

STATEMENT

The spread of infections in the education and care 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. Kogarah Community Services (KCS) 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.

Our Service will provide up-to-date information and advice to parents, families and educators sourced from the Australian Government, the Department of Health and Aged Care and state Ministry of Health about infectious diseases as required. Recommendations from NSW Department of Health and Aged Care and NSW Department of Education will be strictly adhered to at all times.

PURPOSE

Children encounter many other children and adults within the OSHC 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 operation. We aim to manage illnesses and prevent the spread of infectious diseases identified in 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 diseases and illnesses.

SCOPE

This policy applies to children, families, staff, educators, Approved Provider, Nominated Supervisor and management of the OSHC 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 minimising 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's Department of Health and Aged Care and local Public Health Units in the 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.

INFORMATION TO BE DISPLAYED AT THE SERVICE

Information	Website
The National Immunisation Program (NIP) Service	https://www.health.gov.au/initiatives-and-programs/national-immunisation-program

The NSW Immunisation Schedule	http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/immunisation/Pages/nsw-immunisation-schedule.aspx
NSW Health Local NSW Public Health Unit Contact Details	https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/Infectious/pages/phus.aspx

PREVENTING INFECTIOUS DISEASES

Children often enter school and 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 OSHC 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 infectious diseases including:

- effective hand washing hygiene,
- cough and sneeze etiquette,
- use of gloves,
- exclusion of children and staff when they are unwell or displaying symptoms of an infectious disease or virus as per the recommended exclusion advice from the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC)
- effective cleaning of the environment, toys and equipment.
- restricting parents and visitors from entering our service to reduce threat of spread of a community disease (e.g.: COVID-19)

IMMUNISATION REQUIREMENTS

Immunisation is a reliable way to prevent many childhood infectious diseases. When enrolling a child in an Out of School Hours Care Service, parents will be asked to provide an Immunisation History Statement. Should a child not be fully immunised according to the National Immunisation Program Schedule, they will not be prevented from enrolling.

Only parents of children (less than 20 years of age) who are fully immunised or are on a recognised catch-up schedule can receive Child Care Subsidy (CCS)

Educators and other staff at our OSHC 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).

REPORTING OUTBREAKS TO THE PUBLIC HEALTH UNIT

Outbreaks of communicable diseases and contagious viruses represent a threat to public health. To help prevent outbreaks, the Department of Health and Aged Care 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 centres to confidentially notify NSW Health 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. Both the NSW and Commonwealth Privacy Acts only release/disclose patient information where it is lawfully required or authorised.

Management is required to notify the local Public Health Unit (PHU) by phone (call 1300 066 055) 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:

- Diphtheria
- Mumps
- Poliomyelitis
- Haemophilus influenzae Type b (Hib)
- Meningococcal disease
- Rubella ('German measles')
- Measles
- Pertussis ('whooping cough')
- Tetanus
- An outbreak of 2 or more people with gastrointestinal or respiratory illness.

The Children's Services management team will closely monitor health alerts and guidelines from Public Health Units and the Australian Government's Department of Health and Aged Care for any advice and emergency health management in the event of a contagious illness outbreak.

MANAGING A POSITIVE CASE OF COVID-19 IN OSHC SETTINGS

Changes may occur to how our OSHC 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.

As COVID-19 is easily transmissible in education and care services, our Service has implemented a range of risk mitigation strategies to assist in protecting children, adults and visitors at the service.

Although it is no longer a legal requirement for a child or adult to self-isolate if diagnosed with COVID-19 our Service strongly recommends that any person who tests positive to COVID-19 informs their workplace/employer and education and care service as soon as possible.

If a child or staff member has attended the service while infectious, management will:

- identify the period of time that the positive case was in the service during the infectious period
- if this is part of an outbreak of 5 or more people with COVID-19 in a 7-day period the Nominated Supervisor/Responsible Person will notify the service community as soon as practicable
- undertake a thorough clean of the service.

The Approved Provider/Nominated Supervisor must notify families and the Regulatory Authority when an outbreak of COVID-19 has occurred at the Service. [5 or more cases within a 7-day period] (Reg 88, 175).

PREVENTION STRATEGIES FOR MINIMISING THE SPREAD OF DISEASE WITHIN OUR SERVICE INCLUDE ALL STAFF ENSURING:

- full adherence to the NHMRC childcare 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, remotes, light switches, low shelving, etc. This will be increased, if an outbreak has been recorded in the Service or to minimise the risk of transmission of a virus such as COVID-19
- 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 away for the for parents to take home on collection.

- 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 and aired to dry.
- 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 using detergent and water.
- when cleaning up spills of faeces, vomit or urine off floors, bathrooms etc. educators will use disinfectant on the surface after cleaning it with detergent and warm water
- pregnant staff members should not 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*)

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 and Aged Care](#).
- 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.
- 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.
- 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. The Children's Services management team must document the number of cases, dates of onset and 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. (NSW Government- Health 2019)
- A notification is lodged through the NQA-ITS of an outbreak of COVID-19 when there are 5 cases or more within a 7-day period
- A notice is clearly displayed stating that there has been an occurrence of an infectious disease at the OSHC service
- 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
- Existing risk assessments for emergencies include a response to COVID-19.

THE NOMINATED SUPERVISOR/RESPONSIBLE PERSON WILL ENSURE:

- A hygienic environment is promoted and maintained at all times.
- Children are supported in their understanding of health and hygiene practices throughout the daily program and routine (hand washing, cough and sneeze etiquette).
- Educators and staff are aware of relevant immunisation guidelines for children and themselves
- An Immunisation History Statement for each child is requested on enrolment regarding the child's immunisation status (AIR) and any medical conditions
- Families are provided with relevant sourced materials and information on infectious diseases, health, and hygiene including:

- the National Immunisation Schedule
 - exclusion guidelines in the event of a vaccine preventable illness at the Service for children that are not immunised or have not yet received all their immunisations
 - advice and information regarding any infectious diseases in general and information regarding any specific infectious illnesses that are suspected/present in the Service.
- Families are provided with information about an infectious disease via Factsheets and other relevant information displayed and/or sent to them via emails.
- Families are advised that they are requested to alert the Service if their child is diagnosed with an Infectious Illness, including COVID-19
- 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 24hrs before returning to the Service. The Nominated Supervisor may approve the child's return to the Service if families provide a doctor's certificate/clearance certifying that the child is no longer contagious and is in good health. Please note; it is not always possible to obtain a doctor's certificate or clearance for suspected cases of an illness. The decision to approve a child's return is up to the Approved Provider/Nominated supervisor.
- To complete the register of Incident, Injury, Trauma of Illness and/or document incidents of infectious diseases no later than 24 hours of an illness or infectious disease occurring in the Service.
- Families are advised to pick up the children if they are very unwell at the Service.
- Educators or staff who have diarrhoea or an infectious disease do not handle food for others and are not to return to work until they have been symptom free for 48 hours
- Any risk to a child or adult with complex medical needs is minimised in the event of an outbreak of an infectious disease or virus. This may require a risk assessment and decision-making regarding the suitability of attendance of the child or staff member during this time.

EDUCATORS WILL ENSURE:

- That any child suspected of having an infectious illness is addressed 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 or guardian
- 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 OSHC 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
- opportunities are provided for children to participate in effective 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 hygiene practices including:
 - hand washing
 - daily cleaning of the Service
 - wearing gloves (particularly when in direct contact with bodily fluids)
 - Appropriate and hygienic handling and preparation of food
 - wear face masks if mandated by PHU

- they maintain up-to-date knowledge with respect to Health and Safety through on-going professional development opportunities.

FAMILIES WILL:

- Adhere to the Service's policies
- 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 if they display symptoms of an infectious illness or disease or in the event of a vaccine preventable disease occurs in the Service and their child is not immunised fully.
- advise the OSHC Service of their child's immunisation status, by providing approved written documentation for the Service to copy and place in the child's file
- advise the OSHC Service when their child's immunisation/medical condition is updated to ensure that immunisation and medical records are up to date
- 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](#)
- [Recommended exclusion periods- Poster Staying Healthy: Preventing Infectious diseases in early childhood education and care services](#)
- [Time Out Keeping your child and other kids healthy!](#) (Queensland Government)
- Time Out Brochure [Why do I need to keep my child at home?](#)

CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT/REFLECTION

Our *Dealing with Infectious Diseases Policy* will be reviewed on an annual basis in consultation with children, families, staff, educators and management.

COMPLIANCE

NATIONAL QUALITY STANDARD (NQS)		
QUALITY AREA 2: CHILDREN'S HEALTH AND SAFETY		
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.
CHILDREN (EDUCATION AND CARE SERVICES) NATIONAL LAW NSW		
77	Health, hygiene and safe food practices	
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	

90	Medical conditions policy
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
172(2)(g)	a notice stating that there has been an occurrence of an infectious disease at the premises
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
EDUCATION AND CARE SERVICES NATIONAL LAW	
172	Offence to fail to display prescribed information

SOURCE

- Australian Children's Education & Care Quality Authority. (2014).
- ACECQA. (2021). Policy and procedure guidelines. *Dealing with Infectious Diseases*.
- Australian Government Department of Health and Aged Care Health Topics <https://www.health.gov.au/health-topics>
- Australian Government. Department of Health and Aged Care (2019). *National Immunisation Strategy for Australia 2019-2024* https://www.health.gov.au/sites/default/files/national-immunisation-strategy-for-australia-2019-2024_0.pdf
- Australian Government Department of Health and Aged Care Australian Health Protection Principal Committee (AHPPC)
- Department of Human Resources: National Immunisation Program Schedule: <https://beta.health.gov.au/initiatives-and-programs/national-immunisation-program>
- Early Childhood Australia Code of Ethics. (2016).
- Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010. (Amended 2018).
- Education and Care Services National Regulations. (2011).
- Guide to the Education and Care Services National Law and the Education and Care Services National Regulations.
- (2017).
- Guide to the National Quality Framework. (2017). (Amended 2020).
- Guide to the National Quality Standard. (2020).
- 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*.
- NSW Government. Department of Education. Managing COVID cases. <https://education.nsw.gov.au/early-childhood-education/coronavirus/managing-covid-cases>
- NSW Government Department of Health and Aged Care. Vaccination requirements for child care.
- https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/immunisation/Pages/childcare_qa.aspx
- NSW Public Health Unit: <https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/Infectious/Pages/phus.aspx>
- *Public Health Act 2010*
- *Public Health Amendment Act 2017*
- *Public Health Regulation 2012*

- Public Health and Wellbeing Regulations 2019 Victoria
- Revised National Quality Standard. (2018).
- Safe Work Australia

RELATED POLICIES

- Administration of Medication Policy
- Child Safe Environment Policy
- Enrolment Policy
- Governance Policy
- Hand Washing Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Policy
- Medical Conditions Policy
- Sick Children Policy
- Rest Time Policy
- Work Health and Safety Policy

RECORD OF REVISIONS

Unless the Policy specifically states otherwise, the Policy does not form part of your employment agreement with KCS. KCS may unilaterally vary, remove or replace this Policy at any time. To the extent that this Policy imposes any obligations on KCS and/or purports to provide any right or benefit to you, those obligations are not contractual and do not give rise to any contractual rights. The Employee is required to be familiar with the content of the Policy and comply with the terms at all times.

File Reference	CSP025 – Infectious Disease Policy				
Date Created	October 2021	Created By	Jordan Ross	Responsible	Children's Services Manager

Version Number	Modified or Reviewed by	Modifications Made/Notes	Date	STATUS (Internal, External, Archived)
V1	TT	New Policy	July 2020	External
V2	JR	New format	October 2021	External
V2	MT	Content review, formatting and approval	25/11/2021	External
V3	JR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • deleted information about a confirmed COVID-19 case replaced by Managing a positive case of COVID-19 in an OSHC Service • minor edits • sources checked for currency • Edits to COVID-19 practices and references • removal of reference to the COVID-19 Management Policy • policy maintenance • hyperlinks checked and repaired as required • minor formatting edits within text • continuous improvement/reflection section added 	March 2023	External