

Educator/Staff Immunisation Policy

Rationale and Policy Considerations

All educators/employees and contractors within the service have a right to a safe and healthy workplace. Employers have a duty under state/territory and federal legislation to ensure Health and safety in the workplace. Employees and contractors also have obligations under law to take reasonable care to protect themselves and others in the workplace, and to follow health and safety instructions of the employer.

The Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010 requires that the approved provider/nominated supervisor/coordinators take reasonable care to protect children from foreseeable risk of infection. This responsibility is related to the immunisation of educators/staff members, so that they do not themselves pose a risk to the infection of children.

Philosophy

Documented approach to provision of a healthy environment; approach to educator/staff professionalism and responsible conduct.

Legislation and Government Requirements

Federal and State Health and Workplace Safety & Health Legislation (Check your State or Territory legislation).

Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010(Vic) (or corresponding legislation)

Education and Care Services National Regulations

Children's needs

Protection from infection from educators/staff at the education and care service

Families' needs

Reassurance that health and safety standards are maintained to reduce the spread of infectious diseases within the service. and to feel confident that their child's health, wellbeing and development is assured.

Educator/Staff needs

Protection from infection. To be kept up to date with information on best practice in minimising the risk of contracting contagious diseases and spreading infection to others in the education and care service.

Management needs

Minimising the risks of spreading infectious diseases through education and staff immunisation. Information about educator/staff members' current immunisation status.

National Quality Framework

Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010(Vic) – Section 3(2)(a); 167

Education and Care Services National Regulations: 77; 88;

National Quality Standard for Early Childhood Education and Care and School Age Care (Nov 2010) – Element 2.1.4; Element 2.3.2;

Early Years Learning Framework for Australia

Framework for School Age Care in Australia

Policy Statement

The service aims to minimise the risk of spreading infectious diseases by encouraging educators/staff at occupational risk to obtain vaccinations as identified by the National Health and Medical Research Council in the most recent edition of Australian Immunisation Handbook. In addition to this the Approved Provider will provide up to date information on both vaccine preventable and non-vaccine preventable diseases and safe work practices which will minimise the risk of acquiring and spreading infection.

Strategies for Policy Implementation

- In recognition of duty of care responsibilities, educators/staff members will be required to complete an **Educator/Staff Immunisation Record** and keep this up to date. This information will remain confidential and will be kept in the educator/staff member's file at the place of employment. Educators/staff are responsible for updating this record, as their immunisations are updated.
- The approved provider/nominated supervisor/coordinator will encourage those non-immune educators/staff to be vaccinated against:
 - Hepatitis A
 - MMR (Measles, Mumps and Rubella) - immunity to measles requires 2 doses of MMR and those born during or since 1966 may not be immune
 - Varicella (Chicken Pox)
 - Pertussis (Whooping Cough) immunity requires a dTpa booster. Anecdotal evidence suggests that educators/staff members assume they have lasting immunity from childhood immunisation/infection alone.
- The educator/staff member will be responsible for the up front costs associated with the visit to their local General Practitioner and the administration of any of the above vaccinations. *(Each service will need to make a decision about what level of subsidy they are able to provide to encourage staff to become vaccinated.)*
- Educators/staff members who do not take up the offer to have vaccinations will be required to sign a statement to this effect. **Educators/staff choosing not to immunise disclaimer.**
- Educators/staff members that contract a communicable disease will be excluded from the service until they are pronounced non-infectious by their General Practitioner.
- During outbreaks of measles and whooping cough non-immune educators/staff will be excluded from the service for the period recommended by the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC).
- The service will consult with a Public Health Unit when there is an outbreak of a vaccine-preventable disease (not just pertussis and measles) so that non-immune educators/staff members can be provided with chemoprophylaxis/vaccination if available (eg NHIG or hepatitis A vaccine during a hepatitis A outbreak)
- Specific extra procedures will be put in place for:
 - non-immune educators/staff members during outbreaks of other vaccine-preventable diseases such as rubella, hepatitis A and varicella (e.g. adoption of hygiene practices, work restrictions (if relevant) during an outbreak at the service, referral for chemoprophylaxis/vaccination (if available) during an outbreak; and
 - children during such outbreaks if educators/staff members do not receive dTpa (e.g work restrictions on working with infants).
- Educators/staff with an immune deficiency or receiving medical treatment that causes immunosuppression, such as chemotherapy, will be excluded from the centre on full pay during outbreaks of measles, whooping cough or chicken pox for the recommended period. Confirmation of the staff member's medical condition is required from their General Practitioner or Specialist Physician.

- Educators/staff members are required to inform the approved provider/nominated supervisor/coordinator as soon as possible if they are pregnant, and follow procedures as outlined in the service's Managing Pregnancy Policy.
- Vaccine-preventable diseases that pose risks to:
 - non-immune pregnant educators/staff members are varicella and rubella and
 - the reproductive health of non-immune male educators/staff members is mumps.
- All educators/staff members will be provided with up to date information about vaccine preventable diseases.
- The approved provider/nominated supervisor/coordinator will be responsible for providing fact sheets on the following diseases and making these available at the service for educators/staff and parents.

Vaccine Preventable Diseases

Hepatitis A, B,
 Measles
 Mumps
 Rubella
 Pertussis (Whooping Cough)
 Varicella (Chicken Pox)

Non-Vaccine Preventable Diseases

Cytomegalovirus (CMV)
 Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV)
 Parvovirus B19
 Hepatitis C

- Educators/staff will be kept up to date with information available on minimising the risks of spreading infectious diseases through, fact sheets, brochures and information obtained from the internet and other relevant resources.
- Educators/staff will be made aware of their responsibilities through the educator/staff induction process and educator/staff handbooks.
- All educators and staff are responsible for following the Health and Hygiene procedures and practices to minimising the risk of spreading infection. Educators/staff must take responsibility for following all hygiene policies and procedures outlined in the service policy manual and the Australian Government publication, Staying Healthy in Child Care.

Procedures

Services may find the following list of example procedures, useful tools in the implementation of this policy. List your services precise steps for achieving each action. Ask yourself when, how, where and who is responsible for what actions.

- **Duty of Care Checklist**
- **Educator/Employee Injury/Accident/Illness Report**
- **Educator/staff choosing not to immunise disclaimer**
- Educator/staff Code of Ethics
- **Educator/staff immunisation record**
- Educator/staff orientation checklist