

DEALING WITH INFECTIOUS DISEASES POLICY

Effective Date:

Date last reviewed:

Endorsed by:

Scheduled review date:

Version No:

Mandatory – Quality Area 2

Purpose

This policy will provide clear guidelines and procedures to follow when:

- a child attending Hampton Park Community House shows symptoms of an infectious disease
- a child at Hampton Park Community House has been diagnosed with an infectious disease
- managing and minimising the spread of infectious diseases, illnesses and infestations (including head lice)
- managing and minimising infections relating to blood-borne viruses
- managing and minimising infections relating to epidemics (refer to *Definitions*) and pandemics (refer to *Definitions*) (e.g. coronavirus (COVID-19))

Policy statement

1. Values

Hampton Park Community House is committed to:

- providing a safe and healthy environment for all children, staff and any other persons attending 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
- preventing the spread of vaccine-preventable diseases
- complying with current exclusion schedules and guidelines set by the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS)
- complying with the advice of the Australian Health Protection Principal Committee (AHPPC), Victorian Chief Health Officer and DHHS

- providing up-to-date information and resources for families and staff regarding protection of all children from infectious diseases and blood-borne viruses, management of infestations and immunisation programs.

Hampton Park Community House supports the Immunise Australia Program and National Immunisation Program (NIP), which is currently recommended by the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) and supported by the Commonwealth Government. All educators/staff at Hampton Park Community House are committed to preventing the spread of infectious diseases through simple hygiene practices such as hand washing, effective cleaning procedures and assessing acceptable immunisation documentation and complying with recommended exclusion guidelines and timeframes for children and educators/staff

Scope

This policy applies to the Approved Provider, Person with Management or Control, Nominated Supervisor, Person in day-to-day Charge, staff, students on placement, volunteers, parents/guardians, children and others attending the programs and activities of Hampton Park Community House, including during offsite excursions and activities.

Background and legislation

Background

Infectious diseases are common in children and adults may also be susceptible. Infectious diseases such as the Chicken Pox, Common Cold, Measles and Mumps, are common in children and adults are also susceptible.

Children are at a greater risk of exposure to infections in a children's service than at home due to the amount of time spent with a large number of other children.

The DHHS publishes the *Minimum Period of Exclusion from Primary Schools and Children's Services Centres for Infectious Diseases Cases and Contacts*, to assist in protecting the public by preventing, or containing, outbreaks of infectious conditions common in schools and children's services and is regulated by the *Public Health and Wellbeing Regulations 2019*.

During an epidemic or pandemic, further instruction and guidance may be issued by the DHHS and the Australian Health Protection Principal Committee (AHPPC).

An approved service must take reasonable steps to prevent the spread of infectious diseases at the service, and ensure that the parent/guardian, authorised nominee or emergency contact of each child enrolled at the service is notified of the occurrence of an infectious disease as soon as possible. The service must have policies and procedures in place for dealing with infectious diseases (Regulation 88 of the *Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011*). The service has a duty of care to ensure

that everyone attending the service is provided with a high level of protection during all hours that the service is in operation. Protection can include:

- notifying (as soon as practicable) children, families and educators/staff when an excludable illness/disease is detected at the service
- complying with relevant health department exclusion guidelines, advice and information
- increasing educator/staff awareness of cross-infection through physical contact with others.

The Victorian Government offers an immunisation program for children to assist in preventing the spread of infectious diseases. There is also the Immunise Australia Program and National Immunisation Program (NIP), which is currently recommended by the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) and supported by the Commonwealth Government.

Early childhood education and care services that are regulated under the *Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010* have obligations under No Jab No Play legislation (*Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008*), including to request, assess and manage immunisation documentation and to assist parents/carers and families who may face difficulties in meeting the requirements (refer to *Enrolment and Orientation Policy*).

Legislation and standards

Relevant legislation and standards include but are not limited to:

2. *Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010*
3. *Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011: Regulation 88*
4. *Family Assistance Legislation Amendment (Jobs for Families Child Care Package) Act 2017*
5. *Health Records Act 2001*
6. *National Quality Standard, Quality Area 2: Children's Health and Safety*
7. *National Quality Standard, Quality Area 6: Collaborative Partnerships with Families and Communities*
8. *No Jab No Play Law (Vic)*
9. *Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004*
10. *Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014 (Vic)*
11. *Privacy Act 1988 (Cwlth)*
12. *Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008*
13. *Public Health and Wellbeing Regulations 2019*

Definitions

The terms defined in this section relate specifically to this policy. For commonly used terms e.g. Approved Provider, Nominated Supervisor, Regulatory Authority etc. refer to the *General Definitions* section of this manual.

Adequate supervision: entails all children (individuals and groups) in all areas of the service, being in sight and/or hearing of an educator at all times including during toileting, sleep, rest and transition routines. Services are required to comply with the legislative requirements for educator-to-child ratios at all times. Supervision contributes to protecting children from hazards that may emerge in play, including hazards created by the equipment used.

Adequate supervision refers to constant, active and diligent supervision of every child at the service. Adequate supervision requires that educators are always in a position to observe each child, respond to individual needs and immediately intervene if necessary. Variables affecting supervision levels include:

- number, age and abilities of children
- number and positioning of educators
- current activity of each child
- areas in which the children are engaged in an activity (visibility and accessibility)
- developmental profile of each child and of the group of children
- experience, knowledge and skill of each educator
- need for educators to move between areas (effective communication strategies).

Behaviour guidance plan: A plan that documents strategies to assist an educator in guiding a child with diagnosed behavioural difficulties or challenging behaviours to self-manage his/her behaviour. The plan is developed in consultation with the Nominated Supervisor, educators, parents/guardians and families, and other professional support agencies as applicable.

Challenging behaviour: Behaviour that:

- disrupts others or causes disputes between children, but which is part of normal social development
- infringes on the rights of others
- causes harm or risk to the child, other children, adults or living things
- is destructive to the environment and/or equipment

- inhibits the child's learning and relationship with others
- is inappropriate relative to the child's developmental age and background.

Notifiable complaints: The Regulatory Authority is required to be notified of a complaint that alleges:

- a serious incident has occurred or is occurring while a child is being educated and cared for by a service
- the National Law and/or National Regulations have been contravened.

Complaints of this nature must be reported by the Approved Provider to the Regulatory Authority within 24 hours of the complaint being made (Section 174(2)(b), Regulation 176(2)(b)). If the Approved Provider is unsure whether the matter is a notifiable complaint, it is good practice to contact DET for confirmation.

Notification of complaints must be submitted within 24 hours through either the NQA IT System portal: <http://www.acecqa.gov.au> or where this is not possible, the Regulatory Authority must be contacted directly.

Inclusion Support Program: Funded by the Commonwealth Government to assist services to build their capacity and capability to include children with additional needs in mainstream services; providing them with an opportunity to learn and develop alongside their typically developing peers: <https://www.education.gov.au/>

Mental health: In early childhood, a child's mental health is understood as a child's ability to 'experience, regulate and express emotions; form close and secure interpersonal relationships; and explore the environment and learn – all in the context of family, community and cultural expectations for young children. Infant mental health is synonymous with healthy social and emotional development. <https://beyou.edu.au/>

Preschool Field Officer (PSFO) Program: The role of the PSFO Program is to support the access and participation of children with additional needs in preschool: <http://www.education.vic.gov.au>

Serious incident: A serious incident (regulation 12) is defined as any of the following:

- the death of a child while being educated and cared for at the service or following an incident at the service
- any incident involving serious injury or trauma while the child is being educated and cared for, which
 - a reasonable person would consider required urgent medical attention from a registered medical practitioner; or
 - the child attended or ought reasonably to have attended a hospital e.g. a broken limb*

- any incident involving serious illness of a child while that child is being educated and cared for by a service for which the child attended, or ought reasonably to have attended, a hospital e.g. severe asthma attack, seizure or anaphylaxis*.
 - *NOTE: In some cases (for example rural and remote locations) a General Practitioner conducts consultation from the hospital site. Only treatment related to serious injury or illness or trauma are required to be notified, not other health matters.
- any emergency for which emergency services attended. NOTE: This means an incident, situation or event where there is an imminent or severe risk to the health, safety or wellbeing of a person/s at an education and care service. It does not mean an incident where emergency services attended as a precaution.
- a child appears to be missing or cannot be accounted for at the service
- a child appears to have been taken or removed from the service in a manner that contravenes the National Regulations
- a child was mistakenly locked in or out of the service premises or any part of the premises.

Examples of serious incidents include amputation (e.g. removal of fingers), anaphylactic reaction requiring hospitalisation, asthma requiring hospitalisation, broken bone/fractures, bronchiolitis, burns, diarrhoea requiring hospitalisation, epileptic seizures, head injuries, measles, meningococcal infection, sexual assault, witnessing violence or a frightening event.

If the approved provider is not aware that the incident was serious until sometime after the incident, they must notify the regulatory authority within 24 hours of becoming aware that the incident was serious.

Notifications of serious incidents should be made through the NQA IT System portal (<http://www.acecqa.gov.au>). If this is not practicable, the notification can be made initially in whatever way is best in the circumstances.

Sources and related policies

Sources

- *Behaviour guidance practice note series* (DET): <http://www.education.vic.gov.au>
- *Belonging, Being & Becoming – The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia*: <https://www.education.gov.au/>
- *Early Childhood Australia Code of Ethics*: <http://www.earlychildhoodaustralia.org.au/>

- *Guide to the National Quality Framework*, ACECQA: www.acecqa.gov.au
- Inclusion Support Program (ISP), Department of Education and Training: <https://www.education.gov.au/>
- Kids Matter, an Australian mental health and well-being initiative set in primary schools and early childhood education and care services: <https://beyou.edu.au/>
- *The Kindergarten Funding Guide* (DET): <http://www.education.vic.gov.au>
- United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child: <https://www.unicef.org/>
- Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework: <http://www.education.vic.gov.au>

Service policies

- *Child Safe Environment Policy*
- *Code of Conduct Policy*
- *Complaints and Grievances Policy*
- *Curriculum Development Policy*
- *Inclusion and Equity Policy*
- *Occupational Health and Safety Policy*
- *Privacy and Confidentiality Policy*
- *Supervision of Children Policy*
- *Management and reporting of Incidents*

Evaluation

In order to assess whether the values and purposes of the policy have been achieved, the Approved Provider will:

- regularly seek feedback from everyone affected by the policy regarding its effectiveness
- monitor the implementation, compliance, complaints and incidents in relation to this policy
- keep the policy up to date with current legislation, research, policy and best practice
- revise the policy and procedures as part of the service's policy review cycle, or as required
- notify parents/guardians at least 14 days before making any changes to this policy or its procedures unless a lesser period is necessary because of a risk.



Authorities:

Signature of Chair of BOG :

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "R. Kelly", written over a light blue rectangular background.

Date of Approval by BOG:

Hampton Park Care Group Inc.

