

DEALING WITH INFECTIOUS DISEASES POLICY

Overview

The National Quality Standard requires education and care services implement specific strategies to minimise the spread of infectious illness and maintain a healthy environment for all children, staff, educators and families.

Education and Care Services National Regulations require that **SUNBEAMS** ensure reasonable steps are taken to prevent the spread of infectious diseases at the service and that a parent or authorised emergency contact of each child at the service is notified of an occurrence as soon as practicable.

EDUCATION AND CARE SERVICES NATIONAL REGULATIONS	NATIONAL QUALITY STANDARD	OTHER SERVICE POLICIES/DOCUMENTATION	OTHER
R77, 83, 85, 86, 87, 88, 89, 90, 92, 93 162, 168 to 173, 175	S2.1.1, 2.1.2, 2.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Parent Handbook - Staff Handbook - Enrolment and Orientation Policy - Providing a Child Safe Environment Policy - Incident, Injury, Illness and Trauma Policy - Administering of Medication Policy - Medical Conditions Policy. - Privacy and Confidentiality Policy - Work Health and Safety Policy 	<p>Disability Discrimination Act 1975</p> <p>NSW Anti-discrimination Act 1977</p> <p>Work Health and Safety Act 2011</p> <p>Staying Healthy in Child Care (5th Edition)</p> <p>NSW Dept. of Health guidelines.</p> <p>ACECQA</p>

WHO THE POLICY AFFECTS?

Management

Staff

Students

Parents

POLICY STATEMENT:

SUNBEAMS will provide a safe and hygienic environment that will promote the health and wellbeing of the children and staff (*"My Time, Our Place"* Outcome 3). We will take all reasonable steps to prevent and manage the spread of infectious diseases through the implementation of procedures that are consistent with guidelines of State Health Authorities.

The spread of infections in the early childhood 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. Our OSHC Service will minimise children's exposure to infectious diseases by adhering to 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 educators, supporting child immunisation, and implementing effective hygiene practices.

Sunbeams OOSH 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 always adhered to.

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

PROCEDURE

A) PREVENTION

- Universal precautions will be consistently applied across service practices to ensure prevention of the spread of infections is effective.
- A regularly updated copy of the Department of Health guidelines on infectious diseases will be kept at the service for reference by staff, management and families.
- If a child is showing symptoms of an infectious disease whilst at home, families are not permitted to bring the child to the service. Children who appear unwell when being signed in by their family will not be permitted to be left at the service.
- Hand washing will be practised by all educators and children upon entering the service, before preparing or eating food and after all dirty tasks such as toileting, cleaning up any items, wiping a nose, before and after administering first aid, playing outside or handling an animal. In addition, educators will wash their hands before leaving the service.
- Sunbeams will be cleaned daily.
- All toilet facilities will have access to a basin or sink with running cold water and soap and paper towel for washing and drying hands.
- Women and girls will have access to proper feminine hygiene disposal.
- Soap and paper towel will also be available in the kitchen area.
- General surfaces will be cleaned with sanitiser after each activity and at the end of the day and all contaminated surfaces will be disinfected.
- Toys will be washed, cleaned and disinfected on a regular basis with material items such as dress ups and cushion cover laundered as required but a minimum of quarterly. Dress up and soft toys have been removed due to the pandemic to safeguard children safety
- Educators will maintain and model appropriate hygiene practices and encourage the children to adopt effective hygiene practices washing hands for 20 seconds and drying hands with paper towel and disposing in bins provided. As part of children taking



increasing responsibility for their own health and physical wellbeing, educators should acknowledge children who are modelling hygiene practices.

- Informal education in proper hygiene practices will be conducted on a regular basis, either individually or as a group through conversations, inclusion in service routines and reminders. Health and hygiene practices will be highlighted to parents, and where appropriate information sheets or posters will be used by educators to support these practices.
- Educators will aim to provide a non-judgmental approach to differences in hygiene practices and standards between families in order to support children's developing sense of identity. Where practices differ to standards expected in the service remind children that these are practices to be followed in the service, but they may be different for them at home.
- All educators will be advised upon appointment to the position to maintain their immunity to common childhood diseases, tetanus and Hepatitis B through immunisation with their local health professional
- Educators will maintain their flu and COVID-19 vaccinations due to the pandemic
- Further precautions will be taken according to the Coronavirus Policy in times of Government declared pandemic. Please refer to SUNBEAMS COVID-19 Policy, risk assessment and COVID safe plan.

B) MANAGEMENT

- Children and staff with infectious diseases will be excluded from the service for the period recommended by the Department of Health.
- Where there is an outbreak of an infectious disease, each enrolled child's family/emergency contact will be notified within 24 hours under ordinary circumstances. Sunbeams will maintain confidentiality when issuing the notification and ensure it is not prejudicial or identify any children.
- SUNBEAMS will notify families via email and also signage at the Service of all infectious diseases as they occur.
- All infectious diseases will be documented in detail for signs of cross infection as well as providing details to relevant information to NSW health and other appropriate authorities.
- Strategies implemented to combat the infection will also be documented.



- In the event of an outbreak of vaccine-preventable disease at Sunbeams or school attended by children at service, parents of children not immunised will be required to stay at home for the duration of the outbreak, for their own protection.
- If a child develops symptoms of a possible infectious disease whilst at Sunbeams, their family will be contacted to take the child home. Where they are not available, emergency contacts will be called to ensure the child is removed from the service promptly.
- All staff dealing with open sores, cuts and bodily fluids shall wear disposable gloves and practice universal precautions.
- Staff with cuts, open wounds or skin diseases such as dermatitis should cover their wounds and wear disposable gloves.
- Disposable gloves will be properly and safely discarded, and staff are to wash their hands after doing so.
- If a child has an open wound, it will be covered with a waterproof dressing and securely attached.
- If bodily fluids or blood gets on the skin but there is no cut or puncture, wash away with hot soapy water.
- In the event of exposure through cuts or chapped skin, promptly wash away the fluid, encourage bleeding and wash in cold or tepid soapy water.
- In the event of exposure to the mouth, promptly spit it out and rinse mouth with water several times.
- In the event of exposure to the eyes, promptly rinse gently with cold or tepid tap water or saline solution.
- In the event of having to perform CPR, disposable sterile mouth masks are to be used, or if unavailable a piece of cloth. The staff person in charge of the first aid kit will ensure that a mask is always available in the kit.
- Any exposure should be reported to the Director/Owner to ensure proper follow up procedures occur.
- When assisting children with toileting, staff will ensure that they wear gloves and wash their hands afterwards. They will also encourage the child to wash their hands.

- Staff will consider the resources they are using when assisting school age children when toileting to ensure they are age appropriate and ensure privacy for the child and ease of use by staff.
- Any soiled clothing shall be handled using disposable gloves and be placed in a sealed plastic bag for the parents to take home for laundering. The service will never rinse soiled clothing.
- Any blood or bodily fluid spills will be cleaned up immediately, using gloves and the area fully disinfected. Cloths used in cleaning will be wrapped in plastic bags and properly disposed of according to current infection control guidelines.
- Management is required to notify the local Public Health Unit (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 or any confirmed case of COVID-19.
 - 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.
- 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 – (e.g.: COVID-19)
- The Director/Owner will always follow the recommendations as outlined in the Health Department document.
- The decision to exclude or re-admit a child or staff member will be the responsibility of the Approved Provider or Responsible Person based on the child's symptoms, medical opinion and Department of Health guidelines for children who have an infectious disease or who have been exposed to an infectious disease.

- The staff members have the right to refuse access if concerned about the child's health.
- Children and staff with diarrhoea will be excluded for 24 hours after the symptoms have disappeared or after a normal stool.
- A doctor's clearance certificate maybe required for any infectious diseases such as measles, mumps diphtheria, hepatitis A, polio, tuberculosis, typhoid, COVID-19 test and paratyphoid before returning to the service.
- Will ensure all immunisation records are kept up to date.

C) MANAGEMENT OF HIV/AIDS/HEP B AND C

- Under the Federal Disability Act and the Equal Opportunity Act, there will be no discrimination based on a child's/family/educator's HIV status.
- A child with AIDS shall be treated as any other child and will have the same level of physical contact with educators as other children in the centre.
- Where educators are informed of a child, family member or another educator who has HIV/AIDS or Hep B or C, this information will remain confidential at all times. The service has no obligation to advise other families attending the service of a child's or educators HIV status.
- Proper safe and hygienic practices will be followed at all times and implementation of procedures to prevent cross infection as identified in this policy will be consistently implemented.
- Educators and families will be encouraged to participate in AIDS and Hepatitis education.

D) IMMUNISATION REQUIREMENTS

Immunisation is a reliable way to prevent many childhoods infectious diseases. When enrolling a child at Sunbeams OOSH, 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 Sunbeams 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). Sunbeams OOSH recommends educators and children keep up to date with vaccinations for COVID -19.
- Vaccination is important as not only can staff members catch a potentially serious infection such as measles or whooping cough, but they could also then inadvertently pass it onto children in their care who are too young to have had their vaccinations or to women who may be pregnant.
- Exclusion periods and notification of infectious diseases are guided by the Australian Government- Department of Health and local public health units in our jurisdiction as per the Public Health Act. These apply to children and staff at the Service. In the event of an outbreak of a vaccine preventable disease at our OSHC Service, staff who are not vaccinated will be notified and should be excluded from the workplace. [See: Immunisation Policy for further information]

E) 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 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 to protect the patient's privacy. Under the Commonwealth Privacy Acts, patient information is only released/disclosed 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

Notification is also required for:

- an outbreak of 2 or more people with gastrointestinal or respiratory illness in a two-day period.
- 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 /NOMINATED SUPERVISOR WILL ENSURE:

- that obligations under the Education and Care Services National Law and National Regulations are met
- educators, staff, students, visitors and volunteers have knowledge of and adhere to this policy and associated procedure
- all new employees are provided with a copy of this policy as part of their induction process
- families are aware of this Dealing with Infectious Diseases Policy upon enrolment
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- children are protected from harm by ensuring relevant policies and procedures are followed regarding health and safety within the OSHC Service
- an Immunisation History Statement for each child is requested on enrolment regarding the child's immunisation status (AIR) and any medical conditions
- Sunbeams implements recommendations from Staying healthy: Preventing infectious diseases in early childhood education and care services. to maintain a healthy environment
- that all information regarding the prevention of infectious diseases is sourced from a recognised 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 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. (NSW Government- Health 2019)
- after confirmation that a child is suffering from an infectious disease, and as soon as practical, the family of each child enrolled in the Service must be notified whilst maintaining the privacy of the ill/infectious child. Communication may be:
 - verbal
 - through a letter from the educator or approved provider
 - via electronic message- text message or email
 - notice clearly displayed at Sunbeams
 - families are advised that they are requested to alert the Service if their child is diagnosed with an infectious illness, including COVID-19
- daily attendance records for staff, children and visitors are up to date at all times
- safe health and hygiene practices are implemented at all times
- educators and staff routinely role model hand washing, hand drying, cough and sneeze etiquette
- effective environmental cleaning policies and procedures are adhered to all times

- children are supported in their understanding of health and hygiene practices throughout the daily program and routine (hand washing, hand drying, cough and sneeze etiquette)
- families are provided with relevant sourced materials and information on infectious diseases, health, and hygiene including:
 - the current 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.
 - all educators are mindful and maintain confidentiality of individual children's medical circumstances
- that opportunities for educators to source pertinent up to date information from trusted sources on the prevention of infectious diseases and maintaining health and hygiene are provided
- that opportunities for staff, children, and families to have access to health professionals by organising visits/guest speakers to attend the service to confirm best practice are provided
- 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 OSHC Service. If the illness is related to gastroenteritis the child is not to return to the Service for up to 48 hours (see: exclusion periods)
- to complete the register of Incident, Injury, Trauma or Illness and/or document incidents of infectious diseases no later than 24 hours of an illness or infectious disease occurring in 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 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
- 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 Sunbeams OOSH
- all resources or items touched by a child with a suspected illness are thoroughly cleaned and disinfected- (cushions, toys)
- 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 Sunbeams OOSH health and hygiene policy 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

PREVENTION STRATEGIES FOR MINIMISING THE SPREAD OF DISEASE WITHIN OUR SERVICE STAFF AND EDUCATORS WILL ENSURE:

- surfaces are cleaned 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.
- 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 and mops are colour coded so that a separate cloth or mop is used to clean floors, bathroom, art and craft, and meal surfaces
- all washable toys/equipment out on display for the children are to be washed on a weekly basis to decrease the risk of cross contamination and recorded with the date and a signature as evidence.
- 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). All toys and equipment that have been cleaned will be recorded on the toy cleaning register.
- Floor surfaces will be cleaned daily 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 followed by disinfectant and paper towel
- 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). The occupational risks of CMV infection must be discussed with management at Sunbeams.



FAMILIES WILL:

- adhere to Sunbeams policies regarding Dealing with Infectious Diseases, Immunisation and Sick Children Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness and adhere to exclusion requirements
- adhere to Sunbeams OOSH restrictions of entry into the Service in the event of an outbreak of an infectious disease or virus
- adhere to Sunbeams 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 Sunbeams OOSH and their child is not immunised fully
- alert the OSHC Service if their child is diagnosed with an infectious illness, including COVID-19
- advise to Sunbeams OOSH of their child's immunisation status, by providing approved written documentation for the Service to copy and place in the child's file
- advise Sunbeams OOSH when their child's immunisation/medical condition is updated to ensure that immunisation and medical records are up to date
- adhere to Sunbeams OOSH risk minimisation strategies if their child has complex medical needs in the event of an outbreak of an infectious disease or virus.



ENDORSEMENT BY THE SERVICE

The policy will be reviewed as required. The review will be conducted by management, staff, children, families and the wider community.

Last reviewed: September 2024

Date of next review: March 2026

APPROVAL DATE: _____

DATE FOR REVIEW: _____