



# (Dealing with) INFECTIOUS DISEASE POLICY

The spread of infections in the early childhood environment is facilitated by microbial contamination of the environment, as well as the greater exposure to young children who are still developing hygienic behaviours and habits. The Langwarrin Community Centre will minimise children's exposure to infectious diseases by adhering to all recommended guidelines from relevant government authorities regarding the prevention of infectious diseases, promoting practices that reduce the transmission of infection, ensuring the exclusion of sick children and educators, supporting child immunisation, and implementing effective hygiene practices.

The Langwarrin Community Centre will provide up-to-date information and advice to parents, families and educators sourced from the Australian Government Department of Health, Australian Health Protection Principal Committee (AHPPC) and state Ministry of Health about infectious diseases as required. Recommendations from the Health Department will be strictly adhered to at all times.

## NATIONAL QUALITY STANDARD (NQS)

QUALITY AREA 2: CHILDREN'S HEALTH AND SAFETY		
2.1	Health	Each child's health and physical activity is supported and promoted
2.1.1	Wellbeing and comfort	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	Health practices and procedures	Effective illness and injury management and hygiene practices are promoted and implemented.
2.2	Safety	Each child is protected.

EDUCATION AND CARE SERVICES NATIONAL LAW AND NATIONAL REGULATIONS	
S.172	Offence to fail to display prescribed information
S.174(2)(a)	Serious incident- any emergency for which emergency services attended
12	Meaning of a serious incident
77	Health, hygiene and safe food practices
83	Staff members and family day care educators not to be affected by alcohol or drugs



85	Incident, injury, trauma and illness policies and procedures
86	Notification to parents of incident, injury, trauma and illness
87	Incident, injury, trauma and illness record
88	Infectious diseases
89	First aid kits
90	Medical conditions policy
92	Medication record
93	Administration of medication
162	Health information to be kept in enrolment record
168	Education and care service must have policies and procedures
170	Policies and procedures to be followed
173	Prescribed information to be displayed
175(2)(c)	Prescribed information to be notified to the Regulatory Authority- (2) any circumstance arising at the service that poses a risk to the health, safety or wellbeing of a child or children attending the service

## RELATED POLICIES

Administration of Medication Policy Bottle Safety and Preparation Policy Child Safe Environment Policy Enrolment & Orientation Policy Communication Policy Governance Policy Hand Washing Policy Health and Safety Policy	Immunisation Policy Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Policy Medical Conditions Policy Nappy Change and Toileting Policy Sleep and Rest Policy
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## PURPOSE

Children encounter many other children and adults within the Service environment which can result in the contraction of infectious illnesses. Our Service 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.

Immunisation is a simple, safe, and effective way of protecting people against harmful diseases before they come into contact with them in the community. Immunisation not only protects individuals, but also others within the community, by reducing the spread of disease and illnesses.

## SCOPE

This policy applies to children, families, educators, staff, visitors, Approved Provider, Nominated Supervisor and management of the Service.

## IMPLEMENTATION

Under the Education and Care Services National Regulations, the approved provider must ensure policies and procedures are in place in relation to dealing with infectious diseases. (ACECQA, August 2021).

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* (Sixth 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.

This policy must be read in conjunction with our other Quality Area 2 policies:

- Immunisation Policy
- Sick Children Policy
- Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Policy
- Medical Conditions Policy and



- Handwashing Policy

## DEFINITION OF INFECTIOUS DISEASE

- In relation to a participating jurisdiction, means an infectious disease that is designated under a law of that jurisdiction or by a health authority (however described) as a disease that would require a person with the disease to be excluded from an education and care service (Definitions-National Regulations).

## PREVENTING INFECTIOUS DISEASES

Children enter education and care services when their immune systems are still developing. They have not been exposed to many common germs and therefore are susceptible to bacteria that may cause infections. Given the close physical contact children have with other children in early childhood and care, it is very easy for infectious diseases and illnesses to spread through normal daily activities.

Our Service implements rigorous hygienic practices to limit the spread of illness and infectious diseases including:

- effective hand washing hygiene
- respiratory hygiene- cough and sneeze etiquette
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- appropriate use of gloves and other PPE
- exclusion of children, educators or staff when they are unwell or displaying symptoms of an infectious disease or virus
- effective environmental cleaning including toys and resources (including bedding)
- requesting parents and visitors to wash their hands with soap and water or hand sanitizer upon arrival and departure at the Service
- physical distancing (if recommended by Australian Health Protection Principal Committee [AHPPC] and/or Safe Work Australia)
- restricting parents and visitors from entering our service to reduce threat of spread of a community disease (e.g. COVID-19)
- ensuring adequate ventilation
- encouraging children, educators or staff to seek medical attention and get tested if they show symptoms of an infectious disease or virus, including COVID-19.



## IMMUNISATION REQUIREMENTS

Immunisation is a reliable way to prevent many childhood infectious diseases. Our service will follow government guidelines for those children who are unvaccinated due to their parent's conscientious objection. Children who cannot be fully vaccinated due to a medical condition or who are on a recognised catch-up schedule may still be enrolled upon presentation of the appropriate form signed by a medical practitioner who meets the criteria stated by the Australian Government.

Only parents of children who are fully immunised or are on a recognised catch-up schedule or have an approved medical exemption recorded on the Australian Immunisation Register (AIR) can receive Child Care Subsidy (CCS). The relevant vaccinations are those under the *National Immunisation Program* (NIP), which covers the vaccines usually administered before age five. These vaccinations must be recorded on the Australian Immunisation Register (AIR).

Educators and other staff at our Service are highly recommended to keep up to date with all immunisations including yearly influenza vaccinations. These include vaccinations recommended by the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC). Our Service recommends educators and children keep up to date with vaccinations for COVID 19.

## EXCLUDING CHILDREN AND ADULTS FROM THE SERVICE

*'Excluding children, staff and parents who are at risk of transmitting infection to others limits the spread of infection in education and care services.'* (Staying healthy)

The need for exclusion and the length of time a person is excluded from the Service depends on:

- the type of infection
- if symptoms are present and how severe they are
- how easily the infection or disease can spread
- how long the person is likely to be infectious

When a child or adult has symptoms or has been diagnosed with an illness or infectious disease, the Service will refer to information about recommended exclusion periods from the **Public Health Unit** (PHU) and *Staying healthy: Preventing infectious diseases in early childhood education and care services, 6<sup>th</sup> edition*.



Although some illnesses will state '*not excluded*', any child or staff member displaying symptoms of an illness or condition are encouraged to stay at home and/or seek medical advice for any concerning symptoms or if symptoms continue. [Exclusion for common or concerning conditions](#)

- When an infectious disease has been diagnosed or suspected, the Service will display appropriate documentation and alerts for families including information on the illness/disease, symptoms, infectious period and the exclusion period. (Fact sheets are available [Staying Healthy Guidelines](#))
- If a vaccine preventable disease occurs in the Service, children who have not been fully immunised will be excluded from care; staff who are not vaccinated will be notified and should be excluded from the workplace. Management will check all children's immunisation records and alert parents as required.
- Staff and children that have had diarrhoea and/or vomiting will be excluded from the Service until there has not been any diarrhoea or vomiting for at least **24 hours**. If the diarrhoea or vomiting are confirmed to be norovirus, they will be excluded until there has not been any diarrhoea or vomiting for at least 48 hours. Staff who handle food will be excluded from the Service for up to **48 hours** after they have stopped vomiting or having diarrhoea. [\[Staying healthy, 2024.\]](#)

## REPORTING OUTBREAKS TO THE PUBLIC HEALTH UNIT AND REGULATORY AUTHORITY (REG. 175 (2) (C))

Outbreaks of communicable diseases and contagious viruses represent a threat to public health. To help prevent outbreaks, the Department of Health monitors the number of people who contract certain infectious diseases and their characteristics, the recent travel or attendance of infected people in a public place or on public transport and works with health specialists and doctors to help prevent the transmission of diseases to other people.

The Public Health Act 2010 lawfully requires and authorises doctors, hospitals, laboratories, school principals and childcare centre directors to confidentially notify the Public Health Unit (PHU) of patients with certain conditions, and to provide the required information on the notification forms. Specialist trained public health staff review this information and if necessary, contact the patient's doctor, and sometimes the patient, to provide advice about disease control and to complete the collection of information.

All information is held confidentially in order to protect the patient's privacy. The Commonwealth Privacy Acts only release/disclose patient information where it is lawfully required or authorised.



Management is required to notify the local PHU by phone as soon as possible after they are made aware that a child enrolled at the Service is suffering from one of the following vaccine preventable diseases:

- Mumps
- Diphtheria
- Poliomyelitis
- Haemophilus influenza Type b (Hib)
- Meningococcal disease
- Rubella ('German measles')
- Measles
- Pertussis ('whooping cough')
- Tetanus

Notification is also required for:

- an outbreak of 2 or more people with gastrointestinal or respiratory illness

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.

#### THE APPROVED PROVIDER/MANAGEMENT WILL ENSURE:

- safe health and hygiene practices are implemented at all times
- that all information regarding the prevention and transmission of infectious diseases is sourced from a recognised Government Health authority [Australian Government Department of Health](https://www.health.gov.au)
- 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 – 6<sup>th</sup> Edition\*](#) to maintain a healthy environment
- advice and recommendations from the Australian Health Protection Principal Committee (AHPPC) and Safe Work Australia will be implemented where reasonably possible
- 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



- the Public Health Unit is notified as soon as possible after they are made aware that a child enrolled has a vaccinated preventable disease
- 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.
- An email will be sent to all families stating that there has been an occurrence of an infectious disease at the service
- infection control practices are implemented for nappy changing and toileting
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- required enrolment information, including health and immunisation records of enrolled children is collected, maintained and appropriately and securely stored
- daily attendance records for staff, children and visitors are up to date at all times
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### MANAGING A POSITIVE CASE OF COVID-19 IN ECEC SETTINGS

Changes may occur to how our Service manages positive cases of COVID-19. We will be directed by our regulatory authority as to what procedures need to be followed to ensure the health and safety of all staff, children and families.

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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 supported at all times
- any child suspected of having an infectious illness is isolated from other children and supervised whilst waiting for collection by parents/guardian or emergency contact person
- that appropriate health and safety procedures are implemented when treating ill children- wear disposable gloves, face mask or other PPE if needed
- families are aware of the need to collect their unwell child/ children as soon as practicable from the Service
- after confirmation that a child is suffering from an infectious disease, and as soon as practical, the family of each child must be notified whilst maintaining the privacy of the ill/infectious child.

Communication may be:

- verbally
- through a letter from the educator or Approved Provider
- posting a note or sign at the entry of the residence





- via electronic message- text message or email
- all resources or items touched by a child with a suspected illness are thoroughly cleaned and disinfected- (cushions, pillows, toys)
- their own immunisation status is maintained, and the Approved Provider/Nominated Supervisor is advised of any updates to their immunisation status
- opportunities are provided for children to participate in hygiene practices, including routine opportunities, and intentional practice such as hand washing, sneezing and cough etiquette
- consideration is given to the combination of children to decrease the risk of attaining an infectious illness when planning the routines/program of the day
- they adhere to the Service's health and safety policy including:
  - hand washing
  - daily cleaning of the Service
  - wearing gloves (particularly when in direct contact with bodily fluids- nappy changing and toileting)
  - appropriate and hygienic handling and preparation of food
  - wearing face masks (if mandated by PHU)
  - providing adequate ventilation to reduce the transmission of diseases that are airborne
- they maintain up-to-date knowledge regarding best practice principles and high standards of hygiene to reduce the spread of spread of infectious disease and promote good health and safety
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- that children rest 'head to toe' to avoid cross infection while resting or sleeping
- children do not to share beds at the same time
- 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
- that all play dough is freshly made every week. If there is an outbreak of vomiting and/or diarrhoea, or any other contagious communicable disease, play dough is to be discarded at the end of each day and a new batch made each day for the duration of the outbreak
- children wash their hands before and after using play dough.

## PREVENTION STRATEGIES FOR MINIMISING THE SPREAD OF DISEASE WITHIN OUR SERVICE.

### STAFF AND EDUCATORS WILL ENSURE

- a healthy environment is provided through adherence to the Staying Healthy cleaning guidelines
- to clean surfaces first with detergent and water before using disinfectants. (Disinfectants cannot kill germs unless areas are clean)



- 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. This will be increased to several times a day if an outbreak of an infectious disease/virus has been recorded in the Service or to minimise the risk of transmission of a virus.
- 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
- that any toy that is mouthed by a child is placed immediately in the 'toys to be washed' basket and washed with warm soapy water at the end of the day.
- 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 in sunlight
- washable toys and equipment will be washed in detergent and hot water or the dishwasher and aired to dry (toys will not be washed in the dishwasher at the same time as dishes).
- dummies must be stored in an individual container, small zip locked plastic bag, or a protector with the child's name clearly stated to reduce the risk of cross contamination
- all cleaning procedures will be recorded on the Service's Cleaning Checklist
- floor surfaces will be cleaned on a daily basis after each meal and at the end of each day
- toilets/bathrooms will be cleaned in the middle of the day, the end of the day and whenever needed throughout the day.
- when cleaning up spills of faeces, vomit or urine off beds, floors, bathrooms etc. educators will use disinfectant on the surface after cleaning it with detergent and warm water
- pregnant staff members should not change nappies or assist in toileting or cleaning up toileting accidents to prevent unexpected cross contamination and risk of contracting Cytomegalovirus (CMV).  
(see *Pregnancy in Early Childhood Policy*)

#### FAMILIES WILL:

- adhere to the Service's policies regarding *Dealing with Infectious Diseases, Immunisation, Sick Children* and exclusion requirements



- adhere to the Service's restrictions of entry into the Service in the event of an outbreak of an infectious disease or virus
- adhere to the Service's policy regarding *Hand Washing*
- exclude their child from care for the recommended minimum exclusion period if they display symptoms of an infectious illness or disease
- *adhere to the exclusion period* in the event of a vaccine preventable disease occurs in the Service and their child is not immunised fully
- 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
- provide sufficient spare clothing, particularly if the child is toilet training
- adhere to the Service's risk minimisation strategies if their child has complex medical needs in the event of an outbreak of an infectious disease or virus.

## Resources

[Gastro Pack NSW Health](#)

[Common cold fact sheet](#)

[Exclusion for common or concerning conditions](#)

[Recommended exclusion periods- Poster Staying Healthy: Preventing Infectious diseases in early childhood education and care services](#)

[Minimum periods for exclusion from childcare services \(Victoria\)](#)

Time Out Brochure [Why do I need to keep my child at home?](#)

## CHILDCARE CENTRE DESKTOP - RELATED RESOURCES

Hand Washing Procedure	Immunisation Register
Illness Management Procedure	Incident Injury Trauma and Illness Record
Illness or Infectious Disease Register	Reporting Infectious Diseases Procedure

## SOURCE

Australian Children's Education & Care Quality Authority. (2025). [Guide to the National Quality Framework](#)

ACECQA. (2021). Policy and procedure guidelines. (2021). [Dealing with Infectious Diseases](#).

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

Department of Human Resources: [National Immunisation Program Schedule](#)

Early Childhood Australia Code of Ethics. (2016).



Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010. (Amended 2023).

[Education and Care Services National Regulations](#). (Amended 2023).

National Health and Medical Research Council. (2024). [Staying healthy: Preventing infectious diseases in early childhood education and care services. 6<sup>th</sup> Edition](#).

NSW Government. Department of Education. [Managing COVID cases](#)

NSW Government Department of Health. [Vaccination requirements for child care](#).

*Public Health Act 2010*

*Public Health Amendment Act 2017*

Public Health Regulation 2012

Public Health and Wellbeing Regulations 2019 Victoria

Safe Work Australia

## REVIEW

POLICY REVIEWED BY:	Carol Hopkins	CSO	June 2025
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MODIFICATIONS	MARCH <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>policy review</li> <li>definition of Infectious Disease added to policy</li> <li>review of policy following updated recommendations from Staying Healthy in Childcare 6<sup>th</sup> Edition</li> <li>Links to Staying Healthy exclusion periods updated</li> <li>Sources checked and updated as required</li> </ul>		
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POLICY REVIEWED BY:	Carol Hopkins	CSO	Oct 2023
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