



DEALING WITH INFECTIOUS DISEASES POLICY P4.0315.2

DEALING WITH INFECTIOUS DISEASES POLICY

DIVISION: Sport, Community and Activation

BRANCH: Community Outcomes - Family Day Care

CATEGORY: 3

PART 1 - INTRODUCTION

1. BACKGROUND

1.1 The *Education and Care Services National Regulations* require Approved Providers to ensure their services have policies and procedures in place for dealing with infectious diseases.

1.2 Education and care settings are a high-risk environment for the spread of infectious diseases due to the close contact of groups of children and the potential exposure to germs within the environment. It is important to ensure we have effective policies and procedures in place to promote awareness of the types of infectious diseases that often occur in education and care settings and safe hygiene practices which help to prevent and manage cross infection and outbreaks.

2. OBJECTIVE

2.1 As part of our approach to prioritising health and safety, we ensure the implementation of effective hygiene practices and work to prevent, and effectively deal with, any infectious disease in line with the *Education and Care Services National Regulations* and the advice of our Regulatory Authority and health experts.

3. SCOPE

3.1 This policy applies to:

- Camden Council FDC Service
- Staff
- Educators
- Children enrolled in the service and their families
- Residents.

4. DEFINITIONS

4.1 **Approved Provider** means a person who holds a provider approval (*Children (Education and Care) Services National Law*). A provider approval authorises a person to apply for one or more education and care service approvals and is valid in all jurisdictions. The Approved Provider for the purposes of this policy is Camden Council.

- 4.2 **Australian Children’s Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA)** means the independent national authority that assists governments in administering the National Quality Framework including the provision of guidance, resources, and services to support the sector to improve outcomes for children.
- 4.3 **Co-ordination Unit** means the Camden Council FDC principal office and main faculty for running the Service from which staff work.
- 4.4 **Co-ordinator** means a member of the Co-ordination Unit employed by the Approved Provider to monitor and support the FDC educators registered with the service.
- 4.5 **Educational program** means a program that is delivered in accordance with the National Quality Framework, is based on the individual ages, developmental needs and interests of each child and engages and supports them to achieve the outcomes of the National Approved Learning Frameworks.
- 4.6 **Educator** means an individual suitably qualified and registered by Camden Council FDC to provide education and care and refers to the educator as the business owner, educator assistant or relief educator.
- 4.7 **Exclusion period** means staying away from the education and care setting for the specified incubation and/or infectious time of each illness or disease. The aim is to reduce the spread of infectious diseases in the service, as the less contact there is between people who have an infectious disease and people who are at risk of catching the disease, the less chance the disease has of spreading.
- 4.8 **Family Day Care (FDC)** means a type of education and care service that is run from the educator’s own residence or an approved venue for the purpose of educating and caring for small groups of children aged 0-12 years.
- 4.9 **FDC Service** means the FDC education and care business of each individual educator or refers to Camden Council FDC Service.
- 4.10 **Immunisation** means the process of becoming immune to a disease as a result of a vaccine. Vaccines work by making a person’s immune system respond in a similar way to how it would if they actually had the disease, but with less severe symptoms. If the person comes in contact with that germ in the future, their immune system can rapidly respond and prevent the person becoming ill.
- 4.11 **Infectious disease** means a disease or illness that is designated under a law of a relevant jurisdiction or by a health authority as a contagious disease that would require a person with the disease to be excluded from an education and care service.
- 4.12 **Nominated Supervisor** means a person appointed by the Approved Provider and who has given consent to be appointed to be in day-to-day charge of a service and must be contactable during the hours educators are providing education and care.
- 4.13 **Regulatory Authority** means the agency or department in each state or territory who administers the National Quality Framework (NQF). They are responsible for granting approvals, including provider approval and service approvals, assessing and rating services against the National Quality Standard and working with ACECQA to promote continuous quality improvement and educate the sector and community about the NQF.

4.14 **Resident** means any person aged 18 years or over who resides, or intends to reside permanently, or temporarily resides for more than three weeks, at the educator's FDC Residence.

4.15 **Staff** means employees of Camden Council FDC.

PART 2 - POLICY STATEMENT

5. PRINCIPLES

5.1 Children's health, safety and wellbeing is a priority. We implement all regulatory requirements in this regard, including any jurisdictional conditions relating to enrolling children who are not up to date with their immunisations. We also adopt quality practices to help prevent and manage any occurrences of infectious diseases, recognising the effectiveness of good hygiene (e.g. washing hands regularly).

5.2 We recognise the contribution of families in helping to prevent illness and disease at the service. As part of the enrolment process and ongoing communications, we advise parents/guardians about our hygiene and infection control practices and procedures.

6. CONSIDERATIONS

6.1 Considerations for infection control:

6.1.1 Our educators and service staff play an important role in safeguarding the children's health, safety, and wellbeing. We equip them with the necessary knowledge and skills to enable them to deal with infectious diseases and implement effective hygiene practices.

6.1.2 We support children to take increasing responsibility for their own health and physical wellbeing.

6.1.3 Educators will maintain a high standard of hygiene and cleanliness in their service environments and will have cleaning procedures in place.

6.1.4 Educators will model health and personal hygiene practices with children and reinforce these messages with families.

6.1.5 Educators will have a written COVID Safety Plan that aligns with Department of Education rulings for education and care services and outlines the management strategies they will implement to eliminate or minimise cross infection, including strategies for periods of high community transmission.

6.1.6 To stop infections spreading, the chain of infection can be broken at any point through effective hand hygiene; exclusion of ill children, educators, and where applicable educator's residents; immunisation; cough and sneeze etiquette; appropriate use of gloves; and effective environmental cleaning.

6.1.7 Educators will notify families when children have possibly been exposed to an infectious illness in the service so that they can monitor their children for symptoms.

- 6.1.8 When a child becomes unwell whilst at the service, educators will contact the child's family or an authorised person to collect them and where possible will isolate the sick child from other children to minimise cross infection.
- 6.1.9 When a child has been in care with a contagious illness the educator will implement increased methods of cleaning, including all surfaces and/or toys the child has come into contact with.
- 6.1.10 Educators must complete an Illness Record for all children that become unwell while in care and submit this to the co-ordination unit within 24 hours. The record will be kept on the child's file.

6.2 Considerations for exclusion

- 6.2.1 Our service will abide by the Family Assistance Law in relation to enrolment of children including requirements for immunisation.
- 6.2.2 In order to prevent the spread of infectious diseases, children who are suffering from an infectious illness will be excluded from the service in accordance with the exclusion period for each illness as published in *Staying Healthy in Childcare* by the National Health and Medical Research Council.
- 6.2.3 Educators may refuse to accept a child into care who is not well enough to participate in the normal daily activities.
- 6.2.4 A fever can be a sign of an infection and needs to be investigated to find the cause, noting that:
- A child's normal body temperature can vary depending on both their age and the time of day. It can range from 36 up to 37.9°C. A temperature 38°C or higher is known as a fever.
 - To prevent the spread of infection and ensure wellbeing, children with a temperature of or above 38°C will be excluded from the service. Educators will follow the *Dealing with an Infectious Occurrence* procedure.
- 6.2.5 In relation to COVID-19 or other pandemics, educators will follow the advice of NSW Health and the Department of Education and follow their COVID safety plan in making decisions about exclusion.

6.3 Other considerations:

- 6.3.1 Educators must notify the co-ordination unit when a child contracts a notifiable illness.
- 6.3.2 The Nominated Supervisor is responsible for notifying a notifiable illness to the Regulatory Authority within the specified timeframe.
- 6.3.3 Educators and staff must adhere to confidentiality requirements and will not disclose information pertaining to the health status of individuals or families to others.
- 6.3.4 Educators will use daily routines as an opportunity to intentionally teach children good hygiene practices.

7. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

7.1 Approved Provider

- Ensure that all obligations under the National Quality Framework are met.
- Ensure the service has a policy and procedures for dealing with infectious diseases.
- Ensure that educators are aware of their responsibilities in relation to notifying families about notifiable illness and their obligations to protect the privacy of individuals.
- Ensure educators display a notice stating that there has been an occurrence of an infectious disease at their service premises.
- Meet jurisdictional requirements relating to the enrolment or attendance of children who are not up to date with their scheduled immunisation.
- Implement exclusion periods consistent with current information from a relevant recognised authority.
- Ensure that notification requirements to the Regulatory Authority are met in relation to an outbreak of an infectious disease that poses a risk to the health, safety or wellbeing of children attending the service.
- Ensure educators have procedures in place for keeping furniture, equipment and environments safe, clean, and well maintained.
- Ensure educators and staff have the required immunisation.
- Take reasonable steps to ensure that the Nominated Supervisor, educators and staff follow the policy and procedures.
- Ensure that copies of the policy and procedures are readily accessible to Nominated Supervisors, co-ordinators, educators and staff, and available for inspection.
- Notify families at least 14 days before changing the policy or procedures if the changes will affect the fees and charges and/or significantly impact the service's education and care of children or the family's ability to utilise the service.

7.2 Nominated Supervisor

- Implement this policy and related procedures.
- Ensure that educators have sound practices in place and take reasonable steps to prevent the spread of any infectious disease at their service.
- Ensure that educators notify families or an authorised emergency contact of children attending of an occurrence as soon as practicable and in a manner that is not prejudicial to the rights of any individual.
- Ensure educators display a notice stating that there has been an occurrence of an infectious disease at their service.

- Meet jurisdictional requirements relating to the enrolment or attendance of children who are not up to date with their scheduled vaccinations.
- Ensure educators implement exclusion periods consistent with current information from a relevant recognised authority.
- Ensure educators keep their premises, furniture and equipment safe, clean and well maintained.
- Ensure hygiene practices are promoted to educators and staff and where applicable training is provided.
- Ensure educators promote hygiene practices with all children and families.
- Support educators in the development of a COVID safety plan.
- Ensure educators are kept informed about current health information for education and care services including public health orders.
- Ensure educators have current COVID safety plans in place and that they are following their management strategies and the co-ordination unit has a copy on file.
- Ensure that notification is made to the Regulatory Authority in relation to infectious disease and outbreaks that pose a risk to the health, safety or wellbeing of children attending the service.
- Ensure families are asked to provide information about their child's medical condition and health or developmental issues upon enrolment.
- Ensure risk minimisation plans are developed for every child with a medical or health condition and that families and educators are consulted on the development of these.
- Ensure staff follow up on the Immunisation History Statements of children as they are due.
- Follow the ACECQA guidelines for immunisation for education and care workers.

7.3 Coordination Unit Staff

- Ensure they follow Camden Council FDC policy and procedures and implement and maintain all requirements under these and as directed by the nominated supervisor.
- Implement this policy and related procedures.
- Monitor and ensure educators practices align with this policy and procedures.
- Ensure each enrolled child has a current Immunisation History statement from Australian Immunisation Register (AIR), that shows their immunisations are up to date for their age or a medical exemption.

- Discuss immunisation requirements and schedule with families at time of enrolment.
- As children become due for their next immunisation, follow up with families to ensure immunisation History statements are provided to the co-ordination unit.
- Ensure each child's immunisation status is recorded on enrolment form and updated at the time of new immunisations.
- Provide information and resources to educators on how to prevent transmission of infectious disease.
- Ensure hygiene practices are followed by educators and taught to children.
- Engage in discussions with educators that facilitate critical reflection on how to deal with infectious diseases.
- Follow the ACECQA guidelines for immunisation for education and care workers.

7.4 Educators

- Implement this policy and procedures.
- Have a COVID safety plan and keep this up to date and provide a copy to the co-ordination unit. Inform families of the current management strategies in place.
- Monitor children's health, safety and wellbeing daily and manage accordingly.
- Follow the ACECQA guidelines for immunisation for education and care workers.
- Close their FDC service if they themselves have an excludable infectious illness. Evaluate the risk and consider closing if a resident has an excludable infectious illness (follow the COVID safety plan and/or public health orders in the case of COVID).
- Implement and role model good hygiene practices for cleaning hands, nappy changing, toileting and food handling.
- Integrate infection control awareness, hygiene and protective practices into the educational programming and planning.
- As children become due for their next immunisation, follow up with families to ensure immunisation History statements are provided to the co-ordination unit.
- Communicate with families about infectious diseases in general and specific expectations within the service e.g. exclusion periods.

7.5 Families

- Follow this policy and procedures.
- Provide immunisation documentation (or exemption documentation) upon enrolment and as immunisations are administered.
- Keep their child at home if the child is unwell or has an excludable infectious disease until symptoms are gone and/or for the exclusion period.
- Keep their child at home if there is an infectious disease at the service and their child is not fully immunised against it.
- Inform the service if their child has an infectious disease or has been in contact with a person who has an infectious disease.

8. INDUCTION AND ONGOING TRAINING

8.1 Induction and ongoing professional development will be implemented for all educators and FDC staff, focusing on this policy and related procedures.

8.2 All new educators will be required to view the NSW Department of Education 'Supporting Children's Health' Workshop as a part of their induction, for the purpose of assisting them to:

- Learn how to recognise signs and symptoms that indicate sickness in a child.
- Learn how to manage a child that is displaying signs and symptoms of sickness in your care.
- Understand the importance of appropriately cleaning an area and surfaces.
- Learn how to identify and reduce risk in the prevention and control of infection.

8.3 Information will be shared with relief educators on induction and as relevant to the environments that they are working in, their shift responsibilities and the children in their care.

9. MONITORING, EVALUATION AND REVIEW

9.1 This policy will be monitored to ensure compliance with legislative requirements and unless deemed necessary through the identification of practice gaps, the service will review this policy every three years.

9.2 Families, educators and staff are essential stakeholders in the policy review process and will be given opportunity and encouragement to be actively involved.

9.3 In accordance with regulation 172 of the *Education and Care Services National Regulations*, the service will ensure that families of children enrolled at the service are notified at least 14 days before making any change to a policy or procedure that may have significant impact on the provision of education and care to any child enrolled at the service; a family's ability to utilise the service; the fees charged or the way in which fees are collected.

10. SOURCES AND RESOURCES

- [ACECQA Guide to the National Quality Framework](#)
- [Department of Health Immunisation](#)
- [Department of Health National Immunisation Program \(NIP\) Schedule](#)
- [Immunisation Handbook](#)
- [National and State legislation regarding immunisation requirements for child care](#)
- [NSW Department of Education Supporting Children's Health Workshop](#)
- [Recommended minimum exclusion periods table](#)
- [Staying Healthy: preventing infectious diseases in early childhood education and care services 5th edition](#)

□ * * *

RELEVANT LEGISLATIVE INSTRUMENTS: *Children (Education and Care Services) National Law (NSW)*
Education and Care Services National Regulations
Family Assistance Law (inclusive of Primary and Associated Legislation)
National Quality Standard | Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA)
Privacy Act 1988
Work Health and Safety Act 2011

RELATED POLICIES, PLANS AND PROCEDURES: COVID-19 procedure
Dealing with an infectious occurrence procedure
Dealing with medical conditions policy
Enrolment and orientation policy
Governance and management policy
Incident, injury, trauma and illness policy
Meeting vaccination requirements for relevant workers procedure
Nutrition, food, beverages and dietary requirements policy
Post incident procedure
Prevention and awareness procedure
Providing a child safe environment policy

RESPONSIBLE DIRECTOR: Director Sport, Community and Activation

APPROVAL: General Manager through the Executive Leadership Group.

HISTORY:

Version	Approved by	Changes made	Date	EDMS Number
1		New	July 2021	21/325870
2	ELG	Major amendment. Name changed from Dealing with infectious diseases COVID-19. The Hygiene and Infection control policy will merge with this policy to become a separate procedure under this policy.	23/06/2022	22/309597