Health, Hygiene and Infection Control

Rationale and Policy Considerations

The education and care service understands it has a duty of care to ensure that all persons are provided with a healthy and safe environment in which to play and work. To this end all educators/staff will be fully informed about their responsibilities to implement and adhere to the service’s health policies and procedures.

All children have the right to develop to their full potential in an environment which provides for their health, safety and wellbeing. Effective hygiene strategies and practices assist services to protect all persons from, and minimise the potential risk of communicable diseases. Experiences that promote basic hygiene awareness assist children to become competent and independent, and develop valuable life skills.

The Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010 requires that approved provider/nominated supervisor/coordinators take reasonable care to protect children from foreseeable risk of harm, injury and infection.

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 Occupational 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

Healthy, clean, hygienic environment in which to play and learn. Protection from infection, instruction about personal hygiene.

Families’ needs

Reassurance that health and safety standards are maintained at the service and their children are safe. To feel confident that their child’s health, wellbeing and development is assured.

Educator/Staff needs

Protection from infection, clean hygienic environment, appropriate equipment to ensure high level of hygiene, clear guidelines in relation to their duty of care.

Management needs

Staff to maintain appropriate levels of hygiene and cleanliness to meet required standards; families to co-operate in keeping sick and infectious children away from the service.

National Quality Framework

Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010(Vic) – Section 3(2)(a): 167; 179; 189

Education and Care Services National Regulations: 77; 88-96; 106; 109; 110; 112; 115

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Policy Statement

The service aims to promote a healthy and safe environment in which children will grow and learn about the world around them. The service is committed to protecting its stakeholders through the implementation and monitoring of simple hygiene and infection control strategies. The application of preventative measures through an infection control program aims to prevent the spread of infections and will be followed by all people in the education and care service at all times.

Strategies for Policy Implementation:

Hygiene

- All educators/staff are required to observe and maintain high standards of hygiene in the provision of the education and care service.
- Educators/staff will be provided with training on infection control.
- Educator’s role model personal hygiene and discuss hygiene practices with children.
- Hand hygiene considered to be the most effective way of controlling infection in the service. Educators and children should wash their hands:
  - when arriving at the service to reduce the introduction of germs.
  - before all clean tasks e.g. handling and preparing food and eating.
  - after all dirty tasks e.g. nappy changing, toileting, cleaning up urine, faeces, vomit or blood, wiping a nose, playing outside, handling animals after removing gloves.
  - before going home to prevent taking germs home.
- The service has provided an adequate number and placement of hand washing basins and is committed to maintaining these in a hygienic and serviceable condition.
- Notices which clearly explain effective hand washing procedures will be displayed next to hand washing basins.
- The service has access to laundry facilities that are adequate and appropriate for the needs of the service, and are located and maintained in a way that prevents unsupervised access by children. It is not recommended that educators/staff take centre laundry home to wash.
- Soiled laundry will be hygienically stored in a sealed container in an area inaccessible to children, until such a time as it is laundered or removed from the premises. Items returned to a child’s home for laundering will have soiling removed and will be placed in a leak proof container and not placed in the child’s bag in contact with personal items. It is not recommended that educators/staff rinse soiled clothes due to risk of contaminating their clothing which can then be a source for transporting germs.
- Educators will wear gloves when handling soiled linen and will follow recommended procedures for washing soiled linen.¹
- Educators/staff will use separate cloths or tissues to wipe different children’s faces and noses. Tissues will be disposed of immediately after wiping a child’s nose. Hand hygiene will be performed between each child after wiping noses and disposing of tissues.

¹ Staying Healthy in Child Care
Educators/staff will use colour coded sponges for cleaning different areas (i.e. blue for kitchen, yellow for bathroom), and will wear rubber gloves when cleaning and hang them outside to dry when finished, including rubber gloves.

The service will use detergent and warm water to clean except where the public health authority recommends a particular disinfectant for an outbreak of an infectious disease.

Each child will have their own bedding which will be washed at least once a week or after soiling. Educators will follow recommended procedures for dealing with a child’s soiled bedding.¹

Toileting and nappy changing

Nappy changing will be done only in the nappy change area which will be properly stocked with gloves, paper towels, towelettes, plastic bags, fresh nappies, clean clothes, rubbish bin with sealed lid lined with plastic. After each nappy change the child’s and educator’s hands will be washed and the change table or mat cleaned with detergent and warm water. At the end of each day the nappy change area will be washed with warm water and detergent and left to dry, preferably in the sun. The procedure for nappy changing will be displayed in the nappy change area.

Centres need to decide whether:
- families supply and launder own nappies;
- nappies are laundered at the centre by hot wash or chemical disinfection;
- disposable nappies are used; or
- a commercial nappy service is used.

Educators will discuss signs of toileting readiness with parents and work with families to develop a consistent approach to toilet training.

Educators will not begin toilet training of a child until there are definite indications that the child is developmentally and emotionally ready.

The service will ask families whose children are toilet training to supply several changes of clothing. Educators will follow recommended procedures for assisting children during toilet training and dealing with children’s soiled clothes.²

Educators will always encourage children’s efforts to develop independence.

Nappy changing and toileting is flexible and responsive to children’s individual needs.

Nappy changing and toileting procedures are displayed in the nappy change and toileting areas.

Educators may recommend a variety of training methods to parents who have requested assistance in toileting.

Educators will interact with children in a relaxed and positive way during nappy changing and toileting as this is an excellent time to continue verbal interactions with children especially as it is a one to one time.

The service will ensure that developmentally and age appropriate toilets, hand washing facilities and products are easily accessible to children. Children will be supervised and encouraged to flush toilets and wash and dry their hands after use.

Incontinent children will never be embarrassed by educators/staff in regard to toileting habits. Educators will discourage any negatives from families within a child’s hearing.

Cleanliness of toys and equipment

Toys, equipment and dress up clothes will be washed regularly (e.g. daily, after being mouthed by a child and after being handled by a child who is sick) in warm water and detergent, and one criteria for selecting new toys will be their ease to clean. Toys in the babies’ room will not be shared in order to protect babies against

¹ Staying Healthy in Child Care

² Staying Healthy in Child Care
the spread of infection. The sharing of toys will be limited when children are not toilet trained, and/or are mouthing, to reduce the spread of infection.

- Surfaces will be cleaned with detergent and warm water after each activity and all surfaces cleaned thoroughly daily. Floors in the babies and toddlers rooms will be washed each day. Areas contaminated with blood and body fluids will cleaned as per Staying Healthy in Childcare, depending on the size and type of spill.

- Bottles, dummies and teats will be cleaned with detergent and warm water and rinsed after each use. Dummies will be stored out of reach of children, in individual plastic containers with the child's name clearly displayed.

- Each child will be provided with their own drinking and eating utensils at each mealtime. These utensils will be washed in detergent and warm water after each use. Educators will encourage children not to use drinking or eating utensils which have been used by another child or dropped on the floor.

- Educators will ensure that children do not eat food that:
  - has been dropped on the floor or;
  - has been handled by another child, except where that child has followed hygiene procedures and been involved in the preparation of the food (mainly in school age services).

- The rules of hygiene will be included in the child’s program and staff will initiate discussion about these subjects with groups and individual children at appropriate times.

- Information on hygiene principles and practices will be displayed in the reception area and drawn to the attention of all families on a regular basis.

- Any animal or bird kept at the education and care service will be kept in an area that is separate and apart from any area used by children and it and its environment will be maintained in a clean and healthy condition. Any animals will be provided with appropriate veterinary care (e.g. worming, care of sick animals).

- Children will be supervised by an adult during contact with animals and discouraged from putting their faces close to animals. Children will wash and dry their hands after touching animals.

- Children are not to eat and drink while interacting with animals.

**Immunisation against infectious disease**

- Parents/Guardians will be encouraged to immunise their child against all diseases appropriate to the child’s age. A record of the child’s current immunisation status will be kept at the service.

- Children who are not immunised, do not have a complete immunisation record, are immunosuppressed or are who are receiving medical treatment causing immunosuppression such as chemotherapy will be excluded from care during outbreaks of some infectious diseases in accordance with the National Health & Medical Research Council exclusion guidelines, even if their child is well.

- The service will keep a stock of up to date information/ pamphlets for parents and educators/staff on immunisation and common infectious diseases and will contact their public health unit if they have any questions regarding infectious diseases.

- All workers at the education care service will be encouraged to have all immunisations recommended in the service’s Staff Immunisation Policy.

**Exclusion due to infectious disease**

- Information about the service’s exclusion policy is in accordance with the National Health and Medical Research Council’s exclusion periods and is provided to families in the Parent/Guardian Handbook.

- Children and staff with infectious diseases will be excluded from the service in accordance with the National Health and Medical Research Council guidelines. A medical certificate is required after contracting an

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3 Staying Healthy in Child Care
infectious disease, which must state that the child/staff is well enough to return and does not pose a health risk to other attendees before the adult or child can be re-admitted to the service.

- The service will display a notice at the entrance and use SMS/email or distribution of letters/fact sheets where appropriate to notify educators/staff members, families of enrolled children and visitors to the service of exclusion due to infectious disease.
- If a child is unwell at home parents/guardians are asked not to bring the child to the service.
- If an educator/staff member is unwell they should not report to work. Educators/staff members should contact the approved provider/nominated supervisor/coordinator at the earliest possible time to advise of their inability to report to work.
- If a child becomes unwell whilst at the service the service’s illness policy will be followed.
- In the case of serious ill health or hospitalisation, the child or educator/staff member will require a medical certificate verifying that their recovery is sufficient to enable their return to the service, from their medical practitioner or specialist.

Blood-Borne Viruses

- It is unlawful to discriminate against anyone infected with blood-borne viruses including HIV, hepatitis B and hepatitis C. As blood borne virus are not transmitted through casual contact, a child with a blood borne illness or any other blood borne impairment shall be treated and comforted as any other child, i.e. by cuddling, giving hugs, holding hands etc.
- If an educator/staff member is notified that a child or the child’s parent/guardian or any other educator/staff member is infected with a blood borne virus, the information will remain confidential. Only with the consent of the person with the virus, or the parent/guardian, can this information be shared with other educators/staff. Deliberate breaches of confidentiality will be a disciplinary offence preceding normal consultative action.

Head Lice

- Educators will examine the heads of children who scratch their heads a lot to look for eggs (nits) or lice near the scalp.
- Educators will ensure that a child suspected of being infested does not have close contact with other children for the rest of the day.
- When families come to collect their child they will be asked to commence treatment and keep the child away from the service until the day after appropriate treatment has been started, and the lice are removed. If they begin treatment prior to the next day exclusion is not necessary.
- The child may return to the service the day after treatment has commenced and all live head lice have been removed. A few remaining eggs are not a reason for continued exclusion. However, the family must continue treatment until all eggs and hatchlings have been removed, usually over the following ten days.
- When an incident of head lice occurs at the service, a notice will be displayed and/or SMS/email will be used to advise parents to check their children. A letter will be given to parents advising how to check hair effectively using hair conditioner. It is recommended that children with long hair have their hair tied back to reduce the chance of infestation.
- All educators/staff will be given information and training on detecting head lice.
- Educators with long hair will be required to wear their hair tied up whilst they are at the service. This will help to prevent them from becoming infected in the event of an outbreak.
- Where an educator becomes infected with eggs or lice they will be required to commence treatment on their hair that evening.
- If the child’s family supplies a hair brush or comb for their child to use at the service, this must be kept in the child’s bag to prevent use by other children.
Cleaning up spills of blood and other body fluids

- It is considered that the best way to prevent infection is to follow standard precautions at all times. Standard precautions support the assumption that all blood and body fluids are potentially infectious, therefore hygiene practices that promote infection control are adopted for all contact with blood and body fluids. Educators/staff will follow recommended guidelines for dealing with spills of blood, faeces, vomit, urine, nasal discharge and other body fluids as explained in Staying Healthy in Child Care in order to protect the health and safety of all children and adults within the service. Disposable gloves will be readily available for use in dealing with spills and hands will be washed after removal of gloves.

Healthy Environment

- All staff will ensure that every effort is made to maintain a high standard of hygiene in the provision of the education and care service including supporting the Nominated Provider in the maintenance of all equipment and furnishings in a thoroughly safe, clean and hygienic condition and in good repair. In this regard staff will report any equipment and/or area that is not clean or in a safe condition or any evidence of vermin to the health and Safety representative/officer.
- The service is a non-smoking environment. Passive smoking harms the lungs of young children and may trigger an asthma attack. Refer to Occupational Safety and Health policy.
- To ensure all children and educators attending the service are protected from skin damage caused by harmful ultra violet rays of the sun, educators will consistently follow the service’s Sun Protection policy.
- The service’s Sun Protection policy is provided to families both within the Parent/Guardian Handbook and on a printed handout which is available on request.
- All rooms used within the education and care service will be well ventilated to prevent: reduced concentration span; lack of energy, tiredness and lethargy; increased risk of infection and possible asthma attacks.
- All windows and doors will be flyscreened, or buildings will be protected against flying insects (e.g. use environmentally friendly spray such as Coopex under eaves).
- The educator will ensure that lighting, heating and noise levels are comfortable and take into account specific activities (e.g. sleep time) and individual needs.

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.

- Cleanliness and Hygiene Checklist
- Hand washing procedure
- Head lice checking procedure
- Laundering procedures
- Nappy changing procedure
- Procedures for cleaning toys, equipment, surfaces, floors etc.
- Standard hygiene procedure
- Toileting procedure

Links to other policies

The following policies may be linked to this policy:

- Accidents, Emergencies and First Aid
PSCA Policies in Practice

Health, Hygiene and Infection Control

- Educator/Staff Immunisation
- FDC Assessments
- FDC Educators Monitoring Support and Supervision
- Healthy Eating and Food Handling
- Illness
- Maintenance of a Safe Environment
- Medication and Medical Conditions
- Occupational Safety and Health
- Sun Protection
- Supervision

Further sources


POLICY CREATED DATE:

POLICY REVIEW DATE: