

Tottenham War Memorial Early Childhood Centre

Infectious Diseases Policy

The Centre will minimise the spread and risks of infectious diseases in the Centre by using standard infection control procedures, exclusion of ill persons and through immunisation.

Statutory Legislation and Considerations

Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010

Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011

Links to Health and Hygiene Procedures

National Quality Standard

Rationale

Our Centre is committed to providing a safe and healthy environment for all children, staff and other persons attending the Centre by:

- Responding to the needs of the child or adult who presents with symptoms of an infectious disease or infection while attending the Centre.
- Complying with current exclusion schedules and guidelines set by the Department of Health.
- Providing up to date information and resources for families and staff regarding protection of all children from infectious disease and blood borne viruses, management of infections and immunisation programs.

Goals

The way that children interact with each other and with adults in care means that diseases can quickly spread in a variety of ways. Whilst it is not possible to prevent the spread of all infections and diseases, minimising the risk is enhanced through:

- Effective hand hygiene.
- Exclusion of all ill children, educators and other staff.
- Immunisation.

Strategies

Effective Hygiene - Our Centre will maintain and promote effective hygiene practices including:

- Correct hand washing techniques.
- 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.
- Disposing of soiled items in a container that is inaccessible to children.
- Washing rubbish bins and nappy disposal bin regularly.
- Actively promoting handwashing and other hygiene practices with children and families.

Exclusion of ill children, educators and other staff

Infectious diseases – To prevent the spread of infectious diseases through interpersonal contact the Centre will adhere to the exclusion period table, published by the Department of Health.

Fever - In children, a temperature of over 38⁰ 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 a bacteria) – such as ear infections, pneumonia or urine infections.

- To prevent the spread of infection and ensure wellbeing, children with a temperature of above 38⁰ will be excluded from the Centre.

Immunisation - The Centre aims to minimise risks, complications and the spread of vaccine preventable disease by encouraging children and staff to have up-to-date immunisation in accordance with the Australian Standard Vaccination Schedule. The NSW Government Immunisation toolkit for early childhood education guides our practice and provides resources and information to support families to access information regarding immunisation. Under the Public Health Act 2010, Centres cannot enrol children unless approved documentation has been provided that show the child:

- Is fully vaccinated for their age or
- Has a medical reason not to be vaccinated or
- Is on a recognised catch-up schedule if the child has fallen behind with their vaccinations.

To enrol in our Centre families must provide a copy of one of the following:

- ACIR Immunisation History Statement which shows that the child is up-to-date with their scheduled vaccinations or
- Medicare Immunisation History Form (IMMU13) on which the immunisation provider has certified that the child is on a recognised catch-up schedule or
- Medicare Immunisation Exemption – Medical Contraindication Form (IMMU11) which has been certified by an immunisation provider.

Immunisation of children and adults significantly reduces the risks, serious complications, and mortality associated with vaccine preventable diseases. Immunisation, defined exclusion periods and good hygiene practices reduces the potential risk of exposure to vaccine preventable diseases within the early childhood environment. Centre staff also benefit from up-to-date immunisation in the reduction of risks in pregnancy from infectious diseases.

The Centre encourages children and staff immunisation but respect individual preferences. The Centre provides all families and staff with information on immunisation, vaccines and recognised exclusion periods. Keeping up to date records for children and staff will facilitate immunisation and the control of infectious diseases during outbreaks in the Centre.

The use of standard precautions to minimise the spread of any infection within the Centre and staff role modelling positive health practices minimises the risk of infection.

Roles and Responsibilities

Approved Provider will:

- ensure that all information regarding the prevention of infectious diseases is sourced from a recognised health authority, such as: *Staying Healthy in Child Care – Preventing Infectious Diseases in Child Care - 5th Edition (2012)*; or *NSW Ministry of Health*.
- implement these recommendations to prevent the spread of infectious diseases at the Centre;
- ensure that children are reasonably protected from harm by working with the Nominated Supervisor and staff on developing, maintaining, implementing and reviewing policies that will guide health and safety procedures;
- collect, maintain, and store appropriately the required enrolment documents of children in the Centre;
- ensure that the Regulatory Authority is notified within 24 hours of a serious incident when a child becomes ill at the Centre and medical attention is sought while the child is attending the Centre.

Nominated Supervisor will:

- Ensure that the Centre operates in line with the Education and Care Services National Law and National Regulations 2011.

- Ensure the exclusion requirements for infectious diseases are adhered to as per recommended minimum exclusion periods, notifying the Approved Provider and parents of any breakout of infectious diseases and display this information in a prominent position.
- Ensure that an 'Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness' record is completed as soon as practicable or no later than 24 hours of the illness occurring.
- Ensure that where there is an occurrence of an infectious disease reasonable steps are taken to prevent the spread of the infectious disease.
- Notify the Regulatory Authority within 24 hours of a serious incident when a child becomes ill at the Centre and medical attention is sought while the child is attending the Centre.
- Children not immunised or on a catch-up schedule do not attend the Centre and do not return until there is no more occurrence of that disease at the Centre.
- Develop procedures for maintaining a hygienic environment; providing families with relevant infectious diseases, health and hygiene information; guiding children's understanding of health and hygiene throughout the daily program; ensuring staff are aware of relevant immunisation guidelines for children and themselves; and maintaining relevant records regarding the current status of the immunisation of staff and children at the Centre, as well as any relevant medical conditions of children at the Centre.
- Develop an enrolment procedure that captures all required information regarding the children's immunisation status, and any medical conditions.
- Provide relevant sourced materials to families about the current NSW Immunisation Schedule for children; exclusion guidelines for children that have not yet received all their immunisations in the event of an infectious illness at the Centre.
- Notify and provide information to families as soon as practicable of the occurrence of an infectious disease that describe the nature of illness; incubation period; and infectious and exclusion periods. This information will be sourced from a reliable source such as, *Staying Healthy in Child Care – Preventing Infectious Diseases in Child Care - 5th Edition (2012)*.
- Maintain hygiene practices within the Centre and teach young children about health and hygiene to assist in the prevention of infectious diseases.
- Maintain confidentiality with regards to children's individual medical circumstances, by putting procedures in place to safeguard children and families' personal information.
- Ensure that processes are completed and forwarded to all staff so that they are aware of individual children's circumstances.
- Devise a routine written process for updating children's enrolment records with regards to immunisation, ensuring that this occurs as required (ie. as children reach age milestones for immunisation), or at least twice a year.
- Advise staff of the recommended immunisations for people working with children as per the *Immunisation Handbook – 9th Edition (2008)*; *Staying Healthy in Child Care* Section 4.2 (page 66).
- Maintain current records of staff immunisation status and ensure staff are familiar with written procedures for exclusion of staff as well as children in the event of an infectious illness.
- Provide opportunities for staff to source relevant up to date information on the prevention of infectious diseases, and maintaining health and hygiene from trusted sources.
- Ensure opportunities for staff and families to be involved in the review of the policies and procedures regarding children's health and safety.
- Inform and implement the advice of the health department, or local health unit, regarding Infectious Diseases.
- Ensure that a minimum of one member of staff with current first aid qualifications is in attendance and immediately available at all times the Centre is in operation.

Staff will:

- Ensure that any children suspected of having an infectious illness are responded to, and their health and emotional needs supported always, and contact parents to request the child be collected as soon as possible;
- Implement appropriate health and safety procedures when tending to ill children;
- Advise families that they will need to alert the Centre if their child is diagnosed with an infectious illness;

- Maintain their own immunisation status, and advise the Nominated Supervisor of any updates to their immunisation status;
- Provide varied opportunities for children to engage in hygiene practices, including routine opportunities, and intentional practice;
- Take into consideration the grouping of children to reduce the risk of acquiring an infectious illness when planning the routines/program of the day;
- Implement the Centre's health and hygiene procedures including hand washing (washing and drying thoroughly, and remembering to include babies when hand washing); routine and daily cleaning of Centre; nappy changing procedures; wearing gloves (particularly when in direct contact with body fluids); and proper handling and preparation of food.
- Provide opportunities for staff, children and families to have access to health professionals by organising visits/guest speakers to attend the Centre to ensure that practices in place at the Centre are correct; and
- Maintain currency about Health and Safety by attending appropriate professional development opportunities.

Families will:

- Advise the Centre of their child's immunisation status, and provide written documentation of this for the Centre to copy and keep with the child's enrolment records.
- Advise the Centre when their child's immunisation/medical condition is updated and provide this information to the Centre to ensure that enrolment records are up-to-date.
- Keep their child at home if they are unwell or have an excludable infectious disease.
- Inform the Centre if their child has an infectious disease or has been in contact with a person who has an infectious disease. Keep their child at home when an infectious disease has been diagnosed at the Centre and their child is not fully immunised, until there are no more occurrences of that disease and the exclusion period has ceased.
- Provide input into the review and effectiveness of policies and procedures of the Centre via various methods.

Infection control measures for staff, visitors and families

- To be aware that transmission of infectious diseases, especially respiratory and diarrhoeal infections, occurs more frequently in the child care environment because of the close contact between many children and staff, and that using standard infection control precautions will reduce transmission and risks.
- Ensure the use of additional barriers such as disposable gloves in nappy changing, assisting children who have had a toileting accident, in nose blowing, food preparation and administering first aid.
- Regular cleaning of the indoor environment of the Centre (refer to Cleaners' Duties).
- Daily cleaning of toilet, nappy change area, food preparation area, taps, door handles and flush handles (see *Cleanliness Procedure*).
- Regularly wash and clean toys and play equipment. Wash toys daily that have or are likely to have been mouthed by children. Record this on the daily cleaning sheet.
- If possible soiled clothes will be rinsed and sent home in a sealed bag, kept inaccessible to children.
- Be aware that transmission of infection is more likely to occur when infants and children who are not toilet-trained are mixed with children who are toilet-trained.
- Ensure children and staff don't share brushes, combs, toothbrushes, bottles, dummies, towels and hats.
- Ensure safe disposal of soiled nappies in accordance with the Centre's *Nappy Change Procedure*.
- Ensure Centre staff **always** wears gloves where they are likely to be exposed to blood, faeces, urine, or other body fluids (including any activity where there might be contact with a child's mucous membranes such as the nose, mouth or genital area, or when handling any items or materials that have come into contact with blood or body fluids).
- Separate ill children from well children and keep under supervision until they can be picked up by their family or nominated responsible person (in accordance with the Centre's *Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Policy*).
- Exclude children who have a respiratory infection, diarrhoea, any vaccine preventable disease, a transmissible skin infection not yet being treated, or any other infectious disease.

- Ensure that medical equipment used for individual staff or children must not be used for any other person and must be cleaned, disinfected or sterilised after each use and in accordance with manufacturers' instructions.
- Only use digital thermometers (not glass or tympanic) and afterwards clean according to the manufacturer's instructions.
- Keep up-to-date information in relevant community languages about infectious diseases, to provide education and advice to culturally and linguistically diverse families.

Children's Immunisation

The Centre will:

- Be aware that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children have a different immunisation schedule because they are at a higher risk of many infectious diseases, especially respiratory and ear infections.
- Distribute a copy of the exclusion guidelines with enrolment package to all families.

If any child, staff, or visitor has a vaccine preventable disease, the Centre is required under the Public Health Act 1991 to:

- inform the local Public Health Unit directly and ask for advice,
- inform in writing, or request the Public Health Unit to inform in writing, all families, staff and persons normally working or visiting the premises that an outbreak of the infectious disease has occurred,
- contact the local Public Health Unit to seek advice about exclusion of children and staff who are not immunised or do not have up-to-date immunisation until the outbreak has been resolved,
- ask the Public Health Unit for advice on exclusion of children too young to be immunised for that disease,
- on instruction of the Public Health Unit inform in writing (or ask the PHU to inform in writing) any staff member or family of any child who is excluded, giving the reason and length of exclusion period.

At enrolment ask parent/guardian are to be made aware that:

- the Centre requires a copy of their child's up-to-date immunisation history statement.
- it is the family's responsibility to ensure their child's immunisation is up-to-date. A child who is not immunised or whose immunisation is not up-to-date may be excluded during an outbreak of a vaccine preventable disease, and
- the PHU, or the Centre on their advice, will inform families when a vaccine preventable disease occurs in anyone attending, working or visiting the Centre, what action needs to be taken to protect children, staff and others from risk of infection, and exclusion of children or staff from the Centre until the outbreak resolves.

Staff Immunisation practices

In recognition of duty of care responsibilities, staff will be required to complete a Staff Immunisation Record and keep this up to date. This information will remain confidential and will be kept in the employees file. Staff are responsible for updating this record as their immunisation is updated.

The Centre will minimise the risk of exposure of staff to infectious diseases transmitted from children in their care and prevent illness and other risks from vaccine preventable diseases by appropriate immunisation.

The Centre will:

- Provide information to Centre staff on current recommended immunisations for all staff in accordance with current Australian Standard Vaccination Schedule and the current edition of the *Australian Immunisation Handbook*.
 - All Australians should have received vaccination in childhood against diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis, polio, measles, mumps and rubella. Adults who have not received these vaccinations should seek advice from their own doctor in relation to the requirements of the latest edition of the *Australian Immunisation Handbook*.
 - Recommended immunisation for children's centre staff:

- Hepatitis A
 - Measles, mumps, rubella (MMR)
 - Varicella (for seronegative staff) – Chicken Pox
 - Adult Diphtheria, Tetanus, acellular Pertussis (adult DTPa) – Whooping Cough
 - A dose of DTPa vaccine is recommended as a booster for staff providing they have previously received a full course of vaccination for diphtheria and tetanus.
 - MMR vaccine is recommended for staff born during or since 1966. Staff should have evidence of receiving two doses of MMR vaccine. Staff should have their rubella antibody status checked and if seronegative they should have two doses of MMR vaccine one month apart, and have their rubella immunity checked to ensure they are seropositive before employment in children’s services. Pregnant staff should not receive MMR vaccine, and MMR vaccine should be given at least 1 month before planning a pregnancy.
 - Varicella vaccine is recommended for staff who have not had varicella or are uncertain if they have had varicella. Such staff should seek advice from their own doctor in relation to the requirements of the latest edition of the *Australian Immunisation Handbook* before commencing employment in child care.
 - Hepatitis B is not recommended for staff because of the low risk of exposure. However, the NOHSC (National Occupational Health and Safety Commission) Consensus Statement on Hepatitis B and the Workplace states "Vaccinations should be offered by employers to those people working in occupations where there is a risk of exposure to human blood or body fluids". If a staff member is likely to be involved in any emergency procedure or giving first aid to children, or they are at risk of exposure to blood or body fluids, they should discuss the risk of hepatitis B exposure with their doctor and have hepatitis B vaccination if indicated.
- Recommended immunisation boosters for adults:
- Diphtheria and tetanus (DTPa) age 15-17 and 50 years.
 - Pneumococcal vaccine for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 50 years and over.
 - Annual influenza vaccine for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 50 years and over.
- Advise all staff before commencing work that the above recommendations for immunisation will minimise transmission and risks of those infectious diseases in children and staff. If a staff member has concerns about these diseases or immunisations they should seek advice from their doctor before commencing work.
 - The Management Committee pays 100% of staff immunisation for permanent members of staff.
 - Advise all staff that if an outbreak of a vaccine preventable disease occurs in the Centre, staff members should inform the Centre Nominated Supervisor if they are not immunised against that disease. Non-immunised staff should consult their doctor to determine if it is appropriate for them not to attend work during the outbreak and discuss any issues relating to their immunisation or other medical management.

Evaluation:

Infection control is effectively managed at the Centre to ensure children remain healthy and transmission of infectious diseases are minimised.

Sources: Guide to the National Quality Standard (3) ACECQA (2011); Guide to the Education and Care Services National Law and the Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011; Staying Healthy in Child Care – Preventing Infectious Diseases in Child Care - 5th Edition (2012); NSW Ministry of Health: www.health.nsw.gov.au/; National Health and Medical Research Council: www.nhmrc.gov.au/; Community Child Care Cooperative Policy Template: Infectious Diseases; The Australian Immunisation Handbook, 9th edition, NHMRC, 2008 at: <http://www.immunise.health.gov.au/handbook.htm>; Australian Standard Vaccination Schedule: www.health.gov.au/pubhlth/immunise/schedule_n2.htm.

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