

Illness & Infectious Diseases Policy



Statement / Aim

For Macquarie Long Day & Early Learning Centre to minimise the spread of potential infectious diseases between children and centre staff, by excluding children who may have an infectious disease or are too ill to attend care. Sick children, as defined below, cannot be admitted to the centre to safeguard the health of other children and staff members.

Procedure

- If a child becomes sick whilst at the centre, an educator holding a first-aid certificate is to assess the child's condition by taking the child's temperature informing the Director/Nominated Supervisor or Responsible Person on duty of the child's condition and then contact the parent/guardian or emergency contact for the child to be collected.
- If a child is unwell at home, parents are asked not to bring the child to the centre.
- The centre will follow and implement the recommendations from *Staying Healthy: Preventing infectious diseases in early childhood education and care services*.
- Confidentiality will be maintained with regards to children's individual medical circumstances.
- Families will be advised that they will need to alert the centre if their child is diagnosed with an infectious illness.

Assessing an infectious illness

- Educators at the centre are not health care professionals and are unable to diagnose an illness – this is the responsibility of medical practitioners. To ensure that symptoms are not infectious and minimise the spread of an infection, medical advice should always be sought.
- The centre will ensure that staff are aware of symptoms which may indicate a possible infection or serious medical illness or condition.
- Signs and Symptoms indicating an illness may include but are not limited to:
 - Is lethargic
 - Unusual behaviour (child is cranky or less active than usual, cries more than usual, seems uncomfortable)
 - Loss of appetite
 - High temperature (38 degrees and above)
 - Loose bowels
 - Vomiting
 - Discharge from the eye or ear
 - Skin that displays rashes, blisters, spots, crusty or weepy sores
 - Difficulty breathing
 - Sore Throat or difficulty swallowing
 - Headache or stiff neck
 - Is unable to participate in the activities or routine with the centre

- Sleeps at unusual times
- Is in need of constant one on one care
- severe pain anywhere (including toothache)
- Grey or very pale faeces
- Unusually dark or tea-coloured urine
- Frequent scratching to the scalp or skin
- Shows other obvious signs of ill-health
- Coughing
- When educators identify symptoms that may indicate the illness is potentially infectious they will administer first aid where required and parents will be notified and instructed to collect the child immediately. Depending on the nature of the illness, the child will only be able to return to the centre following presentation of medical certificate stating that the child is well enough to attend.
- Educators will also take into account recommended exclusion periods.
- The Director/Nominated Supervisor reserves the right to overwrite a Doctor's letter allowing the child back into care if the child's condition does not fulfil the criteria for return to care
- Advice regarding exclusion will be sought from the local Public Health Unit if necessary.
- A child will be considered sick and must be collected from the centre if he/she has a temperature on or over 38. The child will be fit for care the following day providing there are no other signs or symptoms of being unwell, the temperature has not returned and they are not in need of Panadol (or similar pain relief).
- A child or adult will be considered sick, must be collected from the centre and not return for 24hours from last sign/symptom if he/she:
 - Vomits
 - Has diarrhoea (twice in 1 day)
- A child or adult will be considered sick, must be collected from the centre and requires a medical certificate pronouncing the child 'fit for care' to return to the centre if he/she:
 - Has as an infectious disease
 - Has ear or eye discharge
 - An undiagnosed rash
 - Severe, persistent or prolonged cough. This includes a child who is coughing for more than one week without seeing a Doctor or a child goes red or blue in the face, has difficulty catching their breath, vomiting from coughing or makes a high pitched croupy or whooping sound after coughing
 - Has symptoms consistent with an infectious disease reported in the centre
- A child will not be admitted to the centre if he/she:
 - Does not present a medical certificate when required
 - Has not been excluded for 24hours when required
 - Is in need of Panadol (or other similar pain relief) in the morning before care except in the case of pain relief (eg. from teething)
- When other symptoms are present the Nominated Supervisor/Director in conjunction with the Room Leader will assess the child to determine if exclusion is necessary.

High Temperature

- High temperature is one of the most common reasons why children visit a medical practitioner and is generally considered to be a mechanism that the body is experiencing and fighting an infection.
- A temperature will be considered high if it is on or above 38°C.
- Consideration will be made for children who have recently been immunised.
- Educators are able to administer an age appropriate dose of Children's Panadol to children who are teething or have a mild high temperature (no higher than 38.5 degrees) caused by teething. The child does not need to be sent home in this instance as long as they show NO other symptoms of being unwell. Educators will NOT administer Panadol in this situation unless verbal or written consent from the parents has been given.
- Educators will follow procedures to reduce the temperature as well as focusing attention on the way the child looks, behaves, the level of alertness and whether there are any other symptoms present.
- Educators will follow the following procedure for dealing with a high temperature
 1. Remove the child's excess clothing, for example jumpers and jackets, whilst taking into account the temperature in the room.
 2. Remove shoes and socks
 3. Place a wet washer on the back of the child's neck – Luke warm
 4. Gently fan the child
 5. Encourage the child to drink water often to help prevent dehydration.
 6. Constantly observe and monitor the child for changes. Never leave the child unattended
 7. Contact the parent and advise them that his/her child has a high temperature and ask them to make arrangements for the child to be collected immediately.
 8. Educators will gain verbal permission from parent to administer an age appropriate dose of Panadol.
 9. If the parent cannot be contacted then educators are to check the child's *Enrolment Form* for permission to administer Panadol once all attempts have been made for verbal permission first.
 10. If written permission has been given on the *Enrolment Form*, staff will administer an age appropriate dose of Panadol whilst awaiting collection.
 11. Where permission has been given to administer Panadol, educators are to follow the procedures on Administering Medication.
 12. Complete the Illness Report Form and give to the Parent/Emergency Contact on arrival to read and sign.
 13. Complete the 'Administration of Panadol' form and give to the parent/Emergency Contact on arrival to read and sign.

Common Colds

- Common colds are very common in children occurring 6-8 times per year on average. Children may show symptoms but do not display symptoms of an infectious illness that requires exclusion

- In these cases, an assessment will be made by the Director/Nominated Supervisor in conjunction with the room leader to determine if the child is well enough to continue at the centre or requires parental care based on their symptoms and general wellness. Symptoms could include:
 - Runny or blocked nose
 - Sneezing
 - Coughing
 - Watery Eyes
 - Headache
 - Mild sore throat
 - Slight fever
 - Nasal discharge may start clear and can become thicker and turn yellow or green over a day or so
- Medical history and other signs and symptoms present will be taken into consideration when making the assessment
- The Director/Nominated Supervisor will have the final say regarding whether a child is able to attend the centre.
- We want to support all family's need for childcare, however the parent must realise that a child who is unwell will need one-on-one attention. This places additional pressure on staff ratios and the needs of other children.
- Effective hygiene practices should help control the spread of common colds

When signs of infection are present

- 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. If possible, they will be placed in a quiet area away from other children with adult supervision until the child's parents or other authorised person arrives to collect them and take them home.
- The Department of Education and Communities requires a record to be kept of any particulars of illness or treatment given to children at the centre.
- The educator, who attends to the child, is to complete the *Illness Report Form* and get it signed by parent/guardian.
- A photo copy of the Illness Report Form is to be provided to the parent/guardian as this will state when the child is able to return to the centre and if they require a medical certificate.
- A copy of these forms is to be kept in the child's file after being signed off by the Director/Nominated Supervisor.
- If a staff member is unwell, they should not report for work. Staff should contact the Director/Nominated Supervisor as soon as possible to inform them that they are unable to attend work. This must be at least 2 hours before the commencement of their shift.
- If a staff member becomes ill or develops symptoms whilst at the centre, they can return home if able or organise for someone to take them home. The Director/Nominated Supervisor will organise a suitable replacement as soon as possible.
- Educators will follow the Workplace Instruction for the Service Routine for Cleaning Equipment in the event of all illnesses.

- Educators will ensure all bedding, towels, clothing, etc., which has been used by the child is disinfected – these articles should be washed separately and, if possible, aired in the sun to dry.

Nasal discharge

- Washing hands every time an educator wipes a child's nose or their own nose will reduce the spread of colds.
- If educators cannot wash their hands after every nose wipe, use an alcohol-based hand rub.
- It is not necessary to wear gloves when wiping a child's nose.
- If gloves are worn, hands must be washed or an alcohol-based hand rub used afterwards.
- Dirty tissues should be disposed of immediately in a plastic-lined rubbish bin.
- Nasal discharge may start clear but can become thicker and turn yellow or green over a day or so (Educators can refer to the Illness and Infectious Diseases Policy regarding nasal discharge)
- If a child is seen to be touching or wiping their nasal secretions, they should be instructed to wash their hands straight away. Older children are able to use an alcohol-based hand rub.

Procedure for a Notifiable Outbreak or Infectious Disease

- The centre will inform all families as soon as practicable of any infectious conditions in the centre. The notification will be via e-mail.
- Notices of Infectious Diseases will include signs and symptoms of the condition, exclusion time from the centre for any infectious persons, and the need for a medical clearance before returning to the centre, if applicable.
- Notification to families about infectious diseases will be performed in a way which does not breach the confidentiality of individual persons or families.
- Parents are responsible for informing the centre immediately if an infectious condition has been discovered in their family. This is important to minimise the risk of spreading of the illness.
- If any medication or medical, hospital or dental treatment or ambulance services are obtained for a child, a parent of the child is notified as soon as practically possible of the accident or illness and the treatment or services arranged for the child.
- The Director/Nominated Supervisor will contact the Department of Health and any other relevant health authority with any outbreaks of notifiable infectious diseases. Details of the child and family may be given if requested by the Department.
- The decision to exclude or re-admit a child or staff member will be the responsibility of the Director/Nominated Supervisor based on the symptoms, medical opinion and Department of Health guidelines for children and staff who have an infectious disease or who have been exposed to and infectious disease.
- A regularly updated copy of the Department of Health guidelines on infectious diseases will be kept in the centre for reference by staff and management and made available to parents on request.
- The Director/Nominated Supervisor will follow the recommendations as outlined in the Department of Health document.

TEMPORARY CHANGE TO POLICY – COVID 19

Effective from 15/4/20 until further notice.

Current health guidelines surrounding COVID-19 stipulates a high temperature to be 37.5 degrees Celsius or above. We will now follow our usual procedures for dealing with a high temperature if your child's temperature reaches 37.5 degrees. If your child develops a temperature whilst at the centre of 37.5 degrees or above, we will contact you and ask you to make arrangements for them to be collected immediately. Where possible, your child will be cared for in an area that is separated from other children at the centre to prevent the spread of any illness.

We will now be implementing a 24 hour exclusion period following a high temperature. This means that if your child is sent home with a temperature or develops a temperature at home, they must be symptom-free for 24 hours before they are able to return to the centre (without the need for medications like Panadol).

Considerations / Resources

- Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011
- Department of Health
- Staying Healthy – Preventing Infectious Diseases in Early Childhood Education & Care Services – 5th Edition
- National Quality Framework 2011

Date for next review: May 2021