



ECHUNGA
PRIMARY & PRESCHOOL

Hand Washing Policy and Procedures

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Background

Infection can be spread through direct physical contact between people, airborne droplets from coughing and sneezing or from contact with surfaces and objects. Children come into contact with a large number of other children and adults, play equipment, eating utensils and other resources whilst being cared for in preschool services. This high degree of physical contact with people and the environment creates a higher risk of children being exposed to and spreading infectious illnesses. Whilst it may not be possible for services to prevent the spread of all infections, we aim to create a hygienic environment to minimise the spread of diseases and infections.

Effective hand washing is a vital strategy in the prevention of spreading many infectious diseases. Research emphasises effective and frequent handwashing as the single most important way to reduce the spread of bacteria, germs, viruses, and parasites that may infect educators, staff and children in school aged care services and in our general population.

Micro-organisms such as bacteria, germs, viruses, and parasites are present on the hands at all times and live in the oil that is naturally produced on your hands. The use of soap or detergent and water remove most of these organisms and decreases the risk of cross infection.

Policy statement

Our preschool is committed to ensuring the health and safety of all educators, staff, volunteers, families, and children by providing a safe and healthy environment. Effective hand hygiene significantly reduces the risk of infection and is therefore of the utmost importance. We aim to implement specific hand washing hygiene practices regularly to minimise the risks associated with cross infection of viral and bacterial borne diseases. We believe the hygiene practices of children being cared for should be as rigorous as those of staff and educators. Our environment supports the creation of appropriate healthy hygiene habits to ensure lifelong healthy decisions and actions.

Relationship and Legislative Requirements

NATIONAL QUALITY STANDARD (NQS)

QUALITY AREA 2: CHILDREN'S HEALTH AND SAFETY		
2.1	Health	Each child's health and physical activity is supported and promoted.
2.1.2	Health practices and procedures	Effective illness and injury management and hygiene practices are promoted and implemented.

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2.2	Safety	Each child is protected.
2.2.1	Supervision	At all times, reasonable precautions and adequate supervision ensure children are protected from harm and hazard.

EDUCATION AND CARE SERVICES NATIONAL REGULATIONS	
77	Health, Hygiene and safe food practices
88	Infectious diseases
93	Administration of medication
106	Laundry and hygiene facilities
109	Toilet and hygiene facilities
168	Education and care service must have policies and procedures

Hand Washing Procedures

Having and encouraging effective hygiene practices in our preschool is essential for reducing the risk of infection. Helping children to develop appropriate personal hygiene habits, such as hand hygiene, will become embedded as they grow and develop. It is important to work with families to ensure children follow simple hygiene rules by incorporating good hygiene strategies in both preschool and home environment.

Our preschool will adhere to National Regulation requirements, standards, and guidelines to support the effectiveness of our hand washing policy. We aim to educate and encourage children to wash their hands frequently and effectively which will help to reduce the incidence of infectious diseases, adhering to guidelines provided in *Staying healthy: Preventing infectious diseases in early childhood education and care services* and recommendations from the Department of Health- Australian Health Protection Principal Committee (AHPPC) to guide best practice.

To ensure the greatest level of personal hygiene our preschool will ensure:

- all employees, parents, children and visitors wash their hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds upon arrival to the Service or, use the alcohol-based sanitiser under adult supervision
- hands are thoroughly dried using hand towel and disposed of in the bin provided
- disposable tissues are used to wipe noses, eyes or mouths and disposed of in the bin provided immediately after use

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- hands are washed following the use of tissues
- hands are washed thoroughly using soap and water before and after using the toilet
- signage is provided to prompt visitors and children to wash their hands regularly and effectively when visiting our Service.
- hands are washed before eating
- hands are washed after sandpit/mud play
- hands are washed after touching animals (including our resident chickens)

Strategies educators will use to encourage effective hand hygiene practices include:

- talking about the importance of hand hygiene
- talking about when hand washing is appropriate and why
- singing a song or rap as a guide to how long it should take to wash hands
- using a clear visual poster with step by step instructions
- using positive language
- ensuring equipment is accessible (liquid soap, hand towels)
- ensuring adequate supervision and assistance is available when required

Hand Drying

Effective hand drying is just as important as comprehensive hand washing. Research states that wet hands can pick up and transfer up to 1000 times more bacteria than dry hands. Drying hands thoroughly also helps remove any germs that may not have been rinsed off.

Our preschool provides children, staff, and educators with disposable paper towel to ensure effective hand hygiene. Bins are provided with foot control lids to dispose of used paper towel. Where possible, our preschool aims to find sustainable long term alternatives to paper towel that may harm the environment.

Hand washing procedure

Wet hands with clean, running water, turn off the tap.

Rub soap all over your hands

Rub hands together for as long as it takes to sing "Happy Birthday" twice

Don't forget the backs of your hands, your wrists, between your fingers and under your fingernails

Rinse the soap off your hands under running water

Dry your hands using paper towel or under a hand dryer.

Alcohol-based hand sanitizer

Where possible, staff will use soap and water to clean their hands however, if this is not possible and hands are not greasy or visibly dirty, an alcohol-based hand sanitiser may be used.

Hand sanitizer procedure

Apply liquid to the palm of one hand

Rub it all over both hands until the sanitiser dries

This takes about 20 seconds

Be careful not to wipe the sanitizer off before it is dry.

Roles and Responsibilities

Roles	Responsibilities
<p>Approved provider, Nominated supervisor</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • educators and staff wash their hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds regularly • educators and staff wash their hands <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ before and after eating and handling food ○ before and after applying sunscreen or other lotions to children ○ after using the toilet ○ after blowing their own nose ○ after supervising children near toilet facilities ○ after touching animals ○ after cleaning high touch surfaces- (tables, light switches, door handles, computers, iPads) ○ after cleaning or mopping floors ○ after changing learning environments – outdoor play area, indoor learning ○ whenever their hands are visibly dirty (after gardening, painting) ○ before leaving the preschool at the end of the day • educators and staff adhere to effective food preparation and food handling procedures • educators and staff wash hands before and after wearing disposable gloves when: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ preparing food ○ administering medication ○ administering first aid ○ cleaning spills- faeces, vomit or blood ○ cleaning with disinfectant or chemicals ○ after handling garbage and/or contaminated materials
<p>Educators</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • will follow the Hand Washing Policy and Procedures • children are explicitly taught the correct process of hand washing • children are carefully supervised when handwashing • children are reminded to wash their hands frequently throughout the day • they model effective handwashing procedures • the required equipment and resources are easily accessible and appropriate to use- liquid soap, running water, paper towel
<p>Families</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • will encourage their children to follow hand washing guidelines

Resources/References

- Australian Government Department of Health [Practise good hand hygiene](#)
- Be a Soapy Hero! <https://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/campaigns/soapy-hero>
- Child Care Centre Desktop- Handwashing posters (see below)
- NSW Department of Health [Handwashing poster](#)
- [Teaching washing your hands with pepper experiment](#)
- Australian Children's Education & Care Quality Authority. (2014).
- Australian Government Department of Education, Skills and Employment. My Time, Our Place: Framework for School Age Care in Australia. (2011).
- Australian Government Department of Health Australian Health Protection Principal Committee (AHPPC)
- Early Childhood Australia Code of Ethics. (2016).
- Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010. (Amended 2018).
- [Education and Care Services National Regulations. \(2011\).](#)
- Guide to the Education and Care Services National Law and the Education and Care Services National Regulations. (2017).
- Guide to the National Quality Framework. (2017). (amended 2020).
- National Health and Medical Research Council. (2013). *Staying Healthy: Preventing infectious diseases in early childhood education and care services* (5th Ed.). Australia: Commonwealth of Australia. NSW Government. (n.d.).
- Revised National Quality Standard. (2018).
- Safe Work Australia (2020) *Early childhood education and care workers: Minimising the risk of exposure to COVID-19*