Sickness and Illness Policy

Policy Statement

At Auckland House Day Nursery we are committed to promoting the good health, wellbeing, and oral health of all children attending the nursery. We recognise that children thrive when they are healthy and that preventing the spread of infection is essential to maintaining a safe and nurturing environment for children, staff, and families.

The nursery aims to minimise the spread of illness and infection through effective hygiene practices, staff training, appropriate exclusion periods, and close partnership working with parents/carers. We follow guidance from the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA), OFSTED, and local health protection teams to ensure children's health needs are managed safely and appropriately.

We understand that young children are more vulnerable to illness and infection due to developing immune systems. Therefore, children who are unwell are best cared for in the comfort of their home environment where they can rest, recover, and receive individual attention.

Aims of the Policy

The aims of this policy are to:

- Promote the health and wellbeing of all children attending the nursery
- Prevent the spread of infectious illnesses and diseases
- Ensure appropriate action is taken when children become unwell
- Support staff and parents in understanding exclusion periods and illness procedures
- Maintain a safe, hygienic, and healthy nursery environment
- Ensure compliance with EYFS safeguarding and welfare requirements
- Promote healthy lifestyles, oral health, nutrition, sleep, and emotional wellbeing

Promoting Good Health

Auckland House actively promotes healthy lifestyles and wellbeing through daily routines, healthy practices, and positive role modelling.

Children are provided with healthy, balanced, and nutritious meals, snacks, and drinks that support their growth and development. Staff encourage healthy eating habits and provide information to parents/carers regarding healthy lunchboxes, oral health, hydration, and nutrition.

Children have regular opportunities for outdoor play and physical exercise in fresh air. Indoor areas are ventilated appropriately to support infection control and healthy environments.

The nursery also supports children's emotional wellbeing and physical development by providing appropriate rest and sleep areas. Staff work in partnership with families to support children's sleep routines and provide information regarding recommended sleep patterns for young children.

Information relating to childhood vaccinations, oral health, healthy lifestyles, and government guidance regarding vitamins for children aged six months to five years will be shared with parents/carers where appropriate.

Infection Prevention and Control

Auckland House follows rigorous hygiene and infection control procedures to minimise the spread of illness and infection.

Staff and children are encouraged to wash their hands regularly throughout the day, particularly before eating, after using the toilet, after outdoor play, and after contact with bodily fluids.

All toys, equipment, resources, and frequently touched surfaces are cleaned and disinfected regularly in accordance with the nursery's Infection Control Policy. Bedding, sleep mats, and comfort items are cleaned appropriately between use.

Disposable gloves and aprons are worn when dealing with bodily fluids, nappy changing, toileting accidents, or cleaning contaminated areas.

Staff members and visitors who are unwell are asked not to attend the nursery in order to reduce the spread of infection.

Procedures for Children Who Become Unwell

If a child becomes unwell during the nursery day, staff will monitor the child carefully and take appropriate action to ensure their comfort and safety.

Where a child develops symptoms such as a high temperature, sickness, diarrhoea, unexplained rash, or signs of an infectious illness, parents/carers will be contacted immediately and asked to collect their child as soon as possible.

Whilst awaiting collection, the child will be cared for in a quiet, calm, and comfortable area with their key person or another familiar staff member where possible. Staff caring for an unwell child will follow infection control procedures and wear appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) if necessary.

If a child develops a temperature, staff will take reasonable measures to support the child's comfort, such as removing excess clothing, encouraging fluids, and monitoring symptoms. Medication such as Calpol will only be administered with prior written parental permission and in line with the nursery's Medication Policy.

If a child's temperature remains high, symptoms worsen, or the child appears significantly unwell, parents/carers will be contacted and expected to collect their child promptly.

Exclusion Periods and Infectious Illnesses

Auckland House follows guidance provided by the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) regarding exclusion periods for infectious illnesses and communicable diseases.

Children suffering from sickness and diarrhoea must remain away from nursery for at least 48 hours after the last episode of sickness or diarrhoea. This is essential in preventing outbreaks and protecting other children and staff.

Children with a temperature of 38°C or above must remain at home until they have been free from a high temperature for at least 24 hours without the use of medication such as Calpol or Ibuprofen.

Where a child is prescribed antibiotics for an infectious illness, parents/carers are requested to keep the child at home for the first 24 hours of treatment unless otherwise agreed as part of an individual medical care plan and the child is otherwise well.

The nursery reserves the right to refuse admission to any child who appears unwell, infectious, or unable to participate comfortably in nursery activities. Decisions regarding exclusion will be made by the nursery manager or senior member of staff and are final.

Sickness, Diarrhoea, and Vomiting Procedures

If a child has repeated loose nappies or episodes of diarrhoea whilst attending nursery, staff will monitor symptoms carefully.

Where a child has three consecutive loose nappies within one nursery day, parents/carers will be contacted and asked to collect their child. Parents may be informed after the second loose nappy to allow preparation for possible collection.

If a child vomits whilst at nursery, management staff will assess the likely cause by considering the child's overall presentation, including temperature, behaviour, other symptoms, and the severity of the vomiting episode.

Where staff believe the vomiting may indicate illness or infection, parents/carers will be contacted immediately, and the child will be excluded from nursery for at least 48 hours following the last episode of vomiting.

Teething Symptoms

The nursery recognises that some younger children may display mild symptoms whilst teething, such as dribbling, irritability, or mild discomfort.

However, symptoms such as persistent diarrhoea, vomiting, high temperatures, or lethargy will not automatically be attributed to teething and children will be assessed carefully by management staff to determine whether they are well enough to remain in nursery.

Where appropriate and with parental permission, teething remedies or medication may be administered in accordance with the nursery's Medication Policy.

Head Lice

The nursery recognises that head lice are common amongst young children and do not reflect poor hygiene.

Information and guidance regarding the identification and treatment of head lice will be made available to parents/carers. Parents are encouraged to regularly check their child's hair and inform the nursery if head lice are identified so that other families can be advised to check their own children's hair.

Children will not normally be excluded due to head lice, although prompt treatment is expected.

Contagious Illnesses and Outbreaks

Where a contagious illness is identified within the nursery, parents/carers will be informed appropriately whilst maintaining confidentiality.

The nursery will take additional cleaning and infection control measures where required to reduce the spread of infection. This may include enhanced cleaning of toys, resources, sleeping areas, toilets, and frequently touched surfaces.

The nursery will seek advice from the UK Health Security Agency or local health protection teams when managing outbreaks or significant infectious illnesses.

OFSTED will be notified of any serious illness outbreaks or incidents, including food poisoning affecting two or more children, within required timescales.

Meningitis Procedure

If a parent/carer informs the nursery that their child has meningitis, the nursery manager will immediately contact the local Health Protection Team or Infection Control Nurse for guidance.

The nursery will follow all advice provided by health professionals regarding exclusion periods, communication with families, cleaning procedures, and any further actions required.

Where necessary, OFSTED and other relevant authorities will also be informed in line with legal requirements.

Emergency Medical Treatment and Hospital Procedures

If a child becomes seriously ill or requires urgent medical treatment whilst at nursery, staff will act immediately to ensure the child receives appropriate care.

A member of the management team must be informed immediately. If the illness or condition is severe, staff will contact emergency services by calling 999 and follow all instructions provided by the emergency call handler.

Staff must never attempt to transport a seriously ill child to hospital in a personal vehicle where emergency medical assistance is required.

Whilst waiting for emergency services, staff will contact the child's parents/carers and arrange for them to meet their child at the hospital where appropriate.

A suitable member of staff will accompany the child to hospital if parents/carers are unavailable. Relevant documentation, medication, consent forms, and comfort items will accompany the child.

Staff will remain calm and supportive throughout the incident and provide reassurance to other children who may witness the situation.

Transporting Children in Non-Emergency Situations

In situations where hospital assessment may be required but emergency ambulance transport is not necessary, the nursery will carefully risk assess any transport arrangements.

The nursery will consider:

- Maintaining staff-to-child ratios
- Appropriate parental consent
- Safeguarding arrangements
- Appropriate car seat requirements
- Vehicle safety and insurance

- Availability of an additional adult escort where required

Wherever possible, alternatives to transporting children in private vehicles will be considered first.

Supporting Staff Health

The nursery has a responsibility to protect the health and wellbeing of staff members.

Staff who are unwell, infectious, or experiencing symptoms of contagious illness are expected to remain at home until they are fit to return to work and no longer pose a risk to others.

The nursery may request medical advice or evidence where appropriate to support infection control and safe staffing practices.

Partnership with Parents and Carers

Auckland House values strong communication and partnership working with parents/carers in supporting children's health and wellbeing.

Parents/carers are expected to:

- Inform the nursery of any illness, infection, or medical diagnosis
- Keep children at home when they are unwell
- Follow exclusion guidance provided by the nursery
- Provide accurate emergency contact details
- Inform staff of any medication administered before nursery attendance

By working together, we can help maintain a healthy and safe environment for all children.

Monitoring and Review

This policy will be reviewed annually, following significant illness incidents, changes in legislation, or updated public health guidance.

The nursery manager and leadership team are responsible for ensuring that all staff understand and implement this policy effectively.

Related Policies

This policy should be read alongside:

- Infection Control Policy
- Medication Policy
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Accident and Incident Policy
- Oral Health Policy
- Sleep and Rest Policy
- Emergency Evacuation Policy

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