

Early Learning

Hygiene and Infectious Disease Policy

Policy Statement

Uniting Early Learning is committed to:

- providing a safe and healthy environment for all children, educator/staff/educators and any other persons attending the service;
- the consistent implementation of effective hygiene practices;
- implementing infection control procedures to minimise the likelihood of cross-infection and the spread of infectious diseases and illnesses to children, educator/staff/educators and any other persons in attendance at the service;
- responding to the needs of the child or adult who presents with symptoms of an infectious disease or infestation while attending the service;
- complying with current regulatory exclusion schedules and guidelines;
- providing current and accessible resources for families, and educator/staff/educators regarding the protection of all children from infection.

Executive Summary

Infections are common in children and often lead to illness. A person with an infection may or may not show signs of illness and, in many instances, the infectious phase of the illness may be in the period before symptoms become apparent, or during the recovery phase. While it is not possible to prevent all infections in education and care environments, services can prevent or control the spread of many infectious diseases by; adopting effective hand hygiene, complying with the minimum period of exclusion guidelines and timeframes for ill children, educators, other educator/staff/educators and visitors and immunisation.

Where an infectious disease has been identified, a parent, authorised nominee or emergency contact of each child at the service must be notified as soon as is practicable, and reasonable steps taken to prevent the spread of that infectious disease. The service must inform DET, DHHS, Education and Care Unit (Tas), Communicable Diseases Prevention and Control Unit and the relevant parents within 24 hours of becoming aware that a child is suffering or believed to be suffering from an infectious disease, or if a child not immunised against the disease has been in contact with an infected person at the service.

Information about the Department of Health and Human Services minimum exclusion periods (refer to *Glossary*) must be displayed at the service and strictly adhered to. Any exclusion of a child will be based on firm medical evidence following diagnosis of an infectious disease, or on recommendations from the DHHS Communicable Diseases Prevention and Control Unit.

Parents of children attending the service should be provided with information and resources to assist in the identification and management of infectious diseases and infestations. They should be advised at enrolment of their responsibilities regarding advising the service if their child has an infectious disease or head lice. All families must have completed a *Consent form to conduct head lice inspections* on enrolment.

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Current Environmental Context

The Public Health and Wellbeing Amendment (No Jab No Play) Act 2015 (Vic) was introduced to increase immunisation rates for young children in the community. This means that the Responsible Person of an early learning service must ensure that the enrolment of a child is not confirmed unless a parent of the child has provided an immunisation status certificate (refer to *Glossary*) indicating that, in relation to a date that is not more than 2 months immediately before the child attends the service the child is age appropriately immunised. For further information refer to the *Enrolment and Orientation Policy*.

As of 1 November 2018, legislation requires early childhood education and care services to ensure parents and carers of children attending their service provide an updated immunisation history statement twice a year. This is in addition to the original requirement, which requires parents and carers to provide evidence of their child's up to date immunisation in order to initially enrol in an early childhood service. The No Jab No Play regulations specify that parents and carers must provide the service with evidence that their child continues to be up to date with immunisations while attending the service at intervals of no greater than seven months.

Attachment 28a: Responsibilities relating to the Hygiene & Infectious Diseases Policy

Attachment 28b: Nappy change procedure

Attachment 28c: Handwashing guidelines can be downloaded from the website of the National Health and Medical Research Council (refer to Sources).

Attachment 28d: Toileting procedures.

Attachment 28e: Procedures for infection control relating to blood-borne viruses

Form No 28.1: Consent form to conduct head lice inspections

Form No 28.2: Head lice action form

Form No 28.3: Head lice notification letter

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Reference/Sources

This policy should be read in conjunction with:

Keeping Children Safe Policy of the Uniting Church in Australia Synod of Victoria and Tasmania, Approved May 2017

- *Administration of First Aid Policy*
- *Administration of Medication Policy*
- *Dealing with Medical Conditions Policy*
- *Enrolment and Orientation Policy*
- *Food Safety Policy*
- *Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Policy*
- *Workplace Health and Safety Policy-L2*
- *Privacy and Confidentiality Policy-L2*
- *A guide for the management and control of gastroenteritis outbreaks in children's centres.* Communicable Disease Prevention and Control Unit, Department of Health (2010) Victorian Government, Melbourne:
<https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/about/publications/researchandreports/A-guide-to-for-the-management-and-control-of-gastroenteritis-outbreaks-in-childrens-centres>
- *Blue Book: Guidelines for the control of infectious diseases.* Communicable Diseases Section, Public Health Group, Victorian Department of Health and Human Services (2011)
https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/getfile/?sc_itemid=%7b7A1F05A1-64B0-4B8C-A730-D4F8F107AA52%7d&title=The%20blue%20book
- *Children's Services Act 1996* Section: 41, 29
- *Children's Services Regulations 2009* Regulation: 68,78, 89, 101, 102, 103
- Communicable Disease and Prevention Control Unit: phone – 1300 651 160:
<https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/public-health/infectious-diseases/infection-control-guidelines>
- Department of Health and Human Services – Communicable Disease Prevention and Control Section ☎ 1300 651 160 Email: immunisation@dhhs.vic.gov.au Web: <https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/public-health/infectious-diseases/infection-control-guidelines>
- Department of Health and Human Services - Immunisation Section ☎ 1300 882 008 (Mon-Fri 9am to 12 midday and 2pm to 3pm) All other times please email your immunisation enquiry to: immunisation@dhhs.vic.gov.au Web: www.health.vic.gov.au/immunisation
- Department of Health and Human Services, Victoria. Food Safety: <https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/public-health/food-safety>
- *Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011:* Regulations 77, 106, 109, 112, 168
- *Head lice management guidelines.* Department of Health and Human Services, Victoria (2012)
<https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/about/publications/policiesandguidelines/Head%20lice%20management%20guidelines>
- *Immunisation enrolment toolkit for early childhood services.* Department of Health and Human Services
<https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/public-health/immunisation/vaccination-children/no-jab-no-play>
- *National Quality Standard.* Quality Area 2: Children's Health and Safety
- *National Quality Standard.* Quality Area 6: Collaborative Partnerships with Families and Communities
- *No Jab No Play* information for parents https://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/~/_media/BHC/Files/Campaign/no-jab/No%20Jab%20No%20Play%20-%20Information%20for%20parents%20and%20carers%20-%20February%202018

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- *Staying Healthy: Preventing infectious diseases in early childhood education and care services* (5th edition) National Health and Medical Research Council (2013): <https://nhmrc.gov.au/about-us/publications/staying-healthy-preventing-infectious-diseases-early-childhood-education-and-care-services>
- *Tasmanian Licensing Standards for Centre Based Child Care Class 5 (2014) Standard 12 Health, Hygiene and Infection Control, 12.1, 12.2.*

Authorisation

This policy was adopted by Uniting Early Learning on: 17 December 2018

Review

This policy is to be reviewed by: 17 December 2020

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