



Dealing with Infectious Diseases

including COVID-19

Reviewed: 5th May, 2021 Next Review: May, 2022

Education and care services regulation/s	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regulation 88 Infectious diseases • Regulation 136 First aid qualifications • Regulation 168 (2)(c) Education and care service must have policies/procedures
NSW Department of Education policy, procedure or guidelines	<p>The following department policies and relevant documents can be accessed from the preschool section of the department's website;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student Health in NSW Public Schools: A summary and consolidation of policy • Infection control information and support document Infection Control Procedure • Infectious diseases information • https://education.nsw.gov.au/early-childhood-education/coronavirus
National Quality Standard(s)	<p>2.1: Health Each child's health and physical activity is supported and promoted.</p> <p>2.1.2: Health practices and procedures Effective illness and injury management and hygiene practices are promoted and implemented.</p> <p>6.1.3 Families are supported Current information is available to families about the service and relevant community services and resources to support parenting and family wellbeing</p> <p>7.1.2 Management Systems Systems are in place to manage risk and enable the effective management and operation of a quality service.</p>
Leading and operating department preschool guidelines	<p>Leading and operating department preschool guidelines Page 34 (staff only)</p>
School policy or procedure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staying Healthy in Child Care - Preventing infectious diseases in child care (5th edition)

Introduction

Ensuring the health and safety of children, and staff, and supporting children's ongoing wellbeing, is a core focus of our preschool. Educators need to be aware of the likelihood of young children being exposed to an infectious illness whilst in care. Maintaining hygiene practices within the centre and teaching young children about health and hygiene will assist in the prevention of infectious diseases. Providing families with timely and current information will further support this process.

Aim

Children's exposure to infectious diseases will be minimised by:

- following all recommended guidelines from relevant authorities regarding the prevention of infectious diseases
- promotion of practices that reduce the transmission of infection
- the exclusion of sick children and staff
- service support for child immunisation
- implementation of effective hand washing procedures.

Implementation

Nominated Supervisor will:

- Ensure that all information regarding the prevention of infectious diseases is sourced from a recognised health authority, such as: *Staying Healthy in Child Care – Preventing Infectious Diseases in Child Care* (5th edition), National Health and Medical Research Council (2006), and the NSW Health, or NSW public hospitals websites;
- Implement the recommendations from *Staying Healthy in Child Care – Preventing Infectious Diseases in Child Care* to prevent the spread of infectious diseases at the service;
- Develop a daily routine for:
 - Maintaining a hygienic environment;
 - Providing families with relevant infectious diseases, health and hygiene information;
 - Guiding children's understanding of health and hygiene throughout the daily program;
 - Ensuring staff are aware of relevant immunisation guidelines for children and themselves; and
 - Maintaining relevant records regarding the current status of the immunisation children at the service, as well as any relevant medical conditions of children at the service.
- Develop an enrolment procedure that captures all required information regarding the children's immunisation status, and any medical conditions;
- Provide relevant sourced materials to families about:
 - The current NSW Immunisation Schedule for children;
 - Exclusion guidelines for children that are not immunised or have not yet received all of their immunisations in the event of an infectious illness at the service, upon induction at the service;
 - Advice and information regarding any infectious diseases in general, and information regarding any specific infectious illnesses that are suspected/present in the service – All infectious diseases identified at the centre will be notified to parents
- Provide information to families as soon as practicable of the occurrence of an infectious disease that describe the:
 - Nature of illness;
 - Incubation period; and
 - Infectious and exclusion periods.
- Maintain confidentiality with regards to children's individual medical circumstances, by ensuring only necessary medical information regarding the child is displayed for emergency situation;
- Advise staff of the recommended immunisations for people working with children
- Ensure opportunities for educators and families to be involved in the review of the policies and procedures regarding children's health and safety
- Inform and implement the advice of the health department, or local health unit regarding Infectious Diseases as required
- Maintain currency with regard to Health and Safety by attending appropriate professional

development opportunities

- Ensure at least one staff member working within the Preschool environment holds a current approved first aid qualification - HLTAID004 Provide an emergency first aid response in an education and care setting.

Educators will:

- Ensure that any children that are suspected of having an Infectious Illness are responded to and their health and emotional needs are supported at all times
- Implement appropriate health and safety procedures, as outlined in *Staying Healthy in Childcare - Preventing Infectious Diseases in Child Care* (5th Edition) when tending to ill children
- Ensure that families are aware of the need to collect their children as soon as practicable to ensure the child's comfort
- Advise families that they will need to alert the service if their child is diagnosed with an Infectious Illness
- Provide varied opportunities for children to engage in hygiene practices, including routine opportunities, and intentional practice
- Take into consideration the grouping of children to reduce the risk of acquiring an infectious illness when planning the routines/program of the day
- Implement the services health and hygiene policy including:
 - Hand washing – washing and drying thoroughly
 - Routine and daily cleaning of the service
 - Wearing gloves (particularly when in direct contact with bodily fluids)
 - Proper handling and preparation of food.

Families will:

- Keep any child who is unwell at home until they are fully recovered, particularly if they are contagious, have a temperature, ear infection, conjunctivitis, vomiting, diarrhoea, a severe cough, or continually runny nose. Refer to guidelines on the Department's website for exclusion times <https://education.nsw.gov.au/parents-and-carers/wellbeing/health-and-safety/too-sick-to-go-to-school>
- Advise the service of their child's immunisation status, and provide an Immunisation Statement from Medicare for the centre to keep with the child's enrolment records
- Advise the centre when their child's immunisation/medical condition is updated and provide an updated Immunisation Statement to the service to ensure that enrolment records are up to date
- Have the opportunity to provide input into the review and effectiveness of policies and procedures of the centre via various methods.
- Keep any child who is legally not vaccinated at home when there is an outbreak of a vaccine-preventable disease.

Practices

- If they need to cough or sneeze the children are encouraged to do so into the crook of their arm, rather than their hand. This way, germs aren't spread around the preschool as the child touches things and we are able to minimise the spread of infection.
- Detergent and water (or diluted disinfectant and water, as required) are suitable for all general environmental cleaning such as wiping table surfaces and/or toys.

- Educators will support children with their toileting, giving individuals the particular support they need, whilst encouraging them to be responsible for their own toileting and hand washing.
- Families will be asked to keep any child who is unwell at home until they are fully recovered, particularly if they are contagious, have a temperature, ear infection, conjunctivitis, vomiting, diarrhoea, a severe cough or continually runny nose.
- If a child vomits or has diarrhoea at preschool their parent will be called and required to collect them.
- If a child is suspected of having an infectious illness, for example chicken pox, they will be isolated from the other children, made comfortable and supervised by a staff member until collected.
- Children suffering from certain infectious illnesses will be excluded from attending preschool.
- The teacher will inform all parents and carers in writing if there is a confirmed case of an infectious illness or head lice in the preschool.
- If a child contracts a vaccine-preventable illness, preschool staff will tell the Principal who will contact parents and the nearest public health unit if necessary. The child must get a medical clearance from a doctor before they return to preschool.
- Hand washing, including drying hands, is one of the most effective ways of preventing the spread of infection. For educator's hand washing will occur:
 - on arrival at the preschool
 - after going to the toilet
 - before and after helping children with toileting (which may include nappy changing)
 - before and after giving first aid
 - before and after giving medication
 - after wiping a child's nose
 - before and after eating or handling food
 - after patting or touching animals
 - before and after preparing or cooking food
 - before and after using playdough
 - after coming into contact with any bodily fluids, for example when toileting accidents occur or a child is sick
 - before and after applying sunscreen.
- Alcohol-based hand rubs/sanitiser can also be an effective way of cleaning hands if they aren't very dirty. This method still requires cleaning between fingers, around thumbs and under nails.

Infection Control

When children attend preschool their exposure to infectious conditions may increase simply because they have age-characteristic behaviours that help spread infection. They may also be exposed to other children who are contagious without recognisable symptoms. Therefore, children need guidance and support to develop good hygiene habits such as handwashing.

Detergent and water (or diluted disinfectant and water, as required) are suitable when doing basic cleaning such as wiping table surfaces and/or toys, and wearing gloves when required can reduce the risk of spreading infection amongst children, staff and visitors.

The Regulations highlight the need to minimise health risks for young children by using appropriate health and hygiene practices. Regulation 77 (2) The nominated supervisor of an education and care service must implement, and ensure that all staff members of, and volunteers at, the service implement – (a) adequate health and hygiene practices; and (b) safe practices for handling and storing food – to minimise risks to children being educated and cared for by the service.

The National Health and Medical Research Council and the Department's Standard Precautions for Infection Control recommend ways to reduce health risks which are exercised at Oak Flats Public School Preschool:

- Use of colour-coded cleaning cloths for different areas and cleaning uses (such as blue in the kitchen and red in the bathroom) ensuring all staff are aware of the code.

- Tissues, cloth towels and ice-pack covers are only used with one child.
- Tissues are used when wiping a child's nose. After wiping a child's nose, wash hands thoroughly with soap and warm water, or use an alcohol-based hand rub/sanitiser
- Gloves, paper towels and tissues are disposed of immediately after use into a container with a disposable lining.
- Children do not share personal items.
- Hand basins are not used for food and drink preparation or rinsing soiled clothing.
- Care is taken with all bodily fluids, secretions and excreta.
- Use of disposable gloves at all times when dealing with bodily fluids, secretions or excreta.
- Display hygiene procedures in bathrooms, staffroom and toilet areas.

When teaching children to wash their hands we exercise the following points:

- Use soap and running water
- Wash hands thoroughly
- Wash all parts of the hands including sides and between the fingers
- Rinse hands well to remove soap
- Sing "Happy Birthday" song twice
- Wipe hands using paper towel and dispose of the towel in the bin
- Follow visual hand washing guides/displays

Infectious Diseases

The Education and Care Services National Regulations (regulation 88) requires that an infectious diseases policy is in place that outlines the practices to be followed. Children suffering from certain infectious diseases will be excluded from attending preschool. Staff always refer to the current NSW Health guidelines on exclusion and follow standard infection control procedures. If a child is suspected of having an infectious disease, for example chicken pox, they will be isolated from other children, made comfortable and supervised by a staff member until collected.

If a child contracts a vaccine-preventable disease, preschool staff should tell the principal who will contact parents and the nearest public health unit if necessary. All parents must be told of any outbreak of an infectious disease at the preschool and asked to keep children with infectious diseases at home for the appropriate time frame. This information can be found in the NSW Health fact sheet, https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/Infectious/factsheets/Factsheets/infectious_childhood.PDF. The child must also get a medical clearance from a doctor before they return to preschool.

Parents should be encouraged to tell the class teacher if a family member has an infectious disease, as this can help reduce the risk of the infection spreading to others. Preschool staff will ensure that parents from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds are given information in their first language if necessary.

Standard Precautions for Infection Control

Standard Precautions for Infection Control should be used by all staff, students, visitors, volunteers and contractors to reduce the risk of transmission of infectious diseases during care procedures.

What are standard precautions?

Standard Precautions in the workplace involve the use of safe work practices and protective barriers for the control of the spread of infection from both recognised and unrecognised sources of infection. It is not possible to reliably identify sources of infections or communicable diseases, therefore it is necessary to presume that the blood (including dried blood) and body substances of all persons be considered as potential sources of infection independent of diagnosis or perceived risk.

When do I use standard precautions?

Standard Precautions must be used before and after care procedures, when providing first aid, when handling and disposing of sharps and contaminated material and when handling animals and potentially infectious agricultural substances.

There is a potential risk of infection when exposed to:

- Blood, including dried blood;
- All other body fluids, secretions and excretions, including saliva and mucous but excluding sweat;
- Urine and faeces
- Broken skin;
- Mucous membranes e.g. mouth and nose.

What do I need to do?**1. Use good hygiene practices**

- Wash your hands after any contamination, following any care procedure and after any activity which involves contaminated substances whether or not gloves are worn.

2. Take care of your skin

- Take care of your skin as it is the first barrier to disease. Protect damaged skin by covering with a waterproof dressing or by using gloves.

3. Use good handling and disposal procedures

- Minimise contact with potentially infectious substances by using personal protective equipment such as gloves, aprons, masks or goggles.
- Ensure that reusable equipment such as that used in first aid provision is cleaned after use and single use items are discarded in a safe manner.
- Follow the Department's procedures when handling and disposing of sharps and use a suitable sharps container.
- Dispose of other contaminated or infectious waste, such as from first aid or care procedures, in a plastic bag which is tied securely and placed inside a second plastic bag and tied securely then placed in the workplace garbage hopper.

- Contain all blood and body fluids i.e. confining spills, splashes and contamination of the environment.
- Clean up spills promptly.

4. Take prompt action if contact is made with blood or body fluids

- Wash skin with mild soap and water, rinse eyes with water, rinse your mouth and spit out.

Care for Kids' Ears

- At Oak Flats Public School Preschool, educators can provide information around ear health, effective hygiene practices and the prevalence of otitis media particularly in Aboriginal children.
- During pre-school and primary school years many children suffer middle ear infections (Otitis Media) and mild hearing loss. Some studies suggest that up to 91% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in rural communities present with Otitis Media (OM).
- Left untreated, ear infections can lead to hearing loss which may limit a child's capacity to develop socially and emotionally. Ear infections can also adversely affect educational outcomes.

Nappy changing and other toileting procedures

Equipment for nappy changing should include:

- Dispenser with disposable gloves
- Storage space for clean nappies and other necessary supplies
- Disposable wipes
- Paper towels
- Plastic bags for soiled clothes
- Bin/bucket with lid to store plastic bag of soiled item/s until collection.
- Foot-operated, plastic-lined bin for disposal of paper wipes, paper towel and disposable gloves
- Separate bin for disposal of nappies (available from contractors supplying sanitary napkin disposal units. The choice of contractor is a school-based decision)

When changing nappies, the following procedures are to be used:

- Disposable gloves should be worn
- Children should be wiped with disposable wipes
- Paper wipes and gloves should be disposed of in a plastic-lined bin
- Nappies should be disposed of into an appropriate bin
- Children's hands should be washed after each nappy change
- Children should not be left unattended
- Adult's hands should be washed before putting on and after taking off gloves

NOTE: If children are still wearing nappies parents should provide nappies, disposable wipes and any creams that the child needs. Disposable nappies should be used to aid in infection control. Written parent consent will be required to administer nappy rash/barrier creams..

A good practice guide for spilt bodily fluids:

- Wear gloves
- Place paper towel over the spill and carefully remove paper towel and contents
- Place the paper towel and gloves in a plastic bag, seal the bag and put in the rubbish bin
- Put on new gloves and clean the surface with warm water and detergent and allow to dry
- Use disinfectant
- Remove and discard gloves

- Wash hands thoroughly with soap and warm water

If a child needs cleaning after wetting or soiling themselves the following procedures apply:

- Wear gloves and use pre-moistened disposable wipes
- Wet paper towels may be used as an alternative
- Ensure running water is used to wet the towels (not a bowl or sink full of water) and that towels are only used once
- Dispose of paper towels
- Place soiled clothes in a sealed plastic bag, and store in a bin/bucket with a lid until collected by the family.
- Remove gloves, discard them and wash hands thoroughly with soap and warm water.

Specific Infectious Disease - COVID-19 (Coronavirus)

Government advice:

- Australian Health Protection Principal Committee (AHPPC) advice on reducing the potential risk of COVID-19 transmission in schools

<https://www.health.gov.au/news/australian-health-protection-principal-committee-ahppc-advice-on-reducing-the-potential-risk-of-covid-19-transmission-in-schools>

- NSW Health

www.health.nsw.gov.au

OFPS General

- Students and staff currently excluded from school are those who:
 - just arrived in Australian and have to self-isolate for 14 days or
 - have flu-like symptoms, a fever or ongoing cough (or otherwise sick)
 - are under medical assessment
 - have been diagnosed with the Novel Coronavirus
- Where students remain without symptoms during the 14 days self-isolation period, they do not require a medical certificate to return to school after the 14 days.
- NSW Health has processes in place to identify any close contacts of cases confirmed.
- All suspected and confirmed cases of COVID-19 should immediately be reported to the Nominated Supervisor (Principal) who will report to the Incident Report and Support Hotline on 1800 811 523.
- OFPS Risk Management Plan in place, for the whole school environment.

Reducing the Risk:

- Stay home if you feel unwell
- Seek medical attention
- Maintain social distancing of 1.5m
- Practice hand hygiene

- Non-contact greetings
- Cough/sneeze into elbow
- Self-isolate as required
- Stay updated via NSW Health

- Use the QR code to register your details when entering the preschool

OFPS Preschool

- A Risk Management Plan is in place for the preschool environment.

In the event of an outbreak of COVID 19 the following measures will be implemented:

Arrival and Departure of Children

- Only 4 families at a time to be in the outdoor entrance foyer. Other families are to wait outside the preschool gate maintaining adequate social distancing.
- The attendance books will be located in the outdoor entrance foyer.
- Families are to sign their child in and then leave them at the preschool door with a staff member who will walk them into preschool and help them with their bag.
- Families are requested to bring their own pen to use.
- Preschool pens are disinfected between uses.

- Childrens hands will be disinfected with sanitizer before entering the preschool building (supervised by staff)
- Families are requested to complete a handwashing procedure with soap or sanitizer before entering main school grounds.
- At departure time only 4 families at a time are in the outdoor entrance foyer. Other families are to wait outside the preschool gate maintaining adequate social distancing.
- Families are to sign their child out and then collect them from the preschool door.
- No families are to enter the preschool unless there is a valid reason that has been discussed with the staff.
- Staggered start and finish times may be implemented to allow for social distancing.

Cleaning

- Increased daily cleaning by preschool staff with additional resources to support cleaning provided.
- Preschool is provided with essential hygiene products, e.g. hand santiser and disinfectant wipes.
- Washing with detergent and water (or diluted disinfectant and water, as required):
 - High touch areas, including but not limited to, handles, taps, door frames, shelves, fridge door, pencils, containers, toys, blocks, pencils, equipment, books, keyboards, ipads, table tops, chairs.
 - If children are observed mouthing objects - remind children about being germ safe and disinfect object straight away
- Enhanced cleaning by contractors in place with increased focus on high touch points.
- Adequate supplies of hand soap and toilet paper have been sourced and will be checked and replenished as needed.

Routine:

- Routine is adjusted to avoid large groups of children together.
- Visits to the school are not carried out unless necessary
- No more than 4 children are allowed in the sandpit
- Learning is conducted in the outdoor environment as much as possible
- Social distancing will be adhered to during meal times (may introduce staggered meal times)
- Put markings on the ground as visuals for space requirements particularly in areas where groups of children may come together for a short period of time, for example when waiting for the bathroom.
- Drink bottles to be kept in individual lockers not together on the trolley
- Playdough not to be used.
- Incursions (library, etc) and excursions are postponed.
- Intentional teaching of washing hands, role modelling by educators. Singing of Happy birthday song
- Intentional teaching of social distancing.
- Discuss sneezing and coughing into elbow or tissue and washing of hands straight after.
- Supervision of handwashing in bathroom and throughout the day

Other

- Parents have the option of keeping their children home or sending them to school.
- Identify students who are vulnerable and discuss with family.
- A hand held non-contact thermometer to be used to monitor children who show symptoms of being unwell.
- Dots to be used on floor for group times to provide personal space – recommended 1 meter to 1.5 meter spacing
- Prefer fresh air and fans, open windows and doors – no use of air conditioner unless necessary
- Phone parents and family to collect children and keep home until well.
- Reminder on SeeSaw about keeping children home if they are sick or have a temperature
- Soft toys, pillows and blankets are washed and temporally packed away.
- Display handwashing, hygiene and other key information posters.
- Place handwashing information and current coronavirus updates on SeeSaw, school facebook page, newsletter, e-News, school website

Staff

- Staff understand the symptoms of COVID-19 and follow the school agreed process.
- Staff to follow procedures regarding reporting and supporting a child who is unwell.
- Staff are encouraged to read DoE and in school information carefully and keep aware of current updates and guidelines.
- Staff will use Personal Protective Equipment when required.
- Staff who are unwell, particularly those with any form of respiratory illness, should remain at home and seek medical attention as required.

Communication

- Usual communication channels, such as school ENews, website, email, electronic newsletters, facebook and SeeSaw will continue to be used to communicate with the preschool families.
- Preschool families are encouraged to download the “NSW School Updates” App, for current updates on school operational status.
- Inform families via SeeSaw of inclusion of COVID-19 to policy.

Evaluation

The effectiveness of this procedure will be measured by the health and safety of those involved with the preschool including families, staff and children. Vigilance will ensure that all health issues are dealt with in a timely manner and updates to procedures will happen as soon as information is available.