if the surface is known to be contaminated with a potential infectious disease, disinfectant is also used to clean beds; and
- Play-dough is freshly made every week.

Families will:

- Adhere to the Service's policies regarding Control of Infectious Diseases, Immunisation, Sick Children, and exclusion requirements;
- Exclude their child from care if they display symptoms of an infectious illness or disease;
- Advise the Service of their child's immunisation status, by providing a current Immunisation History Statement recorded on the Australian Immunisation Register (AIR) for the Service to copy and place in the child's file;
- Advise the Service when their child's medical action plan is updated; and
- Provide sufficient spare clothing, particularly if the child is toilet training.

Human Rights

This policy has considered and complies with the Human Rights and Responsibilities contained in the Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006.

Gender Impact Assessment

This policy has considered and applied Council's Gender Impact Assessment Template and satisfies the provisions established in the *Gender Equality Act 2020* (Vic).

References

Guidelines and Standards

Australian Children's Education & Care Quality Authority 2014

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

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

Department of Human Resources: National Immunisation

Program Schedule: <https://beta.health.gov.au/initiativesand-programs/national-immunisation-program>

Guide to the Education and Care Services National Law and the Education and Care Services National Regulations.

Guide to the National Quality Framework.

Guide to the National Quality Standard.

Medicare Australia (Department of Human Services):

<https://www.humanservices.gov.au/individuals/medicare>

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.

Childhood education centres and schools Revised National Quality Standard.

Legislation

Early Childhood Australia Code of Ethics.

Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010.

Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011

Health Act 2010 Public Health Amendment Act

Public Health Regulation

Public Health and Wellbeing Regulations 2019

Definitions

Term	Meaning	Source
Exclusion period	Families keeping their children at home in the event of illness or disease within the service. The aim is to reduce the spread of infectious diseases in the service, as the less contact there is between people who have an infectious disease and people who are at risk of catching the disease, the less chance the disease has of spreading.	Staying healthy: Preventing infectious diseases in early childhood education and care services (Exclusion periods explained – information for families)
Immunisation	Immunisation can prevent some infections. It works by giving a person a vaccine – often a dead or modified version of the germ – against a particular disease. This makes the person’s immune system respond in a similar way to how it would respond if they actually had the disease, but with less severe symptoms. If the person comes in contact with that germ in the future, their immune system can rapidly respond and prevent the person becoming ill. Immunisation also protects other people who are not immunised, such as children	Staying healthy: Preventing infectious diseases in early childhood education and care services (1.3.3 Immunisation)

	<p>who are too young to be immunised, or people whose immune systems did not respond to the vaccine. This is because the more people who are immunised against a disease, the lower the chance that a person will ever come into contact with someone who has the disease (also known as herd immunity). For families to receive the Child Care Subsidy and Family Tax Benefit (FTB) Part A, their child must meet the immunisation requirements. Jurisdictional requirements may also prevent children who are not immunised from attending a service.</p>	
Infectious disease	<p>A disease that is designated under a law of a relevant jurisdiction or by a health authority as a disease that would require a person with the disease to be excluded from an education and care service.</p>	<p>National Regulations (Definitions)</p>

Attachment 1- Exclusion Table

Column 1 Number	Column 2 Conditions	Column 3 Exclusion of cases	Column 4 Reference for information
1	Chickenpox	Exclude until all blisters have dried. This is usually at least 5 days after the rash appears in unimmunised children, but may be less in previously immunised children	https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/public-health/infectious-diseases/disease-information-advice
2	Conjunctivitis	Exclude until discharge from eyes has ceased	https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/public-health/infectious-diseases/disease-information-advice
3	Cytomegalovirus (CMV) infection	Exclusion is not necessary	https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/public-health/infectious-diseases/disease-information-advice
4	Diarrhoeal illness*	Exclude until there has not been vomiting or a loose bowel motion for 48 hours	https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/about/publications/research-and-reports/A-guide-to-the-management-and-control-of-gastroenteritis-outbreaks-in-childrens-centres
5	Diphtheria	Exclude until medical certificate of recovery is received following at least two negative throat swabs, the first not less than 24 hours after finishing a course of antibiotics and the other 48 hours later	https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/public-health/infectious-diseases/disease-information-advice
6	Fever	Exclude for 48 hours if temperature goes above 37.5 degrees Celsius	48 hour exclusion is given to allow time for the child to see a GP for a diagnosis of the cause of the fever. Further exclusion may apply depending on diagnosis.
7	Glandular fever (Epstein-Barr Virus infection)	Exclusion is not necessary	https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/public-health/infectious-diseases/disease-information-advice
8	Hand, Foot and Mouth disease	Exclude until all blisters have dried	https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/public-health/infectious-diseases/disease-information-advice
9	Haemophilus influenzae type b (Hib)	Exclude until 48 hours after initiation of effective therapy	https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/public-health/infectious-diseases/disease-information-advice
10	Head Lice	Exclude for 1 day after treatment has been given	https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/public-health/infectious-diseases/disease-information-advice
11	Hepatitis A	Exclude until a medical certificate of recovery is received, but not before 7 days after the onset of jaundice or illness	https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/public-health/infectious-diseases/disease-information-advice

1	Hepatitis B	Exclusion is not necessary	https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/public-health/infectious-diseases/disease-information-advice
2	Hepatitis C	Exclusion is not necessary	https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/public-health/infectious-diseases/disease-information-advice
3	Herpes (cold sores)	Young children unable to comply with good hygiene practices should be excluded while the lesion is weeping. Lesions to be covered by dressing, where possible	https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/public-health/infectious-diseases/disease-information-advice
4	Human immunodeficiency virus infection (HIV)	Exclusion is not necessary	https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/public-health/infectious-diseases/disease-information-advice
5	Impetigo	Exclude until appropriate treatment has commenced. Sores on exposed surfaces must be covered with a watertight dressing	https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/public-health/infectious-diseases/disease-information-advice
6	Influenza and influenza like illnesses	Exclude until well	https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/public-health/infectious-diseases/disease-information-advice
7	Leprosy	Exclude until approval to return has been given by the Chief Health Officer	https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/public-health/infectious-diseases/disease-information-advice
8	Measles	Exclude for at least 4 days after onset of rash	https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/public-health/infectious-diseases/disease-information-advice
9	Meningitis (bacterial — other than meningococcal meningitis)	Exclude until well	https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/public-health/infectious-diseases/disease-information-advice
10	Meningococcal infection	Exclude until adequate carrier eradication therapy has been completed	https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/public-health/infectious-diseases/disease-information-advice
11	Mumps	Exclude for 5 days or until swelling goes down (whichever is sooner)	https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/public-health/infectious-diseases/disease-information-advice
12	Molluscum contagiosum	Exclusion is not necessary	https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/public-health/infectious-diseases/disease-information-advice

1	Pertussis (Whooping cough)	Exclude the child for 21 days after the onset of cough or until they have completed 5 days of a course of antibiotic treatment	https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/public-health/infectious-diseases/disease-information-advice
2	Poliovirus infection	Exclude for at least 14 days from onset. Re-admit after receiving medical certificate of recovery	https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/public-health/infectious-diseases/disease-information-advice
3	Ringworm, scabies, pediculosis (head lice)	Exclude until the day after appropriate treatment has commenced	https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/public-health/infectious-diseases/disease-information-advice
4	Rubella (German measles)	Exclude until fully recovered or for at least four days after the onset of rash	https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/public-health/infectious-diseases/disease-information-advice
5	Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS)	Exclude until medical certificate of recovery is produced	https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/public-health/infectious-diseases/disease-information-advice
6	Shiga toxin or Verotoxin producing Escherichia coli (STEC or VTEC)	Exclude if required by the Chief Health Officer and only for the period specified by the Chief Health Officer	https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/public-health/infectious-diseases/disease-information-advice
7	Streptococcal infection (including scarlet fever)	Exclude until the child has received antibiotic treatment for at least 24 hours and the child feels well	https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/public-health/infectious-diseases/disease-information-advice
8	Tuberculosis (excluding latent tuberculosis)	Exclude until receipt of a medical certificate from the treating physician stating that the child is not considered to be infectious	https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/public-health/infectious-diseases/disease-information-advice
9	Typhoid fever (including paratyphoid fever)	Exclude until approval to return has been given by the Chief Health Officer	https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/public-health/infectious-diseases/disease-information-advice

*Diarrhoeal illness includes instances where certain pathogens are identified including Amebiasis (*Entamoeba histolytica*), Campylobacter spp., Salmonella spp., Shigella spp. and intestinal worms, but is not limited to infection with these pathogens.

Review

This policy will be reviewed every four years at a minimum, or if required due to legislative or operational change.

Version History		
Version Number	Date of change	Reasons for change
1.0	September 2023	Re-structure and re-formatting of Council's

		Children's Services policy framework
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