



ECHUNGA
PRIMARY & PRESCHOOL

Dealing with Infectious Diseases and Infestations Policy and Procedures

Managed by:	Echunga Preschool
Contact person:	Hazel Robertson
Contact position:	Principal and nominated supervisor
Contact number:	83888563
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Background

Under the Education and Care Services National Regulations, an approved provider must ensure that policies and procedures are in place in relation to dealing with infectious diseases (regulation 168) and take reasonable steps to ensure those policies and procedures are followed (regulation 170).

Infectious diseases can spread rapidly in education and care services. As noted in the National Health and Medical Research Council's Staying healthy: Preventing infectious diseases in early childhood education and care services, when children – especially younger children – are in close contact with others, they often put objects/fingers in their mouths and noses, and they may not always cover their coughs or sneezes. As some bacteria and viruses can survive on surfaces, children may touch a contaminated surface, then put their hands in their mouth and become infected.

Additionally, if a child has an ill family member at home, they could be incubating the illness, and risk bringing germs from home into the service. It is for this reason that it is especially important for our service to have effective policies and procedures in place that can promote awareness of infectious diseases and safe hygiene practices that help to prevent any infectious disease from occurring, and outline the processes to manage any outbreak.

Preschools provide an opportunity for the spread of infectious diseases and infestations and so must take steps to prevent transmission through the preschool community and on to the wider community. Whilst it is acknowledged that it is not possible to prevent all infectious diseases and infestations, preschools have a responsibility and legal obligation to take action to help prevent the spread. When an outbreak of head lice or other transmittable infestation occurs, the service will follow the procedures as for infectious diseases.

Policy statement

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 vaccinations. We also adopt quality practices to help prevent and manage any occurrences of infectious diseases, recognising in particular the effectiveness of good hygiene (e.g. washing hands regularly).

Our educators and 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 to role model hygiene practices.

We support children to take increasing responsibility for their own health and physical wellbeing. Our educators and staff model health and personal hygiene practices with children and reinforce these messages with families.

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 them about our hygiene and the infection control practices and procedures

Echunga Preschool follows the guidelines for prevention of infectious diseases as outlined in the document Staying healthy in child care. Preventing infectious diseases in child care (National Health and Medical Research Council). Children suffering from infectious diseases will be excluded from preschool for the length of time specified or on the written advice from the child's medical practitioner.

Relationship and Legislative Requirements

NATIONAL QUALITY STANDARD (NQS)

QUALITY AREA 2: CHILDREN'S HEALTH AND SAFETY		
2.1.1	Wellbeing and comfort	Each child's wellbeing and comfort is provided for, including appropriate opportunities to meet each child's needs for sleep, rest and relaxation.
2.1.2	Health practices and procedures	Effective illness and injury management and hygiene practices are promoted and implemented.
2.2	Safety	Each child is protected.

EDUCATION AND CARE SERVICES NATIONAL REGULATIONS	
77	Health, hygiene and safe food practices
85	Incident, injury, trauma and illness policies and procedures
86	Notification to parents of incident, injury, trauma and illness
87	Incident, injury, trauma and illness record
88	Infectious diseases
90	Medical conditions policy
93	Administration of medication
162	Health information to be kept in enrolment record
168	Education and care service must have policies and procedures
170	Policies and procedures to be followed

172(2)(g)	a notice stating that there has been an occurrence of an infectious disease at the premises
173	Prescribed information to be displayed
175	Prescribed information to be notified to the Regulatory Authority
EDUCATION AND CARE SERVICES NATIONAL LAW	
172	Offence to fail to display prescribed information
174(2)(a)	Notification to the Regulatory Authority- (a) any serious incident at the approved education and care service

Dealing with Infectious Diseases and Infestations Procedures

General

Echunga Preschool will act to prevent the spread of infectious diseases/infestations by:

- Ensuring current information about infectious diseases is held at the service.
- Providing information to families regarding infectious diseases and exclusion from the service as part of the family information pack.
- Providing appropriate hand washing facilities and supplies (as outlined in the Nutrition Policy).
- Encouraging effective hand washing techniques.
- Providing appropriate first aid supplies (as outlined in the Administration of First Aid Policy).
- Excluding children from the service who are suffering from an infectious disease (as per the guidelines in Staying Healthy in Child Care).
- Notifying families when an infectious disease has occurred at the service.
- Providing information about immunisation.
- Providing the latest information regarding Covid-19 or any pandemic and the expectations the Government has set forward for preschools.

Covid -19

- In the event that a child or staff member has become positive with Covid -19 and any variants, Echunga Primary and Preschool will follow and comply with any directions and the latest information provided by SA Health, both Commonwealth and State governments, The Department for Education and the Education Standards Board.
- Staff and Children will isolate the appropriate amount of time as required by SA Health.
- Staff will wear masks as required and have available masks for children who wish to wear them.

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- The preschool room shall be cleaned after each session, in line with the Department for Education requirements. The approved provider shall ensure staff are given enough time to comply with the cleaning requirements.
- There will be service access restrictions for families during drop off/pick up and visitors will be limited.
- Excursions and visitors to preschool may be restricted during waves of Covid.

Head lice

If one child at the preschool has head lice, it is likely that others may also have them. To help prevent the spread of head lice, our site will:

- remind parents to be vigilant in checking for head lice weekly
- notify the parent/caregiver of a child who is suspected of having live head lice and request that the child is treated before returning to preschool the following day
- keep families informed if there is someone at preschool with head lice, ensuring confidentiality is not breached by disclosing the child's name who has head lice.
- reduce head-to-head contact between all children when preschool is aware that someone has head lice
- support parents and children who have head lice by providing factual information, reducing parental anxiety and not singling out individual children with head lice
- ensure that the child or children with head lice are not isolated or excluded from learning
- provide families with suggestions of effective treatment for head lice
- encourage parents to tie back children's hair when attending preschool
- record all cases confidentially so an outbreak can be avoided or minimised
- encourage children to learn about head lice so as to help them understand the issue and how to prevent further outbreaks- e.g. avoid sharing hairbrushes and hats

Infectious diseases

In the event that an educator suspects that a child arriving at the service is suffering from an infectious disease:

- The educator will approach the Principal for a second opinion.
- If the Principal also suspects the child is suffering from an infectious disease, he/she will advise the person signing in the child that the child is suspected of suffering from an infectious disease and request that the child be taken home from the service until a medical practitioner has determined that:
 - the child is not suffering from an infectious disease
 - the child has completed the applicable exclusion period as outlined in the current edition of Staying Healthy in Child Care.

In the event that an educator suspects that a child in attendance at preschool is suffering from an infectious disease:

- The child will be withdrawn from the main group and taken to a separate area, where the educator will further assess the child's current health condition and maintain surveillance whilst making the child comfortable.
- The educator will refer to Staying Healthy in Child Care for details on symptoms the child is presenting with.
- An educator will contact the family or, if unsuccessful, the emergency contacts in order of priority and advise the emergency contact of the child's condition and

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request that the emergency contact make immediate arrangements to collect the child from preschool.

- In an event where the child does not have to be collected immediately, precautions as described in Staying Healthy in Child Care will be implemented.

In the event that a child with an infectious disease has been in attendance at preschool, the director will:

- ensure that the families of children in attendance that day, or any other previous day the child has attended and may have been infectious, are notified as soon as practicable. Confidentiality will be maintained and only the name and nature of the infectious disease will be disclosed (see Confidentiality Policy)
- ensure that information regarding the infectious disease is available to families
- ensure that documentation regarding the infectious disease and the actions taken by the service comply with Regulations.

Immunisation

- Immunisation is a reliable way to prevent many childhood infectious diseases. When enrolling a child in a preschool, parents will be asked to provide an Immunisation History Statement. Should a child not be fully immunised according to the National Immunisation Program Schedule, they will be prevented from enrolling.
- Educators and other staff at our preschool are highly recommended to keep up to date with all immunisations including yearly influenza vaccinations. These include vaccinations recommended by the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC). Educators, staff and visitors, including health professionals, volunteers, students, committee members and contractors are required to be fully vaccinated for COVID-19 under Public Health Orders in South Australia (*Refer to Immunisation Policy for more information*).
- The preschool will make information on immunisation available to families. Posters will be displayed prominently and additional information will be available via the Staying Healthy in Child Care document.

Exclusion

- Children and staff with infectious diseases will be excluded from preschool in accordance with the National Health and Medical Research Council guidelines. The guidelines for exclusion can be found in Staying Healthy in Child Care (see References and resources below).
- All exclusion/isolation as directed by SA Health will be followed.
- A medical certificate is required for a child or adult to be readmitted to the service after contracting diphtheria, hepatitis A, polio, tuberculosis, typhoid or paratyphoid.
- If a child is unwell at home or becomes unwell at preschool, parents are asked not to send the child to our OSHC service, but to make alternative arrangements for their care.
- If a staff member is unwell, they should not report to work. Staff members should contact the director/coordinator or nominated supervisor at the earliest possible time to advise of their inability to report to work. In a single staff service, immediate arrangements should be made for a relief person to attend.

- In the case of serious ill health or hospitalisation, a child or staff member will require a medical certificate from their medical practitioner or specialist, verifying that they are sufficiently recovered to return to the service.

Management of unwell children

- If a child becomes unwell while at preschool, the parents will be notified and asked to collect the child. The child will be made comfortable and separated from the other children until the parent arrives or until the child recovers. When a parent cannot be contacted, staff will phone emergency contacts.
- If a child requires immediate medical aid (an ambulance), the service staff will secure that aid and notify the parent.
- If medication is required in an emergency, and there is no prior consent of the parent, the service staff will call for an Ambulance and then contact the parent.

Prevention strategies for minimising the spread of disease within preschool include all staff ensuring:

- full adherence to the cleaning guidelines
- to clean surfaces first with detergent and water before using disinfectants. (Disinfectants cannot kill germs unless areas are clean)
- mops used for toilet accidents are to be soaked in disinfectant in a bucket in the laundry sink and then air-dried
- that a daily clean is carried out on other surfaces that may transmit germs such as high touch objects including doorknobs, tables, remotes, light switches, low shelving, etc. This will be increased, if an outbreak has been recorded in the Service or to minimise the risk of transmission of a virus such as COVID-19
- that if a child has a toileting accident, the items are placed in a plastic bag with the child's name on it. The plastic bag will be labelled 'soiled/wet clothing' for parents to take home.
- cloths are colour coded so that a separate cloth is used to clean floors, bathroom, art and craft, and meal surfaces
- all washable toys/equipment out on display for the children are to be washed on a weekly basis to decrease the risk of cross contamination and recorded with the date and a signature as evidence.
- toys and equipment (that are difficult to wash) will be washed with detergent (or soap and water) and air-dried in sunlight
- washable toys and equipment will be washed in detergent and hot water or the dishwasher and aired to dry (toys will not be washed in the dishwasher at the same time as dishes). All toys and equipment that have been cleaned will be recorded on the toy cleaning register.
- floor surfaces will be cleaned on a daily basis after each session of care
- effective hand washing hygiene
- cough and sneeze etiquette
- use of gloves
- exclusion of children, educators or staff when they are unwell or displaying symptoms of an infectious disease or virus
- effective environmental cleaning including toys and resources

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- requesting parents and visitors to wash their hands with soap and water or hand sanitizer upon arrival and departure at preschool
- physical distancing (if recommended)
- use of face masks

Roles and Responsibilities

Roles	Responsibilities
Approved provider	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ensure that obligations under the <i>Education and Care Services National Law</i> and <i>National Regulations</i> are met • ensure that reasonable steps are taken to prevent the spread of any infectious disease at the service • ensure that families or an authorised emergency contact of the children attending are notified of the occurrence as soon as practicable and in a manner that is not prejudicial to the rights of any child, educator or staff member • display a notice stating that there has been an occurrence of an infectious disease at the service premises • meet jurisdictional requirements relating to the enrolment or attendance of children who are not up-to-date with their scheduled vaccinations • 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 the premises, furniture and equipment are kept safe, clean and well maintained, including high risk areas (e.g. bathroom, toilet, nappy change area, sandpit), furniture (e.g. cots), clothing, linen, and equipment (e.g. toys, carpets, mats) • 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, educators and staff, and available for inspection • notify families at least 14 days before changing the policy or procedures if the changes will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ affect the fees charged or the way they are collected or ○ significantly impact the preschool's education and care of children or ○ significantly impact the family's ability to utilise the preschool. • they are fully vaccinated against COVID-19 and have provided proof of vaccination to the approved provider

<p>Nominated supervisor and Director</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • implement the <i>Infectious diseases and Infestations policy</i> and <i>procedures</i> • ensure that reasonable steps are taken to prevent the spread of any infectious disease at the service • ensure that families or an authorised emergency contact of children attending are notified of the occurrence as soon as practicable and in a manner that is not prejudicial to the rights of any child, educator or staff member • display a notice stating that there has been an occurrence of an infectious disease at the premises • meet jurisdictional requirements relating to the enrolment or attendance of children who are not up-to-date with their scheduled vaccinations • implement exclusion periods consistent with current information from a relevant recognised authority • ensure premises, furniture and equipment are kept safe, clean and well maintained • promote hygiene practices with all children, families, educators and staff • 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. • Ensuring that preschool's practices and procedures minimise the spread of infection/infestation by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ regularly disinfecting and cleaning all equipment. ○ ensuring that there is no sharing of drinking/eating utensils. ○ in the case of head lice removing soft furnishings (bean bags), washing the 'dress ups' and restricting access to them until the immediate risk passes. • Ensuring preschool holds information on specific diseases and exclusion periods and this information is available to educators and families; and that the Staying Healthy in Child Care document and posters are accessible to educators at all times. • Ensuring preschool's documents are all current and available. • Ensuring that any updates to the documents are made available to all educators in a timely fashion. • Ensuring that information regarding the service's policy on exclusion of children with infectious diseases is made available to families in the family information pack, along with the recommendation that families keep children who are unwell at home. • they are fully vaccinated against COVID-19 and have provided proof of vaccination to the approved provider
<p>Educators</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • implement the <i>Infectious diseases and Infestations policy</i> and <i>procedures</i> • monitor children's health, safety and wellbeing on a daily basis and manage accordingly

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • be immunised against infectious diseases as recommended by recognised authorities • stay at home if unwell or have an excludable infectious disease • employ and role model good hygiene practices for cleaning hands, nappy changing, toileting and food handling • integrate infection control awareness, hygiene and protective practices into educational programming and planning • communicate with families about infectious diseases in general and specific expectations within preschool (e.g. exclusion periods). • they are fully vaccinated against COVID-19 and have provided proof of vaccination to the approved provider
Families	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • be familiar with and follow the service's Infectious diseases and Infestations policy and procedures • provide immunisation documentation upon enrolment and as immunisations are administered • keep their child at home if they are unwell or have an excludable infectious disease • keep their child at home if there is an infectious disease at the service and their child is not fully immunised against it • inform preschool if their child has an infectious disease or has been in contact with a person who has an infectious disease.

Resources/References

- ACECQA – Guide to the National Quality Framework acecqa.gov.au/nqf/about/guide
- Australian Government – Coronavirus (COVID-19) information australia.gov.au
- Australian Government – Immunisation requirements servicesaustralia.gov.au/individuals/topics/what-are-immunisation-requirements/35396
- Australian Government – Staying healthy: Preventing infectious diseases in early childhood education and care services nhmrc.gov.au/about-us/publications/stayinghealthy-preventing-infectious-diseases-earlychildhood-education-and-care-services#block-viewsblock-file-attachments-content-block-1
- NCAC OSHCQA Fact Sheet #17 Children's Hygiene at www.acecqu.gov.au (go to NCAC archive)
- SA Health – sa.gov.au
- SA.GOV>AU Health care Plans and support Plans
- SA Health Report of Notifiable Disease or Related Death at www.health.sa.gov.au/pehs/PDF-files/2008-case-reporting-form.pdf
- Starting Blocks – Illness in early learning services startingblocks.gov.au/other-resources/factsheets/illness-in-child-care-services
- Staying Healthy in Child Care—Preventing Infectious Diseases in Child Care. Australian Government
- National Health and Medical Research Council, at www.nhmrc.gov.au/guidelines/publications/ch43
- You've Got What?, Government of South Australia Department of Health at www.health.sa.gov.au/pehs/youve-got-what.htm
- Wash, Wipe, Cover (Health SA) at www.publications.health.sa.gov.au

