



Local Sick Children Policy

National Quality Standards and Regulations

Quality Area 2: Children's Health and Safety (2.1, 2.1.1, 2.1.2)
Regulation 77, 85, 86, 87, 88, 90, 92, 93, 168

Background

Children come into contact with many other children and adults in the kindergarten environment, increasing their exposure to others who may be sick or carrying an infectious illness. The National Quality Standard requires early childhood education and care services to implement specific strategies to minimise the spread of infectious illness and maintain a healthy environment for all children, educators and families. We acknowledge the difficulty of keeping children at home or away from kindergarten when they are sick and the pressures this causes for families. However, educators have a duty of care to the members of our community and aim to minimise the transition of infectious diseases by adhering to regulations and policies protecting the health of all children, educators, families and visitors.

Principles

This policy has been developed based on the following principles:

- The health and safety of all students
- Educators have a duty of care to respond to and manage illnesses that may occur at the site to ensure the safety and wellbeing of children, families, educators and visitors
- Providing a consistent approach to the management of illness and infectious disease
- Providing children with an education around safe hygiene practices
- Consultation with educators, parents and caregivers within the kindergarten community

Scope

This policy applies to all educators, children, parents/caregivers and site visitors
There are no exemptions

Implementation

Hackham East Kindergarten follows the requirements of

- *Staying Healthy: Preventing Infectious Diseases in Early Childhood Education and Care Services* (5th Edition)
- *You've Got What?* (4th Edition)

These publications provide recommendations developed by the Australian Government National Health and Medical Research Council to guide our practices to help limit the spread of illness and disease. We aim to provide families with up to date information regarding specific illnesses and ways to minimise the spread of infection within the kindergarten and at home.

We are guided by decisions regarding exclusion periods and notification of infectious diseases by the Australian Government – Department of Health and local public health units in our jurisdiction as per the Public Health Act.

Understanding the Chain of Infection

There are three steps in the chain of infection

- The germ has a source
- The germ spreads from the source
- The germ infects another person

The chain of infection can be broken at any stage to help prevent and control the spread of diseases.

The germ has a source

Germs can be picked up directly from an infected person or from the environment. It is important to understand that an infected person may not show any signs or symptoms of illness.

The germ spreads from the source

Germs can spread in several ways, including through the air by droplets, through contact with bodily secretions (faeces, urine, saliva, discharges or blood) and through direct contact with skin.

Some germs can spread directly from person to person, others can spread from the infected person to the environment. Many germs can survive on hands or objects such as toys, door handles and bench tops. The length of time a germ can survive on a surface (including the skin) depends on the germ itself, the type of surface and how often the surface is cleaned. Washing hands and surfaces regularly with detergent and water is a very effective way of removing germs and preventing them spreading through the environment.

The germ infects another person

When the germ has reached the next person, it may enter the body through the mouth, respiratory tract, eyes, genitals or broken or abraded skin. Whether a person becomes ill after the germ has entered the body depends on both the germ and the person's immunity.

Minimizing the Spread of Infections and Diseases

We understand that it can be difficult for families to know when their child is sick. Families may experience problems taking time off work or study to care for their child at home. Obtaining leave from work or study can contribute to negative attitudes in the workplace which can cause stress on families. Families may also experience guilt when they send their child to kindergarten when they are not well.

However, it is imperative that families maintain a focus not only on the wellbeing of their own child, but also on the wellbeing of the other children and educators at the kindergarten. To protect the health of children and educators, it is important that children and educators who are unwell are kept away from the kindergarten for the recommended period.

At times, an outbreak of a new virus or infection, such as Covid 19, may require exclusion from the kindergarten that is not specified in the general exclusion periods for common infectious illnesses. Information, education and recommendations regarding any new virus will be provided by the Australian Government Department of Health and/or local public health unit.

The need for exclusion and the length of time a person is excluded depends on:

- How easily the infection can spread

- How long the person is likely to be infectious
- The severity of the infectious disease or illness

Our educators are not medical practitioners and are not able to diagnose whether or not a child has an infectious illness. However, if an infectious illness is suspected, we may ask the family to collect their child from kindergarten as soon as possible (within 30 minutes) or not bring the child to kindergarten.

Educators *may* request families seek medical advice and provide a medical certificate stating that the child is no longer infectious prior to returning to kindergarten

To help minimize the spread of illness and infectious diseases, we implement rigorous hygiene and infection control procedures and cleaning routines including:

- Effective hand washing hygiene
- Cough and sneeze etiquette
- Appropriate use of protective gloves
- Exclusion of children and educators when they are unwell or displaying symptoms of an infectious disease or virus
- Effective environmental cleaning including toys, resources and soft furnishings
- Requesting all visitors to use hand sanitizer or wash their hands with soap and water upon arrival
- Social distancing and wearing of masks when recommended by SA Health

Children Arriving at Kindergarten Who Are Unwell

Educators will not accept a child into kindergarten if they:

- Have a contagious illness or infectious disease (including having symptoms)
- Have been in close contact with someone who has a positive confirmed case of Covid 19
- Have a high temperature above 38°C (staff will not take children's temperatures, this will be based on observation of the child)
- Are unwell and unable to participate in normal activities or require additional attention
- Have had a temperature in the last 24 hours – as reported by families
- Have had diarrhea or vomited in the last 48 hours
- Have started a course of anti-biotics in the last 24 hours
- Have been given medication prior to arriving at kindergarten (for example, Panadol)

Children Who Become Ill at Kindergarten

Children may become unwell throughout the day, in which case educators will respond to the child's individual symptoms of illness and provide immediate comfort and care.

- Educators will closely monitor and document the child's symptoms on the *Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Record*
- Children who are unwell will be able to rest in a quiet area while being supervised until their parent, career or emergency contact are able to collect them (within 30 minutes)
- A child who has passed runny stools/vomited whilst at kindergarten will be sent home and asked to stay away until 48 hours after their last symptom
- If a child is particularly unwell and family are not able to be contacted, educators may call an ambulance
- Educators will continue to update the *Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Record* and have this signed by the adult who collects the child
- Educators will thoroughly clean and disinfect any toys, resources, equipment or soft furnishings that may be contaminated by a sick child

Common Colds and Flu

The common cold or flu (viral upper respiratory tract infections) are very common in children, occurring 6-10 times a year on average, with the highest number usually being during the first 2 years in childcare, kindergarten or school. Symptoms may include coughing, runny nose and a slight temperature.

In circumstances where a child appears to have cold or flu symptoms, educators will determine if the child is well enough to continue at kindergarten or if they require parental care.

Children who are generally healthy will recover from a common cold in a few days. Keeping a child home and away from kindergarten gives them time to recuperate and helps to prevent the spread of germs.

Excluding Children from Kindergarten

When a child has been diagnosed with an illness or infectious disease, the kindergarten will refer to information about recommended exclusion periods from the Public Health Unit (PHU), *Staying Healthy: Preventing Infectious Diseases in Early Childhood Education and Care Services* and *You've Got What?* documents.

Recommended exclusion periods – Poster *Staying Healthy: Preventing Infectious Diseases in Early Childhood Education and Care Services*

- When an infectious disease has been diagnosed, the kindergarten will display appropriate documentation and alert families including information on the illness/disease, symptoms, infectious period and the exclusion period. (This information can be obtained from *Staying Healthy: Preventing Infectious Diseases in Early Childhood Education and Care Services*, or *SA Health*)
- Educators will notify the local Public Health Unit as required and work with them to monitor health alerts and implement guidelines.
- A medical clearance from the child's General Practitioner stating that the child is cleared to return to kindergarten may also be required (Director's discretion)
- Children that have had diarrhea and or vomiting will be asked to stay away from the kindergarten for 48 hours after symptoms have ceased to reduce infectious transition as symptoms can develop again after 24 hours in many instances.
- Children who have a suspected case of Covid 19 and meet the criteria for testing (fever, cough, sore throat, shortness of breath) are required to contact their GP. Exclusion periods will apply if they have a confirmed case.

Responsibilities

Staff will

- Ensure effective hygiene policies and procedures are adhered to at all times to prevent the spread of illnesses
- Promote effective hand hygiene and cough etiquette
- Ensure effective cleaning policies and procedures are adhered to at all times
- Ensure all families are provided with access to relevant policies upon enrolment
- Ensure families are provided with relevant information from a trusted source about preventing the spread of illnesses
- Provide comfort and care to any child who becomes unwell at kindergarten (including (but not limited to) vomiting, diarrhea, cold and flu symptoms, temperature, lethargic or becoming very upset) and contact their emergency contacts to collect the child

- Enforce the exclusion periods for any illness or infectious disease
- Connect with families of a child with complex or chronic medical conditions to notify them in the event of an outbreak of an illness or infectious disease that could compromise their health

Parents and caregivers will

In order to prevent the spread of disease, families are required to monitor their child's health and not allow them to attend kindergarten if they are unwell, have an infectious illness or display symptoms of an illness.

For children who have ongoing medical needs such as asthma or anaphylaxis, parents and caregivers should regularly review their child's health care action plans to ensure educators are able to manage their individual needs as required.

Families should implement effective hygiene routines at home such as regular handwashing and sneeze/cough routines (use a tissue, covering their mouth with coughing, sneezing into a tissue or elbow, washing hands).

Families should notify the kindergarten if their child has been unwell in the past 24 hours or someone in the family is/has been sick. This is particularly critical during a pandemic such as Covid 19.

Signs of illness in young children may include:

- Runny, green nasal discharge
- High temperature
- Diarrhea
- Vomiting
- Red, swelling or discharging eyes (bacterial conjunctivitis)
- Rashes (red/purple)
- Irritability, unusually tired or lethargic
- Drowsiness
- Not eating as normal
- Poor urine output
- Pain
- Mouth sores

Families are required to keep up to date with their child's immunisations, providing a copy of the updated AIR Immunisation History Statement to the kindergarten following each immunisation on the National Immunisation Schedule.

- Be made aware of this policy upon enrolment of their child at the center
- Be encouraged to support this policy by keeping their children home when they are unwell, adhering to exclusion periods and notifying staff of any absences from kindergarten
- Discuss any medical conditions or concerns with staff on enrolment or as they arise

Endorsed by Governing Council:	May 2022
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