

The spread of infections in the early childhood environment is facilitated by crowding and microbial contamination of the environment, as well as the unhygienic behaviours and greater exposure of young children. Brunswick Crèche & Day Nursery will minimise children's exposure to infectious diseases by adhering to all recommended guidelines from relevant authorities regarding the prevention of infectious diseases, promoting practices that reduce the transmission of infection, ensuring the exclusion of sick children and educators, supporting child immunisation and implement effective hygiene practices.

Our Centre will provide up-to-date information and advice to parents, families and educators sourced from the Australian Government Department of Health, Australian Health Protection Principal Committee (AHPPC) and state Ministry of Health about infectious diseases as required. Recommendations from the Health Department will be strictly adhered to at all times.

Purpose

Children encounter many other children and adults within the Centre environment, which can result in the contracting of infectious illnesses. Our centre has a duty of care to ensure that children families, educators and visitors of the centre are provided with a high level of protection during the hours of the centre's operation. We aim to manage illnesses and prevent the spread of infectious diseases throughout the centre.

Immunisation is a simple, safe and effective way of protecting people against harmful diseases before they come into contact with them in the community. Immunisation not only protects individuals, but also others within the community, by reducing the spread of disease and illnesses.

Implementation

Our Centre is committed to minimise the spread of infectious diseases and viruses by implementing recommendations as stated in the *Staying healthy: Preventing infectious diseases in early childhood education and care services* (Fifth Edition) developed by the Australian Government National Health and Medical Research Council and advice provided from the Australian Health Protection Principal Committee (AHPPC).

We are guided by decisions regarding exclusion periods and notification of infectious diseases by the *Australian Government- Department of Health* and local Public Health Units in our jurisdiction as per the Public Health Act.

The need for exclusion and the length of time a person is excluded from the Centre depends on:

- How easily the infection can spread
- How long the person is likely to be infectious and
- The severity of the infectious disease or illness.

This policy must be read in conjunction with our other Quality Area 2 policies:

- Immunisation Policy
- Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Policy
- Medical Conditions Policy and
- Handwashing Policy
- COVID-19 Management Policy

Preventing Infectious Diseases

Children enter education and care services when their immune systems are still developing. They have not been exposed to many common germs and therefore are susceptible to bacteria that may cause infections. Given the close physical contact children have with other children in early childhood and care, it is very easy for infectious diseases and illnesses to spread through normal daily activities.



Our Centre implements rigorous hygienic practices to limit the spread of illness and infectious diseases including:

- Effective hand washing hygiene
- Cough and sneeze etiquette
- Appropriate use of gloves
- Exclusion of children, educators or staff when they are unwell or displaying symptoms of an infectious disease or virus
- Effective environmental cleaning including toys and resources (including bedding)
- Requesting parents and visitors to wash their hands with soap and water or hand sanitizer upon arrival and departure at the Centre
- Physical distancing (if recommended by Australian Health Protection Principal Committee [AHPPC] and/or Safe Work Australia)

Immunisation Requirements

Immunisation is a reliable way to prevent many childhood infectious diseases. As of January 2018, unvaccinated children due to their parent's conscientious objection are no longer able to be enrolled in approved early childcare centres. Children who cannot be fully vaccinated due to a medical condition or who are on a recognised catch-up schedule may still be enrolled upon presentation of the appropriate form signed by a medical practitioner who meets the criteria stated by the Australian Government.

Only parents of children (less than 20 years of age) who are fully immunised or are on a recognised catch-up schedule can receive Child Care Subsidy (CCS) and the Family Tax Benefit Part A end of year supplement. The relevant vaccinations are those under the *National Immunisation Program* (NIP), which covers the vaccines usually administered before age five. These vaccinations must be recorded on the Australian Immunisation Register (AIR).

Educators and other staff at our Centre are highly recommended to keep up to date with all immunisations including yearly influenza vaccinations. These include vaccinations recommended by the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC).

Refer to *Immunisation Policy* for more information

Reporting Outbreaks to the Public Health Unit and Regulatory Authority

Outbreaks of communicable diseases and contagious viruses represent a threat to public health. To help prevent outbreaks, the Department of Health monitors the number of people who contract certain infectious diseases and their characteristics, the recent travel or attendance of infected people in a public place or on public transport and works with health specialists and doctors to help prevent the transmission of diseases to other people.

The Public Health Act 2010 lawfully requires and authorises doctors, hospitals, laboratories, school principals and childcare centre directors to confidentially notify the Public Health Unit (PHU) of patients with certain conditions, and to provide the required information on the notification forms. Specialist trained public health staff review this information and if necessary, contact the patient's doctor, and sometimes the patient, to provide advice about disease control and to complete the collection of information.

All information is held confidentially in order to protect the patient's privacy. Commonwealth Privacy Acts only release/disclose patient information where it is lawfully required or authorised.

Management is required to notify the local PHU by phone (call 1300 066 055) as soon as possible after they are made aware that a child enrolled at the Centre is suffering from one of the following vaccine preventable diseases or any confirmed case of COVID-19:

- Diphtheria
- Mumps



- Poliomyelitis
- Haemophilus influenzae Type b (Hib)
- Meningococcal disease
- Rubella ('German measles')
- Measles
- Pertussis ('whooping cough')
- Tetanus
- An outbreak of 2 or more people with gastrointestinal or respiratory illness

Management will closely monitor health alerts and guidelines from Public Health Units and the Australian Government-Department of Health for any advice and emergency health management in the event of a contagious illness outbreak- e.g. (COVID-19).

The Approved Provider must also notify the Regulatory Authority of any incidence of a notifiable infectious disease or illness. [acecqa contact regulatory authority](#)

Management will ensure:

- That all information regarding the prevention and transmission of infectious diseases is sourced from a recognised Government Health authority [Australian Government Department of Health](#)
- Exclusion periods for people with infectious diseases recommended by Government Authorities are implemented for all staff, children, parents, families and visitors
- The Centre implements recommendations from [Staying healthy: Preventing infectious diseases in early childhood education and care services](#) to maintain a healthy environment
- Advice and recommendations from the Australian Health Protection Principal Committee (AHPPC) and Safe Work Australia will be implemented where reasonably possible
- Children are protected from harm by ensuring relevant policies and procedures are followed regarding health and safety within the Centre
- Required enrolment information, including health and immunisation records of enrolled children is collected, maintained and appropriately and securely stored
- A staff immunisation record that documents each staff member's previous infection or immunisations (including dates) is developed and maintained
- The Public Health Unit is notified in the event of an outbreak of viral gastroenteritis. Management must document the number of cases, dates of onset, duration of symptoms. An outbreak is when two or more children or staff have a sudden onset of diarrhoea or vomiting in a 2-day period.

In the event of a confirmed COVID-19 case the Public Health Unit and Regulatory Authority will be notified, and advice followed to ensure the safety of children, educators and visitors to the centre. [\(NQA ITS\)](#)

- [The Department of Education, Skills and Employment in VIC is notified of a positive case of COVID-19](#)
- Directions from the PHU are followed to close the centre and an industrial/deep clean of the centre is conducted
- All families and staff are notified of the closure of the centre if advised to do so by the PHU
- Privacy and confidentiality laws are adhered to- the person who has the confirmed case of COVID-19 will be on a 'need to know' basis only
- Information is provided to the PHU for contact tracing
- COVID-19 testing will be conducted for educators and staff at the Centre
- COVID-19 testing will be required for all children and families as advised by PHU
- Re-opening dates will be confirmed to the Regulatory Authority, DESE and families when advised by the PHU.

Refer to the *COVID-19 Management Policy* for more information



A Nominated Supervisor/ Responsible Person will ensure:

- A hygienic environment is promoted and maintained
- Children are supported in their understanding of health and hygiene practices throughout the daily program and routine (hand washing, hand drying, cough and sneeze etiquette)
- Educators and staff are aware of relevant immunisation guidelines for children and themselves
- Wall charts about immunisation are displayed
- An Immunisation History Statement for each child is collected on enrolment and maintained/updated regarding the child's immunisation status (AIR) and any medical conditions
- Families are provided with relevant sourced materials and information on infectious diseases, health, and hygiene including:
 - The current Vic Immunisation Schedule
 - Exclusion guidelines in the event of a vaccine preventable illness at the Centre for children that are not immunised or have not yet received all their immunisations
 - Advice and information regarding any infectious diseases in general and information regarding any specific infectious illnesses that are suspected/present in the Centre.
- Families are provided with information about an infectious disease verbally and by displaying and emailing
- Information or factsheets related to the disease/infection and the necessary precautions/exclusions required will be provided to families
- Families are advised that they must alert the Centre if their child is diagnosed with an Infectious Illness
- All educators are mindful and maintain confidentiality of individual children's medical circumstances
- That opportunities for educators to source pertinent up to date information from trusted sources on the prevention of infectious diseases and maintaining health and hygiene are provided
- That opportunities for staff, children, and families to have access to health professionals by organising visits/guest speakers to attend the centre to confirm best practice are provided
- Families are advised to keep children at home if they are unwell. If a child has been sick, they must be well for 24hrs before returning to the Centre. For example, if a child is absent due to illness or is sent home due to illness, they will be unable to attend the next day as a minimum. The Nominated Supervisor may approve the child's return to the Centre if families provide a doctor's certificate/clearance certifying that the child is no longer contagious and is in good health. Please note; it is not always possible to obtain a doctor's certificate or clearance for suspected cases of an illness. The decision to approve a child's return is up to the Nominated supervisor
- educators or staff who have diarrhoea or an infectious disease do not handle food for others and are not to return to work until they have been symptom free for 48 hours
- Any risk to a child or adult with complex medical needs is minimised in the event of an outbreak of an infectious disease or virus. This may require a risk assessment and decision-making regarding the suitability of attendance of the child or staff member during this time.

Educators will ensure:

- That any child suspected of having an infectious illness is responded to and their health and emotional needs supported at all times
- Any child suspected of having an infectious illness is isolated from other children and supervised whilst waiting for collection by parents or guardian
- That appropriate health and safety procedures are implemented when treating ill children- wear disposable gloves, face mask or other PPE if needed
- Families are aware of the need to collect their unwell child/ children as soon as practicable from the Centre (1 Hour Timeframe)
- All resources or items touched by a child with a suspected illness are thoroughly cleaned and disinfected- (cushions, pillows, toys)
- Their own immunisation status is maintained, and the Nominated Supervisor is advised of any updates to their immunisation status
- Opportunities are provided for children to participate in hygiene practices, including routine opportunities, and intentional practice such as hand washing, sneezing and cough etiquette



- Consideration is given to the combination of children to decrease the risk of attaining an infectious illness when planning the routines/program of the day
- They adhere to the Centre's health and hygiene policy including:
 - Hand washing
 - Daily cleaning of the Centre
 - Wearing gloves (particularly when in direct contact with bodily fluids- nappy changing and toileting)
 - Appropriate and hygienic handling and preparation of food
 - COVIDSafe Plan
- They maintain up-to-date knowledge with respect to Health and Safety through on-going professional development opportunities
- That children rest 'head to toe' to avoid cross infection while resting or sleeping
- That cots or mattresses are placed at least 1.5m away from each other if physical distancing measures are required to be implemented
- Children do not to share beds at the same time
- Bedding is cleaned using detergent and water after each use and if the surface is known to be contaminated with a potential infectious disease, disinfectant is also used to clean beds
- That all play dough is freshly made every week. If there is an outbreak of vomiting and/or diarrhoea, or any other contagious communicable disease, play dough is to be discarded at the end of each day and a new batch made each day for the duration of the outbreak
- Children wash their hands before and after using play dough.

Prevention strategies for minimising the spread of disease within our Service include all staff ensuring:

- Full adherence to the NHMRC cleaning guidelines
- To clean surfaces first with detergent and water before using disinfectants. (Disinfectants cannot kill germs unless areas are clean)
- Mops used for toilet accidents are to be soaked in disinfectant in a bucket in the laundry sink and then air-dried
- that a daily clean is carried out on other surfaces that may transmit germs such as high touch objects including doorknobs, tables, light switches, handles, remotes, play gyms, low shelving, etc. This will be increased to several times a day if an outbreak of an infectious disease/virus has been recorded in the Centre or to minimise the risk of transmission of a virus such as COVID-19
- That if a child has a toileting accident, the items are placed in the child's Individual Wet bag.
- Cloths are colour coded so that a separate cloth is used to bathroom, art and craft, and meal surfaces
- That any toy that is mouthed by a child is placed immediately in the 'toys to be washed', and washed with warm soapy water at the end of the day. All washable toys out on display for the children are to be washed on a weekly basis to decrease the risk of cross contamination and recorded with the date and a signature as evidence.
- Toys and equipment (that are difficult to wash) will be washed with detergent (or soap and water) and air-dried in sunlight
- Washable toys and equipment will be washed in detergent and hot water and aired to dry. All toys and equipment that have been cleaned will be recorded on the cleaning register.
- All cleaning procedures will be recorded on the Centre's Cleaning Checklist
- Furnishings and pillowcases will be laundered at the end of each week and hung out to dry.
- Floor surfaces will be cleaned on a daily basis after each meal and at the end of each day
- Toilets/bathrooms will be cleaned in the middle of the day, the end of the day and whenever needed throughout the day using detergent and water followed by disinfectant and paper towel
- When cleaning up spills of faeces, vomit or urine off beds, floors, bathrooms etc. educators will use disinfectant on the surface after cleaning it with detergent and warm water



Families will:

- Adhere to the Centre’s policies regarding *Control of Infectious Diseases, Immunisation, Sick Children* and exclusion requirements
- Adhere to the Centre’s restrictions of entry into the Centre in the event of an outbreak of an infectious disease or virus
- Adhere to the Centre’s policy regarding *Hand Washing*
- Exclude their child from care if they display symptoms of an infectious illness or disease or in the event of a vaccine preventable disease occurs in the Centre and their child is not immunised fully
- Advise the Centre of their child’s immunisation status, by providing a current Immunisation History Statement recorded on the Australian Immunisation Register (AIR) for the Centre to copy and place in the child’s file
- Advise the Centre when their child’s medical action plan is updated
- Provide sufficient spare clothing, particularly if the child is toilet training
- Adhere to the Centre’s risk minimisation strategies if their child has complex medical needs in the event of an outbreak of an infectious disease or virus
- Provide proof of a negative COVID-19 test if their child is tested for the virus

Recommended Minimum Periods of Exclusion

National Health and Medical Research Council.
Staying Healthy in Child Care 5th Edition

Children who are unwell should not attend the centre.

Health Department Rulings

<i>Condition</i>	<i>Exclusion of Case</i>	<i>Exclusion of Contacts</i>
<i>Campylobacter infection</i>	Exclude until there has not been a loose bowel motion for 24 hours	<i>Not excluded</i>
<i>Candidiasis (thrush)</i>	Not excluded	<i>Not excluded</i>
<i>Cytomegalovirus (CMV) infection</i>	Not excluded	<i>Not excluded</i>
<i>Conjunctivitis</i>	Exclude until discharge from the eyes has stopped, unless a doctor has diagnosed non-infectious conjunctivitis	<i>Not excluded</i>
<i>Cryptosporidium</i>	Exclude until there has not been a loose bowel motion for 24 hours ^b	<i>Not excluded</i>
<i>Diarrhoea (No organism identified)</i>	Exclude until there has not been a loose bowel motion for 24 hours ^b	<i>Not excluded</i>
<i>Fungal infections of the skin or nails (e.g. ringworm, tinea)</i>	Exclude until the day after starting appropriate antifungal treatment	<i>Not excluded</i>
<i>Giardiasis</i>	Exclude until there has not been a loose bowel motion for 24 hours ^b	<i>Not excluded</i>
<i>Glandular fever (mononucleosis, Epstein Barr virus [EBV] infection)</i>	Not excluded	<i>Not excluded</i>
<i>Hand, foot and mouth disease</i>	Exclude until all blisters have dried	<i>Not excluded</i>
<i>Haemophilus influenzae type b (Hib)</i>	Exclude until the person has received appropriate antibiotic treatment for at least 4 days	<i>Not excluded. Contact a public health unit for specialist advice</i>
<i>Head lice (pediculosis)</i>	Not excluded if effective treatment begins before the next day at the education and care service.	<i>Not excluded</i>
<i>Hepatitis A</i>	Exclude until a medical certificate of recovery is received and until at least 7 days after the onset of jaundice	<i>Not excluded. Contact a public health unit for specialist advice about vaccinating or treating</i>



		<i>children in the same room or group</i>
<i>Hepatitis B</i>	Not excluded	<i>Not excluded</i>
<i>Hepatitis C</i>	Not excluded	<i>Not excluded</i>
<i>Herpes simplex (cold sores, fever blisters)</i>	Not excluded if the person can maintain hygiene practices to minimise the risk of transmission. If the person cannot comply with these practices (e.g. because they are too young), they should be excluded until the sores are dry. Sores should be covered with a dressing, where possible	<i>Not excluded</i>
<i>Human immunodeficiency virus (HIV)</i>	Not excluded. If the person is severely immune compromised, they will be vulnerable to other people's illnesses	<i>Not excluded</i>
<i>Human parvovirus B19 (fifth disease, erythema infectiosum, slapped cheek syndrome)</i>	Not excluded	<i>Not excluded</i>
<i>Hydatid disease</i>	Not excluded	<i>Not excluded</i>
<i>Impetigo</i>	Exclude until appropriate antibiotic treatment has started. Any sores on exposed skin should be covered with a watertight dressing	<i>Not excluded</i>
<i>Influenza and influenza-like illnesses</i>	Exclude until person is well	<i>Not excluded</i>
<i>Listeriosis</i>	Not excluded	<i>Not excluded</i>
<i>Measles</i>	Exclude for 4 days after the onset of the rash	<i>Immunised and immune contacts are not excluded For non-immunised contacts, contact a public health unit for specialist advice All immunocompromised children should be excluded until 14 days after the appearance of the rash in the last case</i>
<i>Meningitis (viral)</i>	Exclude until person is well	<i>Not excluded</i>
<i>Meningococcal</i>	infection Exclude until appropriate antibiotic treatment has been completed	<i>Not excluded. Contact a public health unit for specialist advice about antibiotics and/or vaccination for people who were in the same room as the case</i>
<i>Molluscum contagiosum</i>	Not excluded	<i>Not excluded</i>
<i>Mumps</i>	Exclude for 9 days or until swelling goes down (whichever is sooner)	<i>Not excluded</i>
<i>Norovirus</i>	Exclude until there has not been a loose bowel motion or vomiting for 48 hours	<i>Not excluded</i>
<i>Pertussis (whooping cough)</i>	Exclude until 5 days after starting appropriate antibiotic treatment, or for 21 days from the onset of coughing	<i>Contact a public health unit for specialist advice about excluding non-vaccinated and incompletely vaccinated contacts, or antibiotics</i>
<i>Pneumococcal disease</i>	Exclude until person is well	<i>Not excluded</i>
<i>Roseola</i>	Not excluded	<i>Not excluded</i>
<i>Ross River virus</i>	Not excluded	<i>Not excluded</i>
<i>Rotavirus infection</i>	Exclude until there has not been a loose bowel motion or vomiting for 24 hoursb	<i>Not excluded</i>
<i>Rubella (German measles)</i>	Exclude until fully recovered or for at least 4 days after the onset of the rash	<i>Not excluded</i>
<i>Salmonellosis</i>	Exclude until there has not been a loose bowel motion for 24 hoursb	<i>Not excluded</i>



Scabies	Exclude until the day after starting appropriate treatment	Not excluded
Shigellosis	Exclude until there has not been a loose bowel motion for 24 hours	Not excluded
Streptococcal sore throat (including scarlet fever)	Exclude until the person has received antibiotic treatment for at least 24 hours and feels well	Not excluded
Toxoplasmosis	Not excluded	Not excluded
Tuberculosis (TB)	Exclude until medical certificate is produced from the appropriate health authority	Not excluded. Contact a public health unit for specialist advice about screening, antibiotics or specialist TB clinics
Varicella (chickenpox)	Exclude until all blisters have dried—this is usually at least 5 days after the rash first appeared in non-immunised children, and less in immunised children	Any child with an immune deficiency (for example, leukaemia) or receiving chemotherapy should be excluded for their own protection. Otherwise, not excluded
Viral gastroenteritis (viral diarrhoea)	Exclude until there has not been a loose bowel motion for 24 hours	Not excluded
Worms	Exclude if loose bowel motions are occurring. Exclusion is not necessary if treatment has occurred	Not excluded

*Staying Healthy. Preventing infectious diseases in early childhood education and care services | 5th Edition | Printed June 2013
NHMRC Ref. CH55e*

Reference: www.immunise.health.gov.au

Source: Australian Government Department of Health Australian Health Protection Principal Committee (AHPPC). Department of Human Resources: National Immunisation Program Schedule: <https://beta.health.gov.au/initiatives-and-programs/national-immunisation-program> Early Childhood Australia Code of Ethics. (2016). Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010. (Amended 2018). [Education and Care Services National Regulations](#). (2011). Guide to the Education and Care Services National Law and the Education and Care Services National Regulations. (2017). Guide to the National Quality Framework. (2017). (Amended 2020). Guide to the National Quality Standard. (2020). Medicare Australia (Department of Human Services): <https://www.humanservices.gov.au/individuals/medicare> National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC): <https://www.nhmrc.gov.au/> National Health and Medical Research Council. (2012). *Staying healthy: Preventing infectious diseases in early childhood education and care services*. Vaccination requirements for child care. https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/immunisation/Pages/childcare_qa.aspx Public Health Unit: <https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/Infectious/Pages/phus.aspx> Public Health Act 2010 Public Health Amendment Act 2017 Public Health Regulation 2012 Public Health and Wellbeing Regulations 2019 Victoria Revised National Quality Standard. (2018). Safe Work Australia

Date Implemented: 16/04/2012

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Schedule for Review: 18/03/2022

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National Quality Standard – NQS		
Quality Area 2: Children’s Health and Safety		
2.1.1	Wellbeing and comfort	Each child’s wellbeing and comfort is provided for, including appropriate opportunities to meet each child’s needs for sleep, rest and relaxation
2.1.2	Health practices and procedures	Effective illness and injury management and hygiene practices are promoted and implemented.
2.2	Safety	Each child is protected
Education and Care Service National Regulations		



77	Health, hygiene and safe food practices
85	Incident, injury, trauma and illness policies and procedures
86	Notification to parents of incident, injury, trauma and illness
87	Incident, injury, trauma and illness record
88	Infectious diseases
90	Medical conditions policy
162	Health information to be kept in enrolment record
168	Education and care service must have policies and procedures
172(2)(g)	a notice stating that there has been an occurrence of an infectious disease at the premises