



INFECTIOUS DISEASES POLICY

Introduction

Normanhurst West Community Preschool is committed to providing a healthy and safe environment for all children, staff and any other persons attending the service. Supporting children's ongoing wellbeing, is a high priority at our Preschool. Educators need to be aware of the likelihood of young children being exposed to an infectious illness whilst at Preschool. Maintaining hygiene practices within the Preschool and teaching young children about health and hygiene will assist in the prevention of infectious diseases. Providing families with timely and current information will further support this process.

Goals – What are we going to do?

The Preschool will minimise children's exposure to infectious diseases by:

- complying with all recommended guidelines from relevant authorities regarding the prevention of infectious diseases;
- promoting practices that reduce the transmission of infection;
- ensuring the exclusion of sick children and staff as stated in the Staying Healthy in Childcare;
- supporting child immunisation; and
- implementing effective hand washing procedures and hygiene practices.

Strategies - How will it be done?

Effective Hygiene

- Our service will maintain and promote effective hygiene practices, including:
- correct handwashing technique;
- using standard precautions when handling blood, all body fluids, secretions and excretions, dried blood and other body substances.
- cleaning toys and other items that children are likely to put in their mouths, after use;
- raking sandpits often and/or securely covering them when not in use;
- disposal and storage of soiled items that is inaccessible to children;
- washing bins regularly; and
- actively promoting handwashing and other hygiene practices with children and families.

Exclusion of Children, Educators and Other Staff

Infectious Diseases

In order to prevent the spread of infectious diseases through interpersonal contact, our service will adhere to the exclusion period table, published by the Department of Health. www.nhmrc.gov.au.

Fever

In children, a temperature over 38°C indicates a fever. A fever is usually caused by an infection somewhere in the body. Some types of infections that lead to fever include:

- viral (caused by a virus) – around nine out of ten children with a fever will have a viral illness, such as cold, flu or gastroenteritis

- bacterial (caused by bacteria) – such as some ear infections, pneumonia or urine infections.
- www.health.vic.gov.au/edfactsheets/downloads/fever-in-children.pdf
- http://raisingchildren.net.au/articles/fever_a.html

In order to prevent the spread of infection and ensure wellbeing, children with a temperature above 38°C will be excluded from the preschool.

Immunisation

The NSW Government Immunisation Toolkit for early childhood education and care services guides our practice and provides resources and information to support families access information regarding immunisation. Under the Public Health Act 2010, and the Bill passed by the NSW Parliament to amend this act, parents who wish to enrol their child are required to provide at the time of enrolment:

- An AIR Immunisation History Statement which shows that the child is up to date with their scheduled vaccinations, or
- An AIR Immunisation History Form on which the immunisation provider has certified that the child is on a recognised catch up schedule (temporary for 6 months only)

No other form of documentation is acceptable (i.e. the Interim Vaccination Objection Form or Blue Book).

Each child's immunisation status will be recorded on the services immunisation register at the time of enrolment.

Under the Public Health Act, a 12-week temporary exemption for children evacuated during a state of emergency and those in emergency out of home care is extended to all children in out of home care and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children.

The Nominated Supervisor will check that an updated approved immunisation form has been provided for each child after each immunisation milestone (6 weeks, 4 months, 6 months, 12 months, 18 months and 4 years of age, as appropriate) and record the details on the immunisation register. This will be retained for 3 years from the date on which each enrolled child ceases to attend the service.

Pandemic

In the event of a pandemic including Covid-19, any presenting symptoms, child/staff will need to be tested and symptom free before returning to the preschool as well as following current NSW Health guidelines and isolation periods.

Exclusion Periods

The Public Health Unit will be advised as soon as the service is aware that a child or educator has contracted a vaccine-preventable disease and any directions will be followed accordingly. Any child or educator that is not fully immunised may be excluded for a period of time if there is a case of a vaccine preventable disease at the service, or if the child or educator has been in contact with someone outside the Service who has a vaccine preventable disease. We will consider the Exclusion Periods recommended by the National Health and Medical Research Council and act on any directions provided by Public Health Unit.

It is the responsibility of families to inform the Service that their child has come into contact with someone with a vaccine preventable or infectious disease.

Roles and Responsibilities

The Approved Provider will:

- Ensure the service operates in line with the Education and Care Services National Law and National Regulations 2011 including:
- 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)).
- Ensure 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 practicable (Regulation 88(2)).
- Ensure that information from the Department of Health about the recommended minimum exclusion periods is displayed at the service, is available to all stakeholders and is adhered to in the event of an outbreak of an infectious disease (as designated by the Department of Health – refer to Definitions).
- Ensure that the parent/guardian and Public Health Department are informed within 24 hours of becoming aware that an enrolled child is suffering from:
 - a) Pertussis,
 - b) Poliomyelitis
 - c) Measles
 - d) Mumps
 - e) Rubella
 - f) Meningococcal C,
 - g) Diphtheria,
 - h) Haemophilus influenza Type b (Hib)
 - i) Tetanus
- Ensuring that any directions provided by Public Health Unit are followed regarding the possible exclusion of a child or educator who is not immunised against a vaccine preventable disease.
- Notifying the Regulatory Authority within 24 hours of a serious incident including when a child becomes ill at the service or medical attention is sought while the child is attending the service.
- Ensuring that appropriate and current information and resources are provided to 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 schedule are communicated to staff and parents/guardians in a timely manner.

The Nominated Supervisor will:

- Contacting the parents/guardians of a child suspected of suffering from an infectious or vaccine- preventable disease, and requesting the child be collected as soon as possible.
- Notifying a parent/guardian or authorised emergency contact person when a symptom of an excludable infectious illness or disease has been observed.
- Ensuring that a minimum of one staff with current approved first aid qualifications is in attendance and immediately available at all times the service is in operation.
- Establishing good hygiene and infection control procedures, and ensuring that they are adhered to by everyone at the service.
- Ensuring the exclusion requirements for infectious diseases are adhered to as per the recommended minimum exclusion periods, notifying the Approved Provider and parents/guardians of any outbreak of infectious disease at the service, and displaying this information in a prominent position.

- 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.
- 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 families to assist in the identification and management of infectious diseases and infestations.
- Maintaining confidentiality at all times.
- Providing relevant sourced materials to families.
- Ensuring that an "Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness" record is completed as soon as practicable or no later than 24 hours of the illness occurring.

Educators and Staff will:

- Ensuring that any children that are suspected of having an infectious illness are responded to and their health and emotional needs supported at all times.
- Implementing appropriate health and safety procedures, when tending to ill children.
- Ensuring that families are aware of the need to collect their children as soon as practicable to ensure the child's comfort.
- Maintaining their own immunisation vaccination status, and advising the Approved Provider/Nominated Supervisor of any updates to their immunisation status.
- Providing varied opportunities for children to engage in hygiene practices, including routine opportunities, and intentional practice.
- Observing signs and symptoms of children who may appear unwell, and informing the Responsible Person.
- Providing access to information and resources for parents/guardians to assist in the identification and management of infectious diseases and infestations.
- Monitoring any symptoms in children that may indicate the presence of an infectious disease.
- Maintaining confidentiality at all times.

Families will:

- Providing Immunisation documentation upon enrolment and as administered and updated
- Keep their children at home, if they are unwell or have an excludable infectious disease.
- Keep their children at home when an infectious disease has been diagnosed at the service and their child is not fully immunised against that infectious disease, until there are no more occurrences of that disease and the exclusion period has ceased.
- Inform the service if their child has an infectious disease or has been in contact with a person who has an infectious disease.

Resources

- Immunisation Toolkit – www.health.nsw.gov.au/immunisation/Publications/immunisation-enrolment-toolkit.pdf
- NSW Immunisation Schedule 1 July 2018 – www.health.nsw.gov.au/immunisation/Pages/schedule-changes.aspx
- Immunisation - www.humanservices.gov.au/individuals/enablers/immunisation-requirements/35396
- Vaccination Q&A – www.health.nsw.gov.au/immunisation/pages/provider_ga.aspx
- Staying Healthy: Preventing infectious diseases in early childhood education and care services 5th edition July 2015 - www.nhmrc.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/attachments/ch55-staying-healthy.pdf
- Exclusion period for infectious diseases table – www.nhmrc.gov.au/file/5111/download?token=sqK1YrXf < AIR-Immunisation History Statement - Australian Immunisation Register
- Public Health Amendment (Vaccination of Children Attending Child Care Facilities) Bill 2013; Public Health regulation 2012; Public Health Act 2010 - Parliament of NSW - www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/bills/Pages/bill-details.aspx?pk=737

- Public health and Wellbeing Amendment (No Jab, no Play) Act, 2015 - [www.legislation.vic.gov.au/Domino/Web_Notes/LDMS/PubStatbook.nsf/51dea49770555ea6ca256da4001b90cd/57107BCF7DB93B04CA257EEB000B924A/\\$FILE/15-055aa%20authorised.pdf](http://www.legislation.vic.gov.au/Domino/Web_Notes/LDMS/PubStatbook.nsf/51dea49770555ea6ca256da4001b90cd/57107BCF7DB93B04CA257EEB000B924A/$FILE/15-055aa%20authorised.pdf)

Policy Availability

This Infectious Diseases Policy will be readily accessible to all staff, families and visitors. A hard copy is located at the sign in desk and a copy is accessible through our website www.nwcps.org

Review Version 7

Management and staff will monitor and review the effectiveness of the Infectious Diseases policy every two years. Updated information will be incorporated as needed. Families will be invited to provide feedback at each review period.

Review History:

- April 2012 Policy created
- June 2013 Policy reviewed to reflect National Regulations 1 Jan, 2012
- October 2014 Policy reviewed
- June 2017 Policy reviewed and updated to reflect current legislation (National Regulations 2012) and guidelines
- April 2018 Policy reviewed and updated to reflect AIR (Australian Immunisation Register) mandatory requirements.
- October 2020 Policy updated to reflect current NSW health Guidelines and regulation, as well as consideration for pandemic.
- September 2022 Policy reviewed and updated to reflect current regulation and guidance from NSW Health.

Legislation:

- Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010: Section 167
- Education and Care Services National Regulations: Regulations 78-80
- Work Health and Safety Act 2011
- Public Health Regulation 2012 < Public Health Act 2010
- Public Health Amendment (Vaccination of Children Attending Child Care Facilities) Bill 2013
- Australian New Zealand Food Standards Code (FSANZ)