

Background

Parents, staff and visitors to early childhood education and care services need to cooperate to ensure anyone entering the Service is in good health so that the possibility of infections spreading to others is minimized.

Policy statement

The policy details the Services practices for managing unwell children and adults at the Service to minimize the spread of infection to others.

Strategies and practices

- The *Managing Infectious Diseases Policy* is explained to parents when they enroll their child in the Service, and their attention is specifically drawn to their responsibilities under the policy. Information about infectious conditions and minimum exclusion periods for these conditions is included in the Parent Handbook provided to parents at enrolment.

Under the *Public Health Act 2005* a parent/guardian must not send their child to the Service: -

- If the parent knows or suspects that the child has a prescribed contagious condition, or if the Nominated Supervisor has directed the parent to remove the child from the Service for the prescribed period for the condition.

Under the *Public Health Act 2005* the Service has an obligation to reduce the spread of contagious conditions by: -

- Advising the parent if they suspect that the child may have a prescribed contagious condition and if the child continues to attend, the Service may direct the parent to remove the child until the child is no longer contagious. If an unvaccinated child is at risk of contracting a contagious condition, the parent may be directed to remove the unvaccinated child until the outbreak is declared over.

Any action taken would be done after consultation with the Public Health Unit.

The medical conditions prescribed as contagious are: - diphtheria, enterovirus 71, gastroenteritis outbreaks, Hemophilus influenza type b (Hib), hepatitis A, measles, meningococcal disease, pertussis (whooping cough), polio, rubella, typhoid, paratyphoid, varicella (chickenpox), COVID-19

A child can be readmitted if: -

- The child has a medical certificate stating that the child does not have the condition, the prescribed period for the condition has ended, or the child has been advised to return by the Public Health Unit.

A prescribed period is the minimum period of exclusion from the Service for children with a contagious condition, or for unvaccinated children at risk because of contact with a child with a prescribed condition. Refer to "Staying Healthy – 5th Ed" for exclusion periods.

1. Educators are informed of the symptoms of excludable illnesses and diseases and of infection control through staff meetings and professional development and are provided with educational materials. They are alert to the signs of illness in children and respond accordingly. The signs include: -
 - a. Severe, persistent or prolonged coughing
 - b. Breathing difficulties (e.g. noisy, wheezy)
 - c. Yellowish skin or eyes
 - d. Irritated eyes, eye lining red, pus from eyes
 - e. Unusual spots or rashes
 - f. Vomiting and/or diarrhoea
 - g. Temperature over 38 degrees Celsius
 - h. Behaviour exhibited that is not 'normal' for the child (e.g., sleeping, being unable to participate in the daily activities as usual)
2. The Services roster ensures sufficient educators with first aid qualifications are always on site when children are present.
3. All instances of illnesses and infectious diseases (children and staff) are recorded in the Illness and Infectious Disease Register so that they may be tracked and any spread minimised. The register is kept in the main office.
4. Educators intentionally teach children health and safety practices to prevent the spread of contagious diseases.
5. The Service strictly adheres to the National Health and Medical Research Council's recommended minimum exclusion periods for infectious conditions. The Time Out Poster – Queensland Health and/or the Recommended Minimum Exclusion Periods Poster – NHMRC detailing these periods is displayed prominently in the foyer and in other areas of the Service.
6. If an outbreak of an infectious disease occurs in the Service, parents are informed verbally and by notices displayed throughout the Service. Information provided to parents will include the nature of the illness, symptoms, incubation and infectious periods and the Services exclusion requirements for the illness.
7. The Service maintains a Non-Immunised Children - Register and a Non-Immunised Staff – Register. Where an outbreak is a vaccine preventable disease, the Service will notify the relevant health authority, and will follow that authority's recommended guidelines and directives. Children and staff who are not immunised may be excluded from the Service for the duration of the outbreak. Refer to the Services Immunisation for Children and Staff Policy.
8. In the case of serious ill health or hospitalisation, the child or staff member may be asked to provide a medical certificate verifying that they are sufficiently recovered to return to the Service. However, the Nominated Supervisor has the final say on whether the child or a staff member may return.
9. Parents are asked not to bring any unwell child into the Service, and not to enter the Service if they are unwell themselves. The Nominated Supervisor can refuse entry to any child or adult (including a staff member) who comes to the Service clearly unwell.

10. Should a child become unwell during the day, the parents or authorised person are contacted immediately to collect the child. The parent will be asked to sign the Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Record. If appropriate, the parent will be provided with a Report of Illness Form.
11. Staff who become ill during the day are sent home and replaced.
12. To ensure the safety of other children, staff and visitors, parents are asked to inform the Service if their child has been exposed to any infectious diseases.

Additional safe practices for babies

- To take extra care to adhere to all health and safety procedures e.g., nappy change, bottle preparation, at the first sign of any outbreak of illness in the Service.

Responsibilities of parents

- To keep the Service informed of their child's current immunisation status.
- To provide, if requested, a medical certificate verifying that the child who has been unwell has sufficiently recovered to return to the Service.
- To keep unwell children away from the Service.
- To remain away from the Service when they themselves are unwell.
- To arrange prompt collection of their unwell child if contacted by the Service.
- To inform the Service at any time their child has been exposed to an infectious disease.

Procedure and forms

- Illness and Infectious Diseases Register (Child and Employee)
- Incident, Injury, Illness and Trauma Record
- Recommended Minimum Exclusion Periods Poster – NHMRC
- Non-Immunised Children Register
- Non-Immunised Staff Register
- Record of Temperature
- Report of Illness Record
- Time Out Poster – Queensland Health
- Time Out Brochure – Queensland Health
- Illness Management Procedure
- Reporting Infectious Diseases Procedure

Links to other policies

- Enrolment and Orientation Policy
- Immunisation for Children and Staff Policy
- Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Policy

Links Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011, National Quality Standard 2011

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

QA	2.1.1	Each child's wellbeing and comfort is provided for, including appropriate opportunities to meet each child's need for sleep, rest and relaxation
	2.1.2	Effective illness and injury management and hygiene practices are promoted and implemented
	7.1.2	Systems are in place to manage risk and enable the effective management and operation of a quality service

Sources

- Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011
- Guide to the National Quality Standard 2020
- National Health and Medical Research Council. (2024). *Staying Healthy: Preventing infectious diseases in early childhood education and care services*. 6th edition. <https://www.nhmrc.gov.au/about-us/publications/staying-healthy-preventing-infectious-diseases> accessed 25 June 2025

Further reading and useful websites

- Department of Health (Australian Government). *National Immunisation Program* <https://www.health.gov.au/initiatives-and-programs/national-immunisation-program> accessed 25 June 2025
- National Health and Medical Research Council – <http://www.nhmrc.gov.au/> accessed 25 June 2025
- Queensland Health – <http://www.health.qld.gov.au/> accessed 25 June 2025
- Queensland Health. (2014). *Time Out Poster*. https://www.health.qld.gov.au/ph/documents/cdb/timeout_poster.pdf accessed 25 June 2025
- Royal Children's Hospital Melbourne – <http://www.rch.org.au/home/> accessed 25 June 2025

Policy review

The Service encourages staff and parents to be actively involved in the annual review of each of its policies and procedures. In addition, the Service will accommodate any new legislative changes as they occur, and any issues identified as part the Service's commitment to quality improvement. The Service consults with relevant recognised authorities as part of the annual review to ensure the policy contents are consistent with current research and contemporary views on best practice.

Version Control

Version	Date Reviewed	Approved By	Comments/Amendments	Next Review Date
1	8 January 2018	Kaylene Harper	Updated to changed NQF requirements 1 February 2018.	January 2019
2	5 February 2019	Kaylene Harper	Policy reviewed. Sources and further readings accessed and updated.	February 2020
3	30 January 2020	Kaylene Harper	Policy reviewed. Sources and further readings accessed and updated.	January 2021
4	25 September 2020	Kaylene Harper	Reviewed policy.	September 2021

Managing Infectious Diseases

			Accessed sources and further readings.	
5	18 February 2021	Kaylene Harper	Reviewed policy. Added COVID-19 to list of infectious diseases.	February 2022
6	23 February 2021	Kaylene Harper	Reviewed policy. Revised location of COVID-19.	February 2022
7	9 September 2021	Kaylene Harper	Reviewed policy	September 2022
8	6 October 2022	Linda Hollard	Reviewed policy Accessed sources	October 2022
9	22 August 2023	Grace McKinstry	Reviewed policy. Accessed sources and further readings.	August 2024
10	9 July 2024	Tiffany Boeske	Reviewed policy Accessed sources	July 2025
11	25 June 2025	Gen Mahaki	Annual review and update of sources/websites.	June 2026