

# INFECTIOUS DISEASES POLICY

To be read in conjunction with Immunisation and Disease Prevention Policy

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## 1 NQS

QA2	2.1.2	Effective illness and injury management and hygiene practices are promoted and implemented.
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## 2 National Regulations

Regs	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
	162	Health information to be kept in enrolment record

## 3 Aim

To reduce the spread of infectious diseases through appropriate hygiene and education practices.

To ensure that we are meeting all reporting and regulatory requirements to support the health and wellbeing of children, families and staff in our services.

## 4 Definitions

An infectious disease is a disease that is caused by an organism, that is not normally found in the body and is capable of causing infection. Viruses, bacteria, fungi or parasites commonly cause infectious diseases. They are spread through:

- i. Intestinal tract, via faeces
- ii. Respiratory tract, via secretions or fluid from the nose or the mouth
- iii. Direct contact via touching, kissing and sharing contaminated objects
- iv. Blood contact

Educators, other staff and children may be carriers of a variety of infections without any clinical evidence of disease. It is important that educators, other staff and children maintain healthy and hygienic practices in order to minimise cross infection.

## 5 Related Policies

The Kids' Uni Policies and Procedures apply to Kids' Uni North, Kids' Uni South, Kids Uni CBD, Kids Uni iC.

Enrolment and Booking Policy (CHI-ADM-POL-022)

Nutrition, Food Safety & Allergen Management Policy (CHI-ADM-POL-027)

Health, Hygiene and Cleaning Policy (CHI-ADM-POL-030)

Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Policy (CHI-ADM-POL-034)

Medical Conditions Policy (CHI-ADM-POL-038)  
Physical Environment Policy (CHI-ADM-POL-046)  
UOW Pulse Immunisation Guidelines

## 6 Who is affected by this Policy?

Children  
Families  
Educators  
Management  
Visitors  
Volunteers

## 7 Implementation

- 7.1 We will minimise the spread of potential infectious diseases between children and educators by excluding children and educators who may have an infectious disease or are too ill to attend the service and by facilitating the prevention and effective management of acute illness in children.
- 7.2 Infection controlled measures are aimed at eliminating the source of infection, preventing transmission of infection and protecting susceptible people.
- 7.3 The service will use the Recommended Minimum Periods of Exclusion outlined in Table 1 in the National Health and Medical Research Council publication, *Staying Healthy – Preventing Infectious Diseases in Early Childhood Education and Care Services 5<sup>th</sup> edition*, to exclude children and educators and inform parents of exclusion and non-exclusion periods for infectious diseases.
- 7.4 If the child's symptom's develop while the child is present at the centre, the educators will notify the child's parents or nominated contacts immediately to inform them that their child has symptoms of an infectious disease. The child will need to be collected from the centre and will be required to provide a medical clearance from a doctor before they can return to the centre. (*Refer to Clause 8 of this policy*).
- 7.5 All families must be notified if there is an infectious disease present in the service. We will use copies of the facts sheets from *Staying Healthy – Preventing Infectious Diseases in Early Childhood Education and Care Services 5<sup>th</sup> edition* to display in the centre or send out via Kinderloop to inform families of the details of the infectious disease that this present.
- 7.6 All appropriate notifications to the local Public Health Unit are available under the 'Infectious Diseases requiring Notification to the local Public Health Unit' (see below) and must occur within 24 hours. The Nominated Supervisor is responsible for notifying the local Public Health Unit.
- 7.7 Children might be brought to care with symptoms or signs of illness, or while in care suddenly develop an illness that has not been diagnosed by a doctor, and that might be potentially infectious or life-threatening for the child. Symptoms may not clearly fit those listed in exclusion diseases making it difficult for the service to decide whether to accept or exclude the child from the service. If we suspect a child may have an infectious disease, we will exclude the child until we receive a medical certificate stating the child is not contagious and is okay to attend the service.

- 7.8 Some non-exclusion diseases can make a child too ill to participate in normal care activities. Children who are unable to participate in the daily routine or elements of the program should not attend the service.
- 7.9 If an infectious disease arises at the service we will respond to any symptoms in the following manner -
- i. Isolate the child from other children.
  - ii. Ensure the child is comfortable and appropriately supervised by educators.
  - iii. Contact the child's parents or nominated emergency contact. If the child's parents are unavailable we will contact the next nominated person. We will inform the contact of the child's condition and ask for a parent or other authorised person to pick the child up as quickly as possible. Any person picking the child up from the service must be approved by the child's parents and be able to show identification.
  - iv. Ensure all bedding, towels and clothing which has been used by the child is cleaned. These items will be washed separately and if possible air dried in the sun.
  - v. Ensure all toys used by the child are cleaned.
  - vi. Provide information in the child's home languages to the best of our ability.
  - vii. Inform all service families and educators of the presence of an infectious disease once confirmed.
  - viii. Ensure confidentiality of any personal health related information obtained by the service and educators in relation to any child or their family.
  - x. If a child or educator has been unable to attend the service because of an infectious illness the person must provide a doctors certificate which specifically states the child/educator is okay to return to the service.

## **8 Parents informing the Service of an Infectious Disease**

Parents/Guardians are asked to inform the service immediately about an infectious disease that has been discovered in their family. This is important to minimise the risk of spread of the illness.

## **9 Children returning to the Service after Contracting an Infectious Disease / Illness**

9.1 Children, who have contracted an infectious disease, may only return to the service on presentation of a medical certificate, which confirms that they are no longer infectious. The Nominated Supervisor is not permitted to allow these children to return without this appropriate medical clearance.

Medical clearance letters cannot be provided by the child's family members, regardless of their medical training and background.

9.2 The requirement for a medical certificate pertains to all infectious diseases except for:

- a common cold. Children can return to the service following a cold once they are well enough to participate in the program and their symptoms have cleared.
- vomiting or diarrhoea. Children may return to the centre 24 hours after their last loose bowel motion or episode of vomiting.

*(NB: during an outbreak we will follow the advice of the Public Health Unit and medical certificates may be required).*

- 9.3 While it is a Medical Practitioner's role to provide a medical certificate it is the Nominated Supervisor who has the ultimate responsibility for deciding if a child is well enough to return to the service.
- 9.4 If there is a difference of opinion between Parents/Medical Practitioner and the educators about whether a child is well enough to return to the service, the Nominated Supervisor should seek advice from the services local Public Health Unit in attempt to resolve this issue.

## 10 Infectious Diseases requiring Notification to the local Public Health Unit

- 10.1 Our Nominated Supervisor will notify the local Public Health Unit by telephone as soon as possible (and within 24 hours) after they are made aware that a child enrolled at the service is suffering from a vaccine preventable disease. Refer to *Staying Healthy – Preventing Infectious Diseases in Early Childhood Education and Care Services 5<sup>th</sup> edition Table 1.3* for a list of vaccine preventable diseases.
- 10.2 NSW local Public Health unit directory and contact details are available on the following NSW Health website –  
<http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/Infectious/Pages/phus.aspx>
- 10.3 As outlined in the Public Health Act 2010 (NSW), Division 4 vaccine preventable diseases, section 88, the Nominated Supervisor of a service is required to notify the local Public Health Unit of any vaccine preventable infectious disease occurrences at the service.

Our Nominated Supervisor will comply with any directions given by the Public Health Unit in relation to the notification. The Public Health Act 2010 (NSW) can be accessed by using the following link <http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/phact/pages/default.aspx>

## 11 Recommended Immunisations for Educators

- 11.1 In line with the NSW Department of Health, Public Health Order (*Public Health (COVID-19 Vaccination of Education and Care Workers) Order 2021*) that comes into effect on 8<sup>th</sup> November, 2021, all staff and visitors in our services will be required to provide a copy of their COVID-19 vaccination record which will be sighted and recorded. Please also refer to the *UOW Pulse Immunisation Guidelines*.
- 11.2 The National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) recommend that educators should be immunised against:
  - i. Hepatitis A
  - ii. Measles-Mumps-Rubella (MMR) - Educators born during or since 1966 who do not have vaccination records of two doses of MMR, or do not have antibodies for rubella, require vaccination.
  - iii. Varicella, if they have not previously been infected with chickenpox.
  - iv. Pertussis. An adult booster dose is especially important for those educators caring for the youngest children who are not fully vaccinated.

11.3 Although the risk is low, educators who care for children with intellectual disabilities should seek advice about Hepatitis B immunisation if the children are unimmunised.

11.4 Our service will: -

- Regularly provide educators and staff with information about diseases that can be prevented by immunisation through in-service training sessions, fact sheets and the Staying Healthy in Childcare publication.
- Regularly advise educators and staff that some infectious diseases may injure an unborn child if the mother is infected while pregnant.
- Encourage all non-immune staff to be vaccinated and advise female educators / staff who are not fully immunised to consider doing so before getting pregnant.
- Advise pregnant educators and staff to review the Staying Healthy in Childcare publication and consult their medical practitioner to consider the risks of continuing to work at the service.

## 12 Recommended Minimum Periods of Exclusion

12.1 Exclusion periods are maintained in accordance with advice provided in the National Health and Medical Research Council publication - *Staying Healthy – Preventing Infectious Diseases in Early Childhood Education and Care Services 5<sup>th</sup> edition*, Commonwealth of Australia 2012.

12.2 Children who have a specific health need eg HIV, Cancer, Asthma, Diabetes, Epilepsy, Hepatitis C or Cystic Fibrosis can alternate from good to bad health and vice versa. Due to the nature and severity of the medical condition and possible side effects of the medication the immune system of the child may be weakened. The child may even need to be kept away from the service depending on their health.

The Nominated Supervisor should discuss management of these situations with the family at the time of enrolment or at the time the condition is diagnosed.

## 13 Confidentiality

13.1 If the Nominated Supervisor is told that a child or child's Parent/Guardian or member of the family is infected with HIV, Hepatitis C, the information must remain confidential, unless that person has given their consent to inform educators and other staff.

13.2 The Nominated Supervisor may explain the benefits to the child if all carers are informed, and that under no circumstances will other Parents/Guardians or their children be told, unless specifically requested by the child's parents.

13.3 If educators, other staff or parents/guardians request that information remain confidential, and this request is breached, legal action could ensue.

## 14 Unknown infectious diseases or outbreaks

From time to time, there could be an outbreak of a new illness that is not immunisation preventable or that is new to the community (eg. COVID-19). During such times, our services will follow the advice of the Australian Department of Health, the NSW Public Health Unit and the NSW Department of Education.

Nominated Supervisors will develop risk assessments as needed and these will guide practice based on the recommendations at the time from the above government agencies. This advice may override other clauses in this policy.

## 15 Sources

Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011  
 National Quality Standard  
 Department of Health, National Immunisation Program Schedule  
 NHMRC. Staying Healthy – Preventing Infectious Diseases in Early Childhood Education and care Services 5<sup>th</sup> edition, Commonwealth of Australia 2012  
 Work Health and Safety Act 2011 (NSW)  
 Work Health and Safety Regulations 2011  
 Public Health Act 2010  
 Public Health Regulation 2012  
 NSW Ministry of Health  
*Public Health (COVID-19 Vaccination of Education and Care Workers) Order 2021*

## 16 Review

The policy will be reviewed every 2 years. The review will include:- Management, Employees, Families, Interested Parties.

## 17 Version Control

Version Control	Date Released	Next Review	Approved By	Amendment
1	February 2012	February 2013	Michele Fowler Manager – Kids Uni	
2	February 2013	February 2014	Michele Fowler Manager – Kids Uni	Paragraph inserted re application of policies across all centres. Migrated into new QA format. This policy replaces the Infectious Disease Issue for Staff Policy and the Reporting Notifiable Diseases Policy.
3	August 2013	August 2014	Michele Fowler Manager – Kids Uni	Updates added as per 'centre support' improvements along with table of exclusions updated to reflect 'staying healthy in child care 5 <sup>th</sup> edition' updates.
4	Aug 2014	Aug 2015	Michele Fowler Manager – Kids Uni	Reviewed with no changes required
5	Sep 2015	Sep 2016	M. Gillmore – General Manager	Reviewed and no changes required
6	Jul 2018	Jul 2020	K.Grose – Children's Services Manager	Updated NQS and Regs references. Removed tables duplicated from Staying Healthy in Child Care and replaced with links to ensure the information remains current. Added requirement for all families to be notified of presence of an infectious disease in service. The review period changed to 2 years.
7	November 2019	July 2020	Nicole Bray – Director Kids Uni iC	Updated to reflect name changes to Kids Uni iC
8	August 2020	August 2022	K.Grose – Children's Services Manager	Changed requirement for medical certificates – these cannot be provided by family members. Clarified when medical certificates are required. Added clause to address outbreaks of unknown illnesses. Added a definition of an infectious disease.

9	November 2021	November 2023	K.Grose – Children's Services Manager	Added requirements for COVID-19 vaccinations Added reference to the UOW Pulse Immunisation Guidelines Added reference to the <i>Public Health (COVID-19 Vaccination of Education and Care Workers) Order 2021</i>
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