Hygiene and Infection Control Policy

Quality Area 2 Policy Statement

The safety, rights and best interest of children are the paramount consideration in all decisions, practices and procedures relating to hygiene control. This includes decisions about illness exclusion, cleaning, supervision, personal protective equipment, food handling, ventilation, immunisation records, outbreak management and communication with families. Where there is any conflict between operational convenience and a child's safety, rights or wellbeing, the child's safety, rights and best interests will take priority.

It is important that educator's role-model and maintain positive health practices, and that children are appropriately supervised, assisted and encouraged in their daily health and hygiene routines. Education and care environments must be hygienically maintained to reduce the possible spread of infection and illnesses through the sound hygiene practices of staff and educators.

To reduce the risk of infectious diseases for children and staff, our service will strictly adhere to guidelines set by relevant government and health authorities. We will implement practices aimed at lowering infection transmission, ensure that sick children and educators are excluded from the environment, support updates on immunisation for children, and maintain effective hygiene practices and procedures.

Goals / what are we going to do?

- The education and care service aims to maintain a healthy and hygienic environment for children, educators, families and visitors by implementing effective hygiene practices on a daily basis.
- The service will ensure that additional procedures are implemented to minimise the potential risk of disease and illness. These procedures will include:
    - Spot and routine cleaning by educators.
    - Effective hand washing practices.
    - Identifying and excluding sick children and educators as per the *Dealing with Infectious Diseases and Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness* policies.
    - Maintaining updated immunisation records as per *the Dealing with Infectious Diseases* policy and immunisation program according to NSW Health.
    - Effective handling, storage and disposal or washing of contaminated items; and the use of personal protection equipment.
    - Sharing hygiene routines and information with families for continued and reinforced personal health and hygiene.

Strategies / How will it be done?

Our service will enhance safe and hygienic environments through regular, effective and thorough cleaning of environments. Children will be monitored for signs of illness and children and staff will observe appropriate exclusion periods in line with any symptoms of infectious disease. The service will adhere to all cleaning schedules and rosters and maintain access to adequate equipment to maintain a safe and hygienic environment.

Roles and responsibilities

Role	Authority/responsibility for
Approved provider	• Implement effective policies and procedures to support health and hygiene practices and review these regularly to ensure the health and safety of all stakeholders using the service. • Ensure all hygiene and infection control policies, procedures and decisions uphold the safety, rights and best interests of children as the paramount consideration. • Facilitates the effective, thorough cleaning of the service through the employment of commercial cleaners on a daily basis as per service agreement and daily schedule. Will engage commercial cleaners to perform deep-cleaning and / or specific cleaning tasks as required. • Ensure procedures that prevent the spread of infectious diseases are designed to be implemented by educators, students and volunteers. • Ensure that the nominated supervisor, educators, volunteers and students are aware of the need to implement health, hygiene practices and safe food handling and storage practices in order to minimise risks for the children in the education and care service. • Ensure indoor spaces are well ventilated through natural ventilation for e.g.: windows, doors • Ensure policies and procedures are reviewed regularly or as required when an outbreak occurs.
Nominated supervisor / Responsible person	• Ensure that the service is adequately stocked with cleaning materials and personal protective equipment. • Ensure that educators and volunteers implement health, hygiene practices and safe food handling and storage practices in order to minimise risks for the children in the education and care service. • Ensure that in the event of an infectious disease being identified within the children, families or educators in the service, steps are taken to prevent the spread of the infectious disease and that parents are notified about the occurrence of an infectious disease as soon as possible. • Maintain up-to-date immunisation records for all children. Families will be given reminder notifications when scheduled immunisations are due. The service will refer to state or territory

Role	Authority/responsibility for
	specific legislation when maintaining immunisation records for children. Documentation required may include AIR Immunisation History Statements or forms. • Any child 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 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. • Introduce cleaning systems that prevent contamination and cross infection. Cleaning buckets, cloths, mops etc will be clearly labelled and colour coded to indicate their specific use and stored in a location inaccessible to children. • Ensure that new educators, casual educators and volunteers are informed about the strategies and procedures implemented by the education and care service to keep themselves and the children protected. • Prioritise training and professional development for educators regarding current hygiene and infection control practices. • Place a copy of hand-washing procedures near all hand-washing areas for educators to follow. • Monitor sand cleanliness and arrange for annual change or topping up as needed. Maintenance man to clean with salt as per schedule or after contact with bodily fluids • Maintain access to adequate laundry facilities considering the context of the service.
Early childhood educators	• Engage in training, research and professional development about current hygiene and infection control practices. • Be responsible for routine cleaning of the education and care service. This will include sweeping and mopping floors as required, wiping tables with soapy water after activities, sanitising toys and equipment after use; and particularly after children have mouthed toys. Toys are also put through the dishwasher or washing machine where appropriate. • Mealtimes take place outside on picnic tables that have clean tablecloths put on daily. If weather is inclement, meals take place inside on a picnic blanket. • The sandpit will be covered with a tight-fitting animal- and vermin-proof cover when the service is unattended and raked daily to expose the sand to sunlight and identify foreign objects or contamination. Contaminated sand will be removed immediately. Where contamination is extensive, all sand will be replaced. Sand will be dug through deeply regularly, salt applied and replenished as required.

Role	Authority/responsibility for
	• Ensure that children's hand-washing areas have a visual procedure available for children to refer to. Educators will role model correct hand-washing techniques and give verbal reminders to children when washing hands. • Monitor children's health and wellbeing while they are at the education and care service. Educators will observe children's activity carefully. If a child shows symptoms such as lethargy, high temperature, vomiting, skin rash, difficulty in breathing, diarrhoea or when educators have concerns about a child's health, they will immediately inform the nominated supervisor and the family (implement the *Dealing with Infectious Diseases and Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness* policies). • Wear gloves at all times when assisting a child with soiled or wet clothing, and toileting routines (*Nappy Change, Showering and Toileting* policy). • Cover any cuts, abrasions or open skin wounds on hands with a water-resistant dressing. • Clean nappy change mats and areas (if used) after each use following the *Nappy Change, Showering and Toileting* policy and procedures. • Spot clean bathroom areas as required during the day. Commercial cleaner to clean bathroom areas thoroughly once daily. • Where a blood, body substance or needlestick exposure occurs, the service will ensure appropriate first aid is provided, prompt medical advice is sought, and the incident is recorded and managed in accordance with workplace health and safety procedures. SafeWork NSW will be notified where the incident meets the requirements of a notifiable incident under work health and safety legislation. If children are exposed, please refer to the *Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness* policy, including the requirements for reporting. • Store and dispose of soiled items appropriately as per nappy change, showering and toileting policies. Soiled items not belonging to an individual child or family that have been exposed to bodily fluids will be rinsed in cold water and washed separately in a machine using hot water. • Encourage children to cover their noses and mouths with their elbow when sneezing or coughing and to wash and dry their hands afterwards. Model this behaviour. • Wash and dry hands thoroughly before preparing, handling or serving food. Gloves are not a substitute for effective hand hygiene and are not required when hands are clean and dry and the skin is intact. Where gloves are used, they must be changed between tasks and immediately if they become contaminated or after contact with a non-food surface before food handling resumes. Tongs, serving utensils or other appropriate equipment will be used where required to prevent contamination of ready-to-eat or shared food. Children's cups, plates, bowls and kitchen utensils will be appropriately cleaned and sanitised after use. • Use every precaution to minimise the risk of infection within the education and care service environment for themselves, the children and the families.

Role	Authority/responsibility for

	• Perform hand hygiene regularly and whenever there is a risk of transferring germs, including before eating or handling food, giving medication, putting on gloves and applying sunscreen or lotions, and after using or assisting with toileting, removing gloves, wiping noses, cleaning body fluids, handling garbage, outdoor play and touching animals. Soap and running water should be used where hands are visibly dirty, greasy or contaminated with food. Alcohol-based hand sanitiser containing 60–80% alcohol may be used where hands are not visibly dirty or where soap and water are unavailable, with children supervised when using hand sanitiser.
	• **Effectively manage blood and body fluid spills and accidents. Where possible, a safety sign or barrier will be placed around the spill until it is cleaned. Educators will:**
	  ○ avoid direct contact with blood and body fluids
	  ○ cover any cuts or abrasions with a waterproof dressing
	  ○ wear disposable gloves and appropriate additional PPE where there is a risk of splashing
	  ○ wipe up the spill using paper towel or other appropriate absorbent material
	  ○ place contaminated disposable materials into a plastic bag, seal the bag and dispose of it appropriately
	  ○ remove disposable gloves and wash hands with soap and water
	  ○ put on clean utility gloves and clean the surface thoroughly with detergent and warm water
	  ○ dry the surface with paper towel
	  ○ wipe the area with an appropriate disinfectant and allow it to dry
	  ○ remove utility gloves and wash hands thoroughly with soap and water
	  ○ seek prompt medical advice following an occupational exposure to blood or body substances or a needlestick injury and follow the service's incident and workplace health and safety procedures.
	  ○ Change soiled clothing if appropriate

Families	• Support the service to maintain a healthy and hygienic environment by following the service's hygiene, hand hygiene, respiratory hygiene, illness and exclusion procedures. • Provide the service with current immunisation documentation at enrolment and updated information when a child's immunisation status changes, as required by relevant legislation. • Inform the service as soon as possible if their child has been diagnosed with an infectious disease or has been in contact with a vaccine-preventable disease.

Role	Authority/responsibility for
	• Keep children who are unwell at home and comply with recommended exclusion periods and any directions provided by NSW Health or the local Public Health Unit. • Provide clean spare clothing for their child as required and collect soiled clothing in accordance with the service's hygiene procedures. • Follow and reinforce appropriate hand and respiratory hygiene practices with children. • Read and act on information provided by the service regarding infectious diseases, outbreaks, exclusion requirements and other health and hygiene matters.

Monitoring, evaluation and review

The implementation of this policy will be monitored through regular review of the cleaning schedules and records, hygiene practices, hand hygiene and food handling practices, illness and incident and incident records, immunisation records, outbreak management procedures and educator practices.

The approved provider and nominated supervisor will monitor compliance with this policy and ensure educators, staff, volunteers and students receive appropriate induction, information, training and professional development in current hygiene and infection control practices or recognised health guidance.

This policy will be reviewed at least annually and earlier where required following an infectious disease outbreak, incident identified practice gap, complaint, change to legislation, regulatory requirements or recognised health guidance. Feedback from educators, staff, children and families will be considered as part of the review process.

All monitoring, evaluation and review will ensure that the safety, rights and best interest of the children remain the paramount consideration.

Related Guidelines, Standards, Frameworks

- The Model Work Health and Safety Laws and Regulations 2011
- Education and Care Services National Regulations
- ACECQA's Guide to the National Quality Framework
- National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) – Staying Healthy: Preventing infectious diseases in early childhood education and care services, 6th Edition
- Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA) – Guide to the National Quality Framework
- National Quality Standard – Quality Area 2: Children's Health and Safety
- Food Standards Australia New Zealand – Australia New Zealand Food Standards Code
- Safe Work Australia and SafeWork NSW guidance relating to biological hazards, blood and body substance exposure and infection control
- NSW Health guidance relating to immunisation and infectious diseases

Related legislation

- Children (Education and Care Services) National Law (NSW)
- Education and Care Services National Regulations (NSW), including Regulation 77 – Health, hygiene and safe food practices; Regulation 88 – Infectious diseases; and Regulation 168 – Education and care service must have policies and procedures
- Public Health Act 2010 (NSW)
- Public Health Regulation 2022 (NSW)
- Work Health and Safety Act 2011 (NSW)
- Work Health and Safety Regulation 2025 (NSW)
- Food Act 2003 (NSW)
- Food Regulation 2025 (NSW)

Sources

- National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) – Staying Healthy: Preventing infectious diseases in early childhood education and care services, 6th Edition
- Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA) – National Law and Regulations
- Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA) – Guide to the National Quality Framework
- Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA) – Understanding Paramount Consideration
- NSW Health – Immunisation and infectious diseases information
- SafeWork NSW – Biological hazards and diseases; blood, body substance and needlestick exposure guidance
- Food Standards Australia New Zealand – Food Safety Standards and Safe Food Australia

Last review date	Changes made	Next review date
30/09/2025	Minor updates to meet the Staying Healthy 6th Edition Guidelines	30/09/2025
11/09/2026	Updated to align with Staying Healthy 6th Edition guidance and current child safety reforms, including the paramount consideration of children's safety, rights and best interests	11/09/2027
30/9/2026	Minor updates reviewed by Staff and St Marks Community, leads to review of *Nappy Change, Showering and Toileting* Policy	30/9/2027