

## Quality Area 2: Children's Health and Safety

### Dealing with Infectious Diseases



#### Introduction

Kootingal and District Preschool is committed to providing a safe and healthy environment for all children, staff and any other persons attending the service by:

- responding to the needs of the child or adult who presents with symptoms of an infectious disease while attending the service;
- complying with current exclusion schedules and guidelines set by the Public Health Unit; and
- providing up-to-date information and resources for families and staff regarding protection of all children from infectious diseases (including COVID-19) and blood-borne viruses, management of infestations and immunisation programs.

#### Goals – What are we going to do?

The way that children interact with each other and with adults at Kootingal and District Preschool means that diseases can quickly spread in a variety of ways. Whilst it is not possible to prevent the spread of all infections and diseases, minimising the risk is enhanced through:

- Effective hand hygiene
- Exclusion of ill children, educators and other staff
- Immunisation (*Staying Healthy: Preventing infectious diseases in early childhood education and care services 6th edition 2024*)
- Use of air filtration systems (VBreathe Tasman Air Purifier)
- Vigilant hygiene practices that prevent the spread
- Implementing all measures recommended by authorities

#### Strategies – To achieve our goals

##### Effective Hygiene

Our service will maintain and promote effective hygiene practices, including:

- Correct handwashing technique
- Using standard precautions when handling blood, all body fluids, secretions and excretions, dried blood and other body substances
- Cleaning toys and other items that children are likely to put in their mouths and after use
- Raking sandpits often and/or securely covering them when not in use
- Disposing of soiled items in a container that is inaccessible to children
- Washing rubbish bins and nappy buckets regularly
- Actively promote handwashing and other hygiene practices with children and families

##### Exclusion of ill children, educators, and other staff

- Infectious Diseases: in order to prevent the spread of infectious diseases through interpersonal contact, our service will adhere to the exclusion period table, published by the Department of Health.
- Fever: in children, a temperature over 38°C indicates a fever. A fever is usually caused by an infection somewhere in the body. Some types of infections that lead to fever include:

- Viral (caused by a virus) – around nine out of ten children with a fever will have a viral illness, such as cold, flu or gastroenteritis
- Bacterial (caused by bacteria) – such as some ear infections, pneumonia or urine infections.

If a child becomes unwell or develops potentially infectious or contagious symptoms during the day, educators will complete an illness record, contact the family, and request that the child be collected from the service. Symptoms may include, but are not limited to:

- Temperatures above 38°C
- Vomiting
- Diarrhoea
- Rash
- Eye discharge
- Excessive nasal discharge
- Persistent cough
- Generalised lethargy and out of character temperament

If a child develops the symptoms described above, the service may request a doctor's clearance to confirm that the child is no longer infectious or contagious

## **Immunisation**

Our service's practice is guided by our state/territory's department of health in relation to child immunisations. We will share resources and information from government bodies and recognised authorities to support families access information regarding immunisations.

Parents who wish to enrol their child are required to provide at the time of enrolment their child's immunisation status. This may be an AIR Immunisation History Statement or Form based on regulatory requirements and/or the state/territory's Public Health Act. We are able to refuse other forms of documentation based on the above.

The NSW Government Immunisation Toolkit for early childhood education and care services guides our practice and provides resources and information to support families access information regarding immunisation.

Under the Public Health Act 2010, and the Bill passed by the NSW Parliament to amend this act, parents who wish to enrol their child are required to provide at the time of enrolment:

To enrol in our service, families must provide a copy of one or more of the following documents:

- An Immunisation History Statement which shows that the child is up to date with their scheduled vaccinations; or
- An Immunisation History Form on which the immunisation provider has certified that the child is on a recognized catch-up schedule (temporary for 6 months only).

Each child's immunisation status will be recorded on Kidsoft at the time of enrolment.

Under the Public Health Act, a 12-week temporary exemption for children evacuated during a state of emergency and those in emergency out of home care is extended to all children in out of home care and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children.

An updated approved immunisation form will need to be provided for each child after each immunisation milestone. This will be retained for 3 years from the date on which each enrolled child ceases to attend the service, and a copy of a child's immunisation documentation will be provided to another service if the child transfers to that service (upon request).

## **Exclusion Periods**

The Public Health Unit will be advised as soon as the service is aware that a child or educator has contracted a vaccine-preventable disease and any directions will be followed accordingly.

Any child or educator that is not fully immunised may be excluded for a period of time if there is a case of a vaccine preventable disease at the service, or if the child or educator has been in contact with someone outside the service who has a vaccine preventable disease. We will consider the exclusion periods recommended by the National Health and Medical Research Council and act on any directions provided by the Public Health Unit.

It is the responsibility of families to inform the service that their child has come into contact with someone with a vaccine preventable or infectious disease.

## Roles and Responsibilities

Role	Authority/Responsibility For
Approved Provider	<p>Ensure the service operates in line with the Education and Care Services National Law and National Regulations 2011 including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Ensuring that where there is an occurrence of an infectious disease at the service, reasonable steps are taken to prevent the spread of that infectious disease (Regulation 88(1)).</li> <li>➤ Ensuring that where there is an occurrence of an infectious disease at the service, a parent/guardian or authorised emergency contact of each child at the service is notified of the occurrence as soon as is practicable (Regulation 88(2)).</li> <li>➤ Ensuring that information from the Public Health Unit about the recommended minimum exclusion periods is displayed at the service, is available to all stakeholders and is adhered to in the event of an outbreak of an infectious disease (as designated by the Department of Health).</li> <li>➤ Ensuring that the parent/guardian and Public Health Unit are notified as soon as possible, after being made aware that an enrolled child: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Has one of the following vaccine preventable diseases</li> <li>○ Is reasonably suspected of having come into contact with a person who has one of these vaccine preventable diseases and the enrolled child has no evidence of immunization lodged to show that the child is immunized against, or acquired immunity by infection from, that disease.</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Pertussis, or</li> <li>b) Poliomyelitis, or</li> <li>c) Measles, or</li> <li>d) Mumps, or</li> <li>e) Rubella, or</li> <li>f) Meningococcal C, or</li> <li>g) Diphtheria, or</li> <li>h) Haemophilus influenza Type b[Hib], or</li> <li>i) Tetanus</li> </ul> </li> <li>➤ Ensuring that any directions provided by Public Health Unit are followed regarding the possible exclusion of a child or educator who is not immunised against a vaccine preventable disease.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Notifying the Regulatory Authority within 24 hours of a serious incident including when a child becomes ill at the service or medical attention is sought while the child is attending the service.</li> <li>➤ Ensuring that appropriate and current information and resources are provided to staff and parents/guardians regarding the identification and management of infectious diseases (including COVID-19), blood-borne viruses and infestations.</li> <li>➤ Keeping informed about current legislation, information, research, and best practice.</li> <li>➤ Ensuring that any changes to the exclusion table or immunisation schedule are communicated to staff and parents/guardians in a timely manner.</li> </ul>
Nominated Supervisor with support of Administrative Assistant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Contacting the parents/guardians of a child suspected of suffering from an infectious disease, and requesting the child be collected as soon as possible.</li> <li>➤ Notifying a parent/guardian or authorised emergency contact person when a symptom of an excludable infectious illness or disease has been observed.</li> <li>➤ Ensuring that a minimum of one staff with current approved first aid qualifications is in attendance and immediately available at all times the service is in operation.</li> <li>➤ Establishing good hygiene and infection control procedures and ensuring that they are adhered to by everyone at the service.</li> <li>➤ Ensuring the exclusion requirements for infectious diseases are adhered to as per the recommended minimum exclusion periods, notifying the Approved Provider and parents/guardians of any outbreak of infectious disease at the service, and displaying this information in a prominent position.</li> <li>➤ Advising parents/guardians on enrolment that the recommended minimum exclusion periods will be observed in regard to the outbreak of any infectious diseases or infestations.</li> <li>➤ Advising the parents/guardians of a child who is not fully immunised on enrolment that they may be required to keep their child at home when an infectious disease is diagnosed at the service, dependent on directions from the Public Health Unit.</li> <li>➤ Requesting that parents/guardians notify the service if their child has, or is suspected of having, an infectious disease or infestation.</li> <li>➤ Providing information and resources to families to assist in the identification and management of infectious diseases and infestations.</li> <li>➤ Maintaining confidentiality at all times.</li> <li>➤ Provide relevant sourced materials to families.</li> <li>➤ Provide reminders to parents if immunisation is due to expire.</li> <li>➤ Ensuring that an "Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness" record is completed as soon as practicable or no later than 24 hours of the illness occurring.</li> </ul>
Early Childhood Educators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Ensuring that any children that are suspected of having an infectious illness are responded to and their health and emotional needs supported at all times.</li> <li>➤ Implement appropriate health and safety procedures, when tending to ill children.</li> <li>➤ Ensuring that families are aware of the need to collect their children as soon as practicable to ensure the child's comfort.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Maintaining their own immunisation status and advising the Approved Provider/Nominated Supervisor of any updates to their immunisation status.</li> <li>➤ Provide varied opportunities for children to engage in hygiene practices, including routine opportunities, and intentional practice.</li> <li>➤ Observing signs and symptoms of children who may appear unwell and informing the Nominated Supervisor.</li> <li>➤ Providing access to information and resources for parents/ guardians to assist in the identification and management of infectious diseases and infestations.</li> <li>➤ Monitoring any symptoms in children that may indicate the presence of an infectious disease.</li> <li>➤ If there is a confirmed case of Covid-19, cooperate with directions from the health authorities.</li> <li>➤ Stay home if unwell.</li> <li>➤ Maintaining confidentiality at all times.</li> </ul>
Families	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Providing Immunisation documentation upon enrolment and as administered.</li> <li>➤ Ensuring that their child is immunised prior to their Immunisation Expiry Date taking place (usually the child's 4<sup>th</sup> birthday).</li> <li>➤ Keeping their children at home if they are unwell or have an excludable infectious disease and notify the service when illness occurs.</li> <li>➤ Keeping their children at home when an infectious disease has been diagnosed at the service and their child is not fully immunised against that infectious disease if directed to do so by the Public Health Unit.</li> <li>➤ Informing the service within 24 hours if their child has an infectious disease or has been in contact with a person who has an infectious disease.</li> </ul>

## Monitoring, Review and Evaluation

Management and staff will monitor and review the effectiveness of the Dealing with Infectious Disease policy regularly. Updated information will be incorporated as needed.

This policy will be monitored to ensure compliance with legislative requirements and unless deemed necessary through the identification of practice gaps, the service will review this Policy every 12 months.

Families and staff are essential stakeholders in the policy review process and will be given the opportunity and encouragement to be actively involved.

In accordance with Regulation 172 of the *Education and Care Services National Regulations*, the service will ensure that families of children enrolled at the service are notified at least 14 days before making any change to a policy or procedure that may have significant impact on the provision of education and care to any child enrolled at the service; a family's ability to utilise the service; the fees charged or the way in which fees are collected.

## Links to other policies:

Hygiene and Infection Control

Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness

Risk Management

Work, Health and Safety

## Complies with:

## NQS

Quality Area 2		Children's health and safety
Standard	2.1	Health
Element	2.1.1	Wellbeing and comfort
Element	2.1.2	Health practices and procedures
Standard	2.2	Safety
Quality Area 6		Collaborative partnerships with families and communities
Standard	6.1	Supportive relationships with families
Standard	6.2	Collaborative partnerships

## National Law

Section	167	Offence related to protection of children from harm and hazards
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## National Regulations

Reg	77	Health, hygiene and safe food practices
Reg	85	Incident, injury, trauma and illness policies and procedures
Reg	86	Notification to parents of incident, injury, trauma and illness
Reg	87	Incident, injury, trauma and illness record
Reg	88	Infectious diseases
Reg	162	Health information to be kept in enrolment record
Reg	168(2)(c)	Dealing with infectious diseases, including procedures complying with Regulation 88

## Sources:

- Work Health and Safety Act 2011
- Public Health Regulation 2012
- Public Health Act 2010
- Public Health Amendment [Vaccination of Children Attending Child Care Facilities] Bill 2013
- Australian New Zealand Food Standards Code (FSANZ)
- Immunisation Toolkit - [www.health.nsw.gov.au/immunisation/Publications/Immunisation-enrolment-toolkit.pdf](http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/immunisation/Publications/Immunisation-enrolment-toolkit.pdf)
- NSW Immunisation Program Schedule - [www.health.nsw.gov.au/sites/default/files/2023-07/national-immunisation-program-schedule.pdf](http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/sites/default/files/2023-07/national-immunisation-program-schedule.pdf)
- Immunisation - [www.humanservices.gov.au/individuals/enablers/immunisation-requirements/35396](http://www.humanservices.gov.au/individuals/enablers/immunisation-requirements/35396)
- Staying Healthy: Preventing infectious diseases in early childhood education and care services 5th edition July 2015 - [www.nhmrc.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/attachments/ch55-staying-healthy.pdf](http://www.nhmrc.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/attachments/ch55-staying-healthy.pdf)
- Exclusion period for infectious diseases table: [www.nhmrc.gov.au/file/5111/download?token=sqK1YrXF](http://www.nhmrc.gov.au/file/5111/download?token=sqK1YrXF)
- Immunisation History Statement – Australian Immunisation Register
- Australian Government Department of Health: Immunisation - [www.health.gov.au/health-topics/immunisation](http://www.health.gov.au/health-topics/immunisation)

- NSW Department of Health – Stopping the spread of childhood infections factsheet – [www.health.nsw.gov.au/Infectious/factsheets/Pages/childhood.aspx](http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/Infectious/factsheets/Pages/childhood.aspx)
- Public Health Amendment (Vaccination of Children Attending Child Care Facilities) Bill 2013; Public Health regulation 2012; Public Health Act 2010 – Parliament of NSW – [www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/bills/Pages/bill-details.aspx?pk=737](http://www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/bills/Pages/bill-details.aspx?pk=737)
- Public Health Amendment (Vaccination of Children Attending Child Care Facilities) Bill 2013

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