

Control of Infectious Diseases Policy

Purpose

The OSHC Service recognises that young children are more susceptible to infectious diseases due to their developing immune systems and hygienic habits. Our Service has a duty of care to protect children, families, educators, and visitors from exposure to infectious illnesses during operating hours. We aim to manage illnesses effectively and prevent the spread of infectious diseases throughout the Service. Immunisation is promoted as a safe, effective way to protect individuals and the broader community by reducing the transmission of disease. The Service follows guidance from recognised health authorities including the Australian Government Department of Health, the Australian Health Protection Principal Committee (AHPPC), and local Public Health Units.

Scope

This policy applies to all children, families, staff, management, and visitors associated with the OSHC Service.

Implementation

The Service implements strategies to prevent the spread of infectious diseases based on the guidelines outlined in *Staying Healthy: Preventing Infectious Diseases in Early Childhood Education and Care Services* (Fifth Edition), along with advice from AHPPC and Safe Work Australia. These strategies include promoting rigorous hand hygiene, cough and sneeze etiquette, the use of gloves, face masks when required, exclusion of unwell individuals, physical distancing (if recommended), and environmental cleaning. Parents and visitors are encouraged to wash hands upon arrival and departure.

Exclusion periods for children, staff, families, and visitors are applied based on the infectiousness of the disease, severity, and risk of transmission. The Service is guided by recommendations from Public Health Units regarding outbreaks and notifiable diseases, including COVID-19 and other vaccine-preventable diseases such as measles, mumps, rubella, pertussis, diphtheria, tetanus, polio, *Haemophilus influenzae* type b, and meningococcal disease.

Immunisation

Children who are not fully immunised are not excluded from enrolment, although eligibility for Child Care Subsidy and Family Tax Benefits may be affected. Educators and staff are encouraged to maintain current immunisations, including influenza and other vaccines recommended by the NHMRC. Staff immunisation records are maintained and updated as required.

Reporting and Notification

The Service reports outbreaks of infectious diseases to the local Public Health Unit and the Regulatory Authority. All notifiable conditions are documented, and families are informed while maintaining confidentiality. Notifications may be communicated verbally, by letter, posted notices, or electronic messages. In the event of a COVID-19 case, the Service follows PHU directions for closure, deep cleaning, contact tracing, testing, and re-opening, ensuring compliance with all government and regulatory requirements.

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Management Responsibilities

Management ensures that: information regarding prevention of infectious diseases is sourced from recognised health authorities; exclusion periods are enforced; hygiene, cleaning, and risk minimisation strategies are implemented; health alerts are monitored; and records of staff and children's immunisation and illness are maintained. Management also ensures that staff have access to professional development regarding infectious disease prevention, hygiene, and safety procedures, and that all staff understand their responsibilities under relevant legislation and Service policies.

Nominated Supervisor / Responsible Person Responsibilities

The Nominated Supervisor ensures a hygienic environment, promotes health and hygiene practices for children, monitors staff and children's immunisation status, communicates relevant information to families, and supervises children who are unwell until collected by a parent or guardian. They also ensure documentation is completed for all incidents, illnesses, and outbreaks and maintain confidentiality regarding individual medical circumstances.

Educator Responsibilities

Educators implement hygiene practices such as handwashing, cough and sneeze etiquette, use of gloves and masks, and safe food handling. They isolate and supervise unwell children, communicate with families, disinfect all surfaces and items touched by ill children, maintain their own immunisation status, and participate in ongoing professional development regarding health and safety. Educators follow Service cleaning procedures, including daily cleaning of surfaces, bathrooms, and toys, and colour-coded cloth use to prevent cross-contamination. Pregnant staff members avoid handling bodily fluids to minimise risk.

Family Responsibilities

Families are expected to adhere to exclusion policies, notify the Service of illness or vaccination updates, follow Service hygiene requirements, and keep unwell children at home. Families must also provide updated immunisation and medical records and comply with risk minimisation strategies for children with complex medical needs during outbreaks. Families are not send their children to care if they have vomited the night prior. There is a 24 hour stand down period from the child's last vomit.

Prevention and Cleaning Procedures

The Service implements daily and routine cleaning procedures to reduce transmission of infectious diseases. High-touch surfaces, floors, bathrooms, toys, and resources are cleaned with detergent followed by disinfectant. Soiled clothing and items are handled hygienically, and all cleaning activities are recorded in the Cleaning Checklist and Toy Cleaning Register. Outbreaks trigger increased cleaning frequency and additional monitoring as advised by Public Health Units.

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Hand Hygiene and Hygiene Practices

Children and staff are supported to maintain effective handwashing with soap and water, hand drying, and sanitisation as appropriate. Educators teach children proper hygiene techniques and monitor compliance throughout the day. Families and visitors are encouraged to wash hands upon entering and leaving the Service. Routine hygiene practices include cleaning of high-touch surfaces, toys, and equipment, along with colour-coded cloth systems for different areas to reduce cross-contamination.

Sick Children and Staff

Children and staff displaying signs of illness or infectious disease must be excluded from the Service until fully recovered. Families are asked to keep children home if unwell, and a child must be symptom-free for at least 24 hours before returning unless a doctor's clearance is provided. Staff who are unwell or experiencing diarrhoea or vomiting are excluded until symptom-free for at least 48 hours. Staff and children with complex medical needs require individualised risk assessments during outbreaks.

Child Safe Standards and Paramountcy Principle

The Service is committed to upholding the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations and embedding a strong child safe culture across all practices. In accordance with the Paramountcy Principle, the safety, wellbeing and best interests of the child are the primary and overriding consideration in all decisions, actions and practices undertaken by the Service, including the prevention and control of infectious diseases.

This means that all health, hygiene and illness management practices must prioritise the protection of children from harm and the prevention of illness transmission above all other considerations. Educators, staff and management are required to exercise professional judgement and take all reasonable precautions to protect children from health risks, including implementing effective hygiene practices, enforcing exclusion periods, and responding promptly to signs of illness or outbreaks.

The Service will ensure that all infectious disease control measures are implemented consistently and in accordance with recognised health authority guidelines. Educators will support children in maintaining hygiene practices, respond to illness in a timely and appropriate manner, and ensure children who are unwell are cared for safely while minimising the risk to others. All responses will prioritise the child's health, dignity and wellbeing, while also protecting the broader Service community.

All practices relating to the control of infectious diseases must prioritise children's safety, health and wellbeing, ensuring a safe, hygienic and responsive environment is maintained at all times.



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Review

Date:	Changes:	Reviewed by:
26/11/2021	New policy (All updated)	Charmayne Nathan
04/0/24	No changed made - reviewed policy	Charmayne Nathan
10/09/25	Policy was updated, information was condensed.	Charmayne Nathan
24/4/2026	Child Safe Standards & Paramountcy Principle was implemented in align with new laws and regulations	Charmayne Nathan