



## MANAGEMENT OF SICK OR INFECTIOUS CHILDREN GUIDELINES

**Aims:** To ensure that sick children are cared for swiftly and that appropriate action is taken to prevent the spread of infection.

- To minimise the risk of cross infection.
- To effectively manage and outbreak of an infectious disease in the service/
- To use "Staying Healthy – Preventing infectious diseases in early childhood education and care services 5<sup>th</sup> Edition, as a guide in matters relating to sick or infectious children, symptoms and exclusions.

<https://www.nhmrc.gov.au/about-us/publications/staying-healthy-preventing-infectious-diseases-early-childhood-education-and-care-services> (National Health and Medical Research Council)

See also on that site: Information for Families- Exclusion Period Explained.

- To comply with any directives from "Population Health" with respect to exclusion periods of children with certain symptoms.
- To clarify that the Responsible Person on duty at the Service has the ultimate responsibility for implementation of the Exclusion Guidelines in Staying Healthy to minimise any risk to other children and families attending the Service.
- The Responsible Person will consider a Dr's alternative diagnosis if provided on the attached form which aims to assist the Doctor to diagnose by giving the context of the Service's decision.
- To communicate effectively with families about illnesses present in the Service.

**Explanation:** The major elements of an effective infection control policy include the maintenance of high standards of hygiene, health practices and adherence to exclusion guidelines. For this reason, as well as the extra demands sick children place on staff resources, the service cannot provide care for ill children or those who are or may be contagious.

**Implementation:** If a child exhibits signs or symptoms of illness, educators will:

- a. Inform the Responsible Person and will contact the child's parent. Where the parent cannot be contacted their emergency contacts will be asked to collect the child.
  - b. If child becomes seriously ill an ambulance will be called in addition to the child's parents or guardians.
  - c. Comfort the sick child. Separate the sick child from other children until the child is collected.
  - d. Take the child's temperature and act to bring down fever as necessary. See following notes.
  - e. Inform the person collecting the child of any current illnesses in the service and the conditions of re-entry to the service as detailed on 'Staying Healthy'. Where relevant, give copy of information from "Staying Healthy" as well as the form for the family to present to a Doctor if they are requesting an opinion/ diagnosis from a Doctor. See details below.
- When a child arrives at the service and, in the opinion of the Responsible Person is too sick to be in attendance or has not met the criteria for readmission as detailed in "Staying Healthy" the parents will be asked to take the child home.



- Children do not need a Doctor's clearance to return, if in the opinion of the Responsible Person at the Centre, they no longer exhibit any of the symptoms for exclusion, as detailed in 'Staying Healthy', except in relation to infectious disease listed at end of this policy.
- If families contest the decision made by the Responsible Person they may present the attached form, which details the symptoms the Service identified, as well as the current history of the condition at the Service to a Dr for his/her diagnosis to be recorded on the form and return the form to the Service. The Responsible person will then consider the doctors diagnosis in conjunction with the current symptoms being exhibited by the child.

"Care services will not be influenced by letters from doctors stating that the child can return to care, unless the child's condition fulfils the service's criteria for returning to care". Quote from National Health and Medical Research Council Information for Families- Exclusion Period Explained.
- Possible contagious illnesses are to be recorded on an illness chart so that details can be tracked.
- When 2 or more related cases (eg in same room) of vomiting or diarrhoea have been identified the Population Health Service is to be notified as is ACECQA via NQAITS
- Where infectious diseases are impacting the Service, families need to be made aware using Storypark and any foyer noticeboards used by the Service.
- If there are a number of cases the Service should consider sending to families via Storypark a copy of this policy, which includes a copy of the letter to a Doctor who might be asked to give an alternative diagnosis, and a copy of "Information for Families- Exclusion Period Explained" available from the following site or attached to this policy.  
<https://www.nhmrc.gov.au/about-us/publications/staying-healthy-preventing-infectious-diseases-early-childhood-education-and-care-services> (National Health and Medical Research Council)
- The service will retain the right to exclude any child who is regarded by the Responsible Person to be a health risk to other children, because they are still exhibiting the symptoms described for exclusion as detailed in "Staying Healthy" or any child who is obviously unwell.
  - Ensure the care environment has been cleaned thoroughly and as immediately as possible, after the identification of any child with symptoms that might be infectious to others in the care environment.
  - Under the Public Health (Amendment) Act, the Nominated Supervisor will contact the Public Health Unit:
    - When any case of the following occurs in the service – diphtheria, measles, mumps, poliomyelitis, rubella, whooping cough, tetanus, meningitis.
    - A medical certificate is required for any child or adult having diphtheria, hepatitis A, polio, tuberculosis, typhoid or paratyphoid before re-entry to the program.
- Where serious infections or major outbreaks occur, the Nominated Supervisor will seek the advice of the Public Health Unit and issue families with a letter advising them of prevention and action to be taken.
- Staff must follow the procedures for bodily fluids, hand washing, cleaning and first aid.
- Sores should be covered. Weeping may result in exclusion until sore is healed.

Dear Doctor,

Date. / /

Updated 3/7/19



We are a high-quality Early Childhood Education and Care Service staffed by experienced Degree and Diploma qualified staff who have many years of experience with children from 0-5 years. We take very seriously our responsibility to maintain the health and wellbeing of all the children in our care and we maintain excellent levels of hygiene in our Centre to support that.

We use "Staying Healthy – Preventing infectious diseases in early childhood education and care services 5<sup>th</sup> Edition, as a guide in matters relating to sick children, symptoms and exclusions. We have attached the relevant extract from this document. We have become experienced in identifying some illnesses, such as Hand, Foot and Mouth Disease, at the very early stages as we have seen it so many times over our many years of experience.

On..... at ..... am/pm we made the decision to exclude ..... based on the symptoms we could see and the history of recent events at the Service.

We understand parents are very keen to get a clearance to allow their child to attend the Service and we feel to allow you to make an informed diagnosis, that will not compromise any other child using the service, we need to provide you with the following information, and ask you to complete this form as a way of acknowledging you are aware of all of the circumstances we are considering in our decision.

The symptoms we have noticed include:- (what, where)

The recent history of similar illnesses at the centre is:-

Based on the guidelines we use we would allow the child to return to care when.....

**Please complete this section.**

Dr's Name

Contact details

Child's name

Date and time examined

Dr's diagnosis

If this child returns to care while exhibiting the symptoms we have identified are you comfortable that no other children will be put at risk of contagion? Yes / No

Any other comments

Dr's signature

