

Infectious Diseases

NQS 2.1.2 Effective illness and injury management and hygiene practices are promoted and implemented.

NQS 2.2 Each child is protected.

Introduction

Ensuring the health and safety of children, and staff, and supporting children's ongoing wellbeing, is a core focus of the delivery of an Education and Care Service. Educators at the Glenaeon Rudolf Steiner Preschool need to be aware of the likelihood of young children being exposed to an infectious illness whilst in care. Maintaining hygiene practices within the service 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.

Aims

To minimise children's exposure to infectious diseases 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; and
- implementation of effective hand washing procedures.

Procedure

Approved Provider will:

- ensure that all information regarding the prevention of infectious diseases is sourced from a recognised health authority, such as NSW Ministry of 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;
- ensure that children are reasonably protected from harm by working with the Nominated Supervisor and Educators on developing, implementing and reviewing policies that will guide health and safety procedures within the service; and
- collect, maintain, and appropriately store the required enrolment documents and enrolment information of children in the service.
- **Ensure that from 1 January 2018**, that children who are unvaccinated due to their parent's conscientious objection will no longer be enrolled into the Preschool. (Children who cannot be fully vaccinated due to a medical condition or who are on a recognised catch-up schedule will still be able to be enrolled upon presentation of the appropriate documentation signed by a medical practitioner).

Nominated Supervisor will:

- Develop procedures 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 of 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; and
- Provide reliable 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.
- Ensure that an “Incident, Injury, Illness and Trauma” record is completed as soon as practicable, or no later than 24 hours after the illness occurring;
- Ensure that all educators are aware of individual children’s circumstances;
- Maintain confidentiality with regards to children’s individual medical circumstances, by putting procedures in place to safeguard children and families personal information;
- Devise a routine written process for updating children’s enrolment records with regards to immunisation, ensuring that this occurs as required, (i.e. as children reach age milestones for immunisation), or each term;
- Advise staff of the recommended immunisations for people working with children as per the *Immunisation Handbook – 10th Edition (2014)*;
- Encourage staff to discuss their immunisation status with their medical practitioner and ensuring educators familiarity with procedures for exclusion of educators as well as children in the event of an infectious illness;
- Provide opportunities for educators to source relevant up to date information on the prevention of infectious diseases, and maintaining health and hygiene from trusted sources;
- Ensure opportunities for educators and families to be involved in the review of the policies and procedures regarding children’s health and safety; and
- Inform and implement the advice of the NSW Health, or local health unit regarding infectious diseases as required.
- Develop cleaning charts indicating how often toys and equipment should be cleaned. All toys and equipment that have been cleaned will be recorded on the cleaning register.

Educators will:

- Ensure that any children that are suspected of having an infectious illness are responded to and their health and emotional needs supported at all times;
- Implement appropriate health and safety procedures, 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;
- Remain aware of their own immunisation status and the risks and procedures associated with non-immunisation and advise the Approved Provider/Nominated Supervisor of any updates to their immunisation status;
- Provide varied opportunities for children to engage in hygiene practices, including routine opportunities, and intentional practice;
- 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); and
 - proper handling and preparation of food.
- Ensure a separate cloth is used for floors, bathroom, art and craft and meal surfaces. Disposable paper towel and disinfectant are used to clean bodily fluids off beds, floors, bathrooms, etc.
- Ensure that if a child has a toileting accident, the soiled items will be placed in a plastic bag (or similar) with the child's name on it. The plastic bag will be stored in a sealed container labelled 'soiled/wet clothing' for parents to take home.
- Maintain currency with regard to Health and Safety by attending appropriate professional development opportunities.

Families will:

- Advise the service of their child's immunisation status, and provide approved written documentation of this for the service to copy and keep with the child's enrolment records. Accepted documents include:
 - A **current AIR Immunisation History Statement** which shows that the child is up to date with their scheduled immunisations.
 - A **current AIR Immunisation History Form** on which the immunisation provider has certified that the child is on a recognised catch-up schedule.
 - An **AIR Immunisation Medical Exemption Form** which has been certified by an immunisation provider for a child who cannot receive one or more vaccine(s).Other records such as the NSW Personal Health Record (Blue Book), a GP letter or an overseas immunisation record will **NOT** be accepted.
Parents / guardians may obtain a copy of their child's Immunisation History Statement at any time :
 - By telephone on 1800 653 809
 - Using their Medicare online account through MyGov
 - Using the Medicare Express Plus App

- In person at any Medicare Office, Centrelink Office or Child Support Service Centre
- Advise the service when their child's immunisation/medical condition is updated and provide this information to the service to ensure that enrolment records are up to date; and
- Have the opportunity to provide input into the review and effectiveness of policies and procedures of the service.
- Families will keep their child at home in any instance where high temperature, vomiting or diarrhoea have occurred within the last 24 hours.
- Families will keep their child at home for the duration of the illness or advised exclusion period.

Statutory Legislation & Considerations

- Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010
- Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011
- Public Health Act 2010

Sources

- National Quality Standard 2018
- Guide to the Education and Care Services National Law and the Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011
- Staying Healthy in Child Care – Preventing Infectious Diseases in Child Care - 5th Edition (2013)
- NSW Ministry of Health: www.health.nsw.gov.au/
- National Health and Medical Research Council: www.nhmrc.gov.au/
- Immunisation Toolkit - www.health.nsw.gov.au/immunisation/Publications/immunisation-enrolment-toolkit.pdf

Evaluation

Infection control is effectively managed at the Glenaeon Rudolf Steiner Preschool to ensure children remain healthy and transmission of infectious diseases are minimised.

Review

Policy Reviewed	Modifications	Next Review Date
April 2013 Sept 2013 Oct 2014 Nov 2015 Jan 2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Changes to immunization requirements and acceptable forms of immunization documentation. 	

Dec 2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Updated the references to comply with the revised National Quality Standard and references to NSW Health. • Update information relating to immunization records and enrolment if not immunized. • Add information relating to cleaning schedules, spills and use of cloths. 	Dec 2018
March 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include that parents can supply a plastic bag or something similar to take children's soiled clothes home in. • Update Legislation considerations to include the Public Health Act 	March 2020