



INFECTIOUS DISEASES

POLICY

Updated January
2019

POLICY RATIONALE

This policy applies to TeamKids management, staff, educators, parents/guardians, children, volunteers and students involved with TeamKids.

Infectious diseases commonly affect children. Children are at greater risk of exposure at an Early Childhood/ Outside School Hours Care service than at home due to the amount of time spent with a large number of other children. Infectious diseases are divided into four categories by the method of notification and the information required. A Minimum Period of Exclusion from Schools and Children's Services for Infectious Diseases Cases and Contacts was developed to protect the public by preventing, or containing, outbreaks of infectious conditions common in schools and other children's services and is regulated by the Public Health Act of the state in which it operates, including the Public Health and Wellbeing Regulations 2008 (Victoria), Public Health Amendment (Review) Act 2017 (New South Wales) & Public Health Act 2005 (Queensland).

An immunisation program is also in place to assist in the prevention and spread of infectious diseases. A standard immunisation calendar is provided as a link to this policy. Families are required to confirm if the child has been immunised at the time of his/her enrolment. As this program is considered an Outside School Hours Care (OSHC) program, the vaccination requirements for early childhood services in each state do not apply to TeamKids services.

POLICY OBJECTIVES

TeamKids is committed to taking reasonable steps to:

- Providing a safe and healthy environment for all children, educators and any other persons participating in the program.
- Prevent infection and break the chain of any infection that may occur
- Responding to the needs of the child who presents with symptoms of an infectious disease or head lice infestation while attending the service.
- Providing up-to-date information and resources for families and staff regarding protection of all children from infectious diseases, immunisation programs and management of head lice infestation.
- Protecting pregnant educators and women is both a workplace health and safety obligation for TeamKids and an obligation to our families.

INFECTIOUS DISEASES & CONTROL

There are 3 major types of harmful germs responsible for human infections: bacteria, viruses and fungi. Parasites can also cause disease or other negative effects in humans.

- Bacteria are found almost everywhere, including in and on the human body. Most bacteria live in close contact with us and our environment without causing any harm. Some are even good for us – good bacteria live in our intestines and help us digest our food. But some bacteria can infect the body and cause disease. Bacterial diseases include streptococcal sore throat, impetigo (school sores), whooping cough (pertussis) and meningococcal infection.
- Viruses can only grow and reproduce inside other living cells. Viruses cause diseases such as the common cold, flu, COVID-19, gastroenteritis, chickenpox (varicella) and measles.
- Fungi generally do not cause disease in humans. However, some can cause skin and soft-tissue infections such as tinea corporis (ringworm), tinea pedis (athlete's foot) and candida (thrush). Some fungi may also cause serious infections in people with compromised immune systems.
- Parasites are organisms that live off or in another organism. Parasites can be harmful to humans and can cause diseases. Most parasites that cause disease in humans come from one of 3 categories. – Protozoa are single-

celled organisms. Those that cause gastroenteritis usually live in water (for example, cryptosporidium and giardia). – Ectoparasites live on the surface of the human body (for example, infestations of scabies and head lice). These parasites can cause a local reaction that leads to itching. – Helminths are parasitic worms (for example, pinworm and roundworm). They can cause intestinal infections in humans.

Generally, people are most infectious when they are sick and showing symptoms (for example, sneezing, coughing, vomiting or having diarrhoea). But not all people with infection show symptoms of illness. They may be infectious before they become sick, during their illness or after they have recovered.

For some diseases, pregnant staff or visitors may need to avoid exposure. If any of these diseases occur in the education and care service, alert pregnant staff and visitors so they can take precautions. Pregnant women may wish to seek advice from local public health authorities if they are concerned about risks from an infectious disease diagnosed in a child or staff member. The notification of both educators and families/guardians/visitors of an outbreak of any infectious illness is therefore of great importance.

Germs spread in several ways. First, germs get out of their current host – for example, through saliva or cuts in the skin. They then travel to a new host. The ways that germs travel are known as their modes of transmission. Several modes of transmission are likely in education and care services.

Infection control is used to break the chain of infection and stop the spread of diseases. The methods used are:

- Personal strategies - actions you can take for yourself or in interactions with other people
 - Immunisation
 - Hand hygiene
 - Respiratory hygiene
 - Wearing gloves and masks
 - Nappy changing and toileting
 - Safely dealing with wounds and body fluids
 - Taking care with animals
 - Protecting pregnant staff and visitors
- Environmental strategies – actions you can take to improve the environment
 - Ventilation
 - Cleaning
 - Food safety
- Exclusion – action to limit infection sources

HYGIENE

Educators can maintain their own hygiene standards, but young children may not be able to maintain hygiene standards on their own.

Educators and other staff must help children with toileting, hand hygiene and respiratory hygiene.

Educators and other staff should also be aware of their own hygiene practices so they can model safe behaviours to children.

TeamKids services provide great opportunities to teach or reinforce good hygiene habits in children and give them lifelong habits that will reduce the spread of infection in our communities.

Hand Hygiene

Hand hygiene is a general term that refers to any action that cleans hands, such as washing hands with soap and water then drying hands or using hand sanitiser. This should be implemented regularly, especially before eating or preparing food, or after touching anything that may contaminate hands, such as after toileting or wiping noses (adult or child).

Washing hands with soap and running water loosens, dilutes and flushes off dirt and germs. Soap alone cannot remove dirt or kill germs – it is the combination of running water, rubbing your hands and the detergent in the soap that helps loosen the dirt, remove the germs and rinse them off your skin.

Warm water is recommended because soap lathers (soaps up) better with warm water. However, soap and cold water can be used if warm water is not available. Antibacterial soap is not required – any soap is effective for hand hygiene if used properly.

Recommendations for when hand hygiene is required is:

WHO	BEFORE	AFTER
Educators and other staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Starting work, so harmful germs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eating or handling food

	<p>are not introduced into the service</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eating or handling food • Giving medication • Putting on gloves • Applying sunscreen or other lotions to children • Going home, so harmful germs are not taken home with you 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Using the toilet • Helping children use the toilet • Taking off gloves • Changing a nappy • Cleaning the nappy change area • Wiping a child's nose or your own nose • Cleaning up body fluids such as faeces, urine, vomit or blood • Handling garbage • Coming in from outside play • Applying sunscreen or other lotions to children • Touching animals
Children	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Starting the day at the service; parents and carers can help with this • Eating or handling food • Going home, so harmful germs are not taken home with them 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eating or handling food • Using the toilet • Touching mucus (snot) • Coming in from outside play • Touching animals

Handwashing techniques

1. Wet hands with running warm water.
2. Apply soap to hands.
3. Lather soap and rub hands thoroughly, including the wrists, the palms, between the fingers, around the thumbs and under the nails. If you wear rings or other jewellery on your hands, sing 'Happy birthday' twice). move the jewellery around your finger while you rub to ensure that the area underneath the jewellery is clean. Rub hands together for at least 20 seconds (for about as long as it takes to
4. Rinse hands thoroughly under running water.
5. Dry hands thoroughly.

Respiratory Hygiene

The correct way is to cough or sneeze into your inner elbow or use a tissue to cover your nose and mouth. Put all used tissues in the rubbish bin straight away and clean your hands with either soap and water or hand sanitiser.

Hand hygiene after every time you wipe a child's nose will reduce the spread of colds and other diseases. It is not necessary to wear gloves when wiping a child's nose. If you do wear gloves, you must remove your gloves and wash your hands or use hand sanitiser afterwards.

Gloves and Masks

Gloves provide a protective barrier against germs. Using gloves correctly reduces the spread of harmful germs but does not eliminate it completely. Gloves prevent contamination of the hands and exposure to damaging substances. Wear disposable gloves if you are likely to come in contact with body fluids – for example, when changing wet or dirty nappies or cleaning up vomit or blood. However, it is not necessary to wear gloves when wiping noses.

Wearing gloves does not replace the need to clean your hands, and you should do hand hygiene before putting gloves on and after taking them off.

Never reuse or wash disposable gloves. They must be thrown away as soon as you have finished the activity that requires gloves.

Masks

Masks reduce transmission of respiratory viruses, especially in crowded, poorly ventilated spaces. Masks may be mandated or recommended by public health authorities if there is an outbreak of certain diseases. TeamKids will notify services where masks are mandated/required.

Nappy changing and toileting

Although the majority of children attending TeamKids services, are toilet trained and able to use bathrooms independently, this is not always the case and children, both pre-school or of school age, may need nappy changing and or bathroom support. All educators must meet children's needs at all times and this includes meeting these needs.

Change nappies when they have faeces in them, and at routine intervals throughout the day. This will minimise the amount of time that urine and faeces are in contact with the child's skin.

The nappy change area needs to be positioned away from food preparation areas, near running warm water and with materials needed such as paper towel, gloves, bags for soiled clothes and a bin for rubbish. Privacy and dignity of the child must be considered at all times.

Wash your hands or use hand sanitiser:

- Before preparing the nappy change area
- After changing the nappy
- After cleaning the nappy change area.

Gloves are to be worn for each nappy change and for toileting support if changing of wet or soiled clothes is required.

The nappy change surface may be a change mat or a waterproof sheet over a mattress on a change table. Ensure that the nappy change surface is:

- Waterproof
- In good condition
- Smooth and easily cleaned (germs can survive in cracks, holes, creases, folds and seams)
- Cleaned after every nappy change.

Always store and dispose of soiled nappies correctly to minimise the spread of harmful germs. Keep soiled nappies in a waterproof container that can contain smells. Do not keep containers for soiled nappies in areas used for preparing or eating food, or where children play.

Bodily fluids and wounds

If a child is bleeding from an injury, nosebleed or bite from another child, you must:

- Look after the child and follow first aid procedures
- Comfort the child and move them to safety, away from other children.
- Put on gloves if time allows
- Dress the wound (if needed)
- Check that no-one else has come in contact with the blood
- Clean up the blood.
- Avoid contact with the blood
- When the wound is covered and no longer bleeding, remove gloves, put them in a plastic bag or alternative, seal the bag and place it in the rubbish bin

- Wash hands thoroughly with soap and running warm water.

Strategies to prevent spills of body fluids include:

- Encouraging children to use the toilet regularly
- Exclude or send home, children with vomiting or diarrhoea
- Encourage children to blow their noses, especially any who have a runny nose, and disposing of tissues appropriately
- When a spill occurs, clean it up as soon as possible. If possible, place a safety sign around the spill to keep people away until it can be cleaned. When cleaning up a spill of blood, faeces, urine, vomit or breastmilk, wear gloves and wipe up the spill with paper towels. Next, clean the surface with warm water and detergent, and dry with paper towels. Wipe the area with disinfectant and allow to dry.
- Wash hands thoroughly with soap and running warm water after having cleaned any spills of body fluids.

Animal care

TeamKids do not usually allow animals to be kept as pets within services, however if they are on site, make sure that adults and children wash their hands with soap and water (or use hand sanitiser if soap and water are not available) after touching animals or cleaning an animal's bedding, cage or tank.

Avoid keeping ferrets, reptiles (including lizards, iguanas, snakes and turtles) and parrots. This is because these animals can carry germs that can be dangerous to humans (for example, reptiles often carry Salmonella).

Ensure that animals are free of fleas, mites, worms and skin diseases. Animals should be immunised as appropriate.

Animals that are sick should be treated promptly by a veterinarian and kept away from children. Do not allow animals in sandpits, and do not allow them to urinate or defecate on soil, in pot plants or in vegetable gardens.

If an educator needs to reach into a fish tank, wear gloves or use a net. If using bare hands and arms, wash hands and arms thoroughly with soap and water afterwards. Never clean an aquarium in a kitchen sink or food preparation area.

Use a laundry/outdoor sink for cleaning and disposal of aquarium water.

Cleaning:

- Always wear gloves when handling animal faeces, emptying litter trays and cleaning cages
- Dispose of animal faeces and litter daily.
- Place faeces and litter in a plastic bag or alternative and put it out with the rubbish.
- Pregnant women, in particular, must avoid contact with cat faeces to minimise their risk of toxoplasmosis
- If you have a birdcage, wet the floor of the cage before cleaning it to avoid inhalation of powdered, dry bird faeces.

PROCEDURES

If the service is notified that a child has suffered or is suffering from an infectious illness, the service will exclude the child from attending the service for the time specified in the exclusion table within the Nationally based document, 'Staying Healthy – Preventing infectious diseases in early childhood educator and care services (6th edition 2024)'.

TeamKids staff and educators will be able to request a clearance certificate from a medical practitioner to verify that a child is no longer suffering from a contagious illness or infectious disease.

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TeamKids National Quality & Compliance Manager is responsible for:

- Informing, the relevant State Regulatory Authority and State Communicable Diseases Control Unit, within twenty-four hours of receiving confirmation, that a child is suffering, or they believe a child is suffering from a vaccine-preventable disease, or a child who has not been immunised against such a disease has been in contact with a person at the service who is infected with that disease, as per the relevant State Legislation. Any exclusion will be based on firm medical evidence following diagnosis of a vaccine-preventable disease, or on recommendations from the Communicable Diseases Control Unit. Note that this may be a different contact method for each state or territory.

The person in day-to-day charge is responsible for:

- Contacting the parent or guardian of the child they suspect may be suffering from an infectious or vaccine-preventable disease, or that their child who is not immunised has been in contact with someone who has a vaccine-preventable disease and requesting the child be collected from the service as soon as possible. Those parents will be required to keep their children at home when an infectious disease has been diagnosed at the service until there are no more occurrences of that disease and the exclusion period has ceased.
- If a child is suspected of suffering from an infectious disease while at the service, they may need to be isolated from other children. The document, *Staying Healthy – Preventing infectious diseases in early childhood and care services* (6th edition) will provide educators with details of when a child should be isolated. The place of isolation will vary from service to service. A separate room may be available, or isolation may be to one side of a room, with other children engaged in experiences away from them. In any scenario, an educator will remain with the child at all times to monitor their condition and ensure they remain well while waiting to be collected by the parent or authorised nominee.
- Establishing good hygiene and infection control procedures and making them part of the routine for everyone in the workplace.
- Placing a sign at the main entrance of the service notifying any families, staff and visitors of any infectious diseases that may be harmful. (R 173)
- Ensuring the exclusion requirements for infectious diseases are adhered to as per the Communicable diseases' exclusion table.
- Notifying the TeamKids and parents/guardians of an outbreak of an infectious disease within the service.
- Advising parents/guardians on enrolment that the Communicable diseases exclusion table will be followed regarding the outbreak of any infectious diseases.
- Requesting parents/guardians notify the service if their child has an infectious disease
- Providing information and resources to parents to assist in the identification and management of infectious diseases and infestations. This may include tip sheets from '*Staying Healthy In Child Care (5th Edition)*'.
- In the case of a head lice outbreak, families/guardians will be contacted to collect their child for treatment, if head lice are detected.
- Maintaining confidentiality at all times.

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The parents/guardians are responsible for:

- Notifying the service if their child has an infectious disease or has been in contact with a person who is infected with an infectious disease, as per the Communicable Diseases Exclusion table.
- Providing accurate and current information regarding the immunisation status of their child/children when they enrol and any subsequent changes to this while they are attending the service.
- Complying with the Communicable diseases' exclusion table.
- Keeping their child at home when an infectious disease has been diagnosed at the service and their child is not fully immunised until there are no more occurrences of that disease and the exclusion period has ceased.
- Regularly checking their child's hair for lice or lice eggs and regularly inspecting all household members and then treating if necessary as well as ensuring their child does not attend the service with untreated head lice.
- Notifying the service if head lice have been found in their child's hair and when treatment has started.

Important Links:

Staying Healthy – Preventing infectious diseases in early childhood education and care services (6th Edition 2024)

https://www.google.com/search?gs_ssp=eJzj4tFP1zc0skiutCw0zDNg9JlpLkmszMxLV8hITcwpyahUyMxTSM7IzEIJTixKBQA5kA73&q=staying+healthy+in+childcare&rlz=1C1GCEB_enAU1037AU1042&oq=staying&gs_lcrp=EgZjaHJvbWUqDABEC4YFBiHAHiABDIMCAAQlxgnGIAEGloFMgwlARAUgBQYhwlyGgAQyBggCEEUYOTIMCAMQABhDGAEGloFMgwlBBAAGEMYgAQYigUyDAgFEAAYQxiABBiKBTIMCAYQABhDGAEGloFMgYIBxBFGDzSAQgyOTgxajBqN6gCALACAA&sourceid=chrome&ie=UTF-8

National Immunisation Program Schedule

<https://beta.health.gov.au/file/7831/download?token=u7ac8cG->

REFERENCES

Public Health and Wellbeing Regulations 2008 (Victoria), R 85

Public Health Amendment (Review) Act 2017 (New South Wales), R 85

Public Health Act 2005 (Queensland), R 85

Staying Healthy in Childcare – 5th Edition (2013)

Department of Health and Human Services www.dhhs.vic.gov.au

Education and Care Services National Law Act (2010), S 165, S 167

Education and Care Services National Regulations (2011), R 87, R 173

ACECQA National Quality Framework Resource Kit (2012)

Quality Area 2 – Children's health and safety

Quality Area 7 – Leadership and Service Management

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