



# HEALTH AND HYGIENE POLICY

**SUB CATEGORY:** Health, Hygiene and Safety

## POLICY GOAL

To ensure effective hygiene practices are promoted and implemented to provide a healthy, hygienic environment.

## RATIONALE

We have obligations under law to provide healthy, hygienic learning environments. Educators and Families should also refer to individual Policies which relate to Health and Safety.

One objective of the NQF is to ensure the safety, health and wellbeing of children attending education and care services. Along with regulations, Quality Area 2 of the National Quality Standards (Children's Health and Safety) provides guidance to Approved Providers, Nominated Supervisors and educators.

*"Quality Area 2 of the National Quality Standard reinforces children's right to experience quality education and care in an environment that provides for their health and safety. Educators support this when they promote each child's wellbeing and healthy lifestyle, and support each child's growing competence, confidence and independence.*

*Learning about healthy lifestyles, including nutrition, personal hygiene (such as handwashing, dental hygiene and ear care), physical fitness, emotions and social relationships, is integral to children's wellbeing and self-confidence. When children develop resilience, their ability to take increasing responsibility for their self-help and basic health routines promotes a sense of independence and confidence. As children become more independent, they can take greater responsibility for their own health, hygiene and personal care and they become aware of their own and others' safety and wellbeing (Early Years Learning Framework, p. 30; Framework for School Age Care, p. 29). This is particularly relevant for school age children attending education and care services.*

*The approved provider, nominated supervisors, co-ordinators and educators have responsibility for supporting the health, protection, safety and wellbeing of all children. In exercising their responsibilities, they must take reasonable care to protect children from foreseeable risk of harm, injury and infection."*<sup>1</sup>

*"Microscopic living things (known as germs) are all around us. Some of these germs can cause disease in people, other animals or plants. There are four major types of germs: bacteria, viruses, fungi and protozoa.*

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<sup>1</sup> "Guide to the National Quality Framework" Australian Children's Education & Care Quality Authority Jan 2020

***The three steps in the chain of infection***

1. The germ has a source.
2. The germ spreads from the source.
3. The germ infects another person.

***You can break the chain of infection at any stage.***

*The way in which a germ spreads is known as its mode of transmission. The modes of transmission that are most likely to affect education and care services are;*

- *Coughing or sneezing (droplet transmission)*
- *Breathing contaminated air (airborne transmission)*
- *Direct contact (contact transmission)*
- *Animals*
- *Food*

*The way that children interact with each other and with adults in education and care services means that diseases can quickly spread in a variety of ways. Children, especially younger children, have close contact with other people through playing or cuddling; they often put objects in their mouths; and they may not always cover their coughs or sneezes. Because some germs can survive on surfaces, children may touch a contaminated surface, then put their hands in their mouth and become infected. If a child has an ill sibling at home, they could also be incubating the illness, and risk bringing germs from home into the education and care service.*

*Whether or not a person becomes ill in an education and care service depends on three things:*

- ***The type of germ***—some viruses, such as measles and norovirus, are very infectious. Others, such as hepatitis B, hepatitis C and human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) are very difficult to spread in education and care services.
- ***The opportunity for transmission***—germs have a greater chance of spreading if, for example, there are inadequate hand-washing facilities, or ill children are not excluded from the education and care service.
- ***The person's immunity***—people who have been immunised against a particular disease, or who have had that disease before, are unlikely to become ill if they come in contact with the disease. People who have not been immunised, or who do not have natural immunity to that disease, have a much higher risk of becoming infected and developing the disease.

***The most important ways to break the chain of infection and stop the spread of diseases are:***

- *effective hand hygiene*
- *exclusion of ill children, educators and other staff*
- *immunisation.*

***Other strategies to prevent infection include:***

- *cough and sneeze etiquette*
- *appropriate use of gloves*
- *effective environmental cleaning.”<sup>2</sup>*

*“Having a pet at your service gives children the opportunity to observe, interact and learn about animals. It can be a valuable part of a child's education and care experience, enriching their learning about nature, ecology and relationships. While there are many benefits to keeping animals in a service, there are also a range of issues that educators need to consider for the safety and well-being*

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<sup>2</sup> “5<sup>th</sup> Edition Staying Healthy Preventing Infectious Diseases in Early Childhood Education and Care Services”  
Australian Government National Health and Medical Research Council 2013

*of both the children and the animals.*

### **ASSESSING AND MANAGING RISKS**

*It is widely recognised that while there are many benefits to providing children with access to animals and keeping pets in education and care services, there are issues that approved providers and educators need to consider for the safety and wellbeing of both the children and the animals concerned. A risk / benefit analysis should be conducted when deciding the type of animal and the way the children engage with it.*

#### **Disease**

*Access to animals in an education and care service requires special consideration to prevent the spread of infectious diseases because contact with animals can spread disease. Health authorities identify that germs can be present on the skin, hair, feathers and scales, and in the faeces, urine and saliva of animals. While these germs may not cause disease in the animal, they may cause disease in humans.*

#### **Effective hand washing and cleaning**

*Children and adults should employ effective hand washing after touching or feeding animals, or cleaning their bedding, tanks, cages or enclosures. Cleaning of bedding, tanks, cages or enclosures can be part of the learning experience.*

#### **Appropriate supervision**

*Children should also be appropriately supervised when they have contact with animals to avoid potential injury or harm to the child or the animal.”<sup>3</sup>*

## **IMPLEMENTATION**

- Our service has a range of policies which provide specific information and procedures on health and hygiene topics. These should be referred to in conjunction with this policy.
- Educators must ensure that they are contributing to healthy and hygienic conditions at all times including implementing appropriate hygiene practices in relation to hand washing, toileting and cleaning of equipment.
- Educators should actively support children to develop health and hygiene practices through planned and spontaneous activities and discussions and by providing children with:
  - Opportunities to take increasing responsibility for self-help and basic health routines
  - Encouragement to participate in physical activities
  - Support to implement effective hygiene practices to control the spread of infectious diseases
  - Opportunities for sleep, rest and relaxation
- Services can also support children’s health and hygiene practices by educating and supporting families with information and guidance on a range of health topics and support agency contacts.

#### **Minimising the spread of germs**

- Educators should engage in meaningful discussions with children about hygiene and model hygienic practises.

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<sup>3</sup> “Keeping Pets and Animals in Education and Care Services” ACECQA National Quality Standard Information Sheet Feb 2018 (accessed on-line April 2020)  
[https://www.acecqa.gov.au/sites/default/files/2019-07/QA3\\_InfoSheetKeepingPetsAndAnimalsInEducationAndCareServices.pdf](https://www.acecqa.gov.au/sites/default/files/2019-07/QA3_InfoSheetKeepingPetsAndAnimalsInEducationAndCareServices.pdf)

- To control the spread of germs, children should be encouraged to either:
  - Cover their mouth and nose with a tissue when they sneeze or cough, then dispose of the used tissue in the rubbish bin. Wash their hands with soap and water, and dry thoroughly; or
  - Cough or sneeze into their inner elbow not into their hands. Then wash their hands with soap and water, and dry thoroughly.
- Educators should take the following simple steps when using play dough:
  - Hand washing before and after using play dough
  - Store the play dough in a sealed container between uses
  - Make a new batch of play dough each week but take out only enough for each day
  - Discard play dough at the end of the day

### **Gloves**

- Educators must wash hands before and after wearing gloves.
- New gloves should be used for each child.
- Disposable Latex gloves are preferred however where latex allergies are present disposable Nitrile gloves should be used.
- Gloves should be powder-free to prevent children and adults being exposed to the powder.
- Reusable utility gloves made of more heavy-duty rubber can be worn during general cleaning activities. These must be stored dry between uses and replaced when showing signs of wear.
- Educators must wear disposable gloves if there is a chance that they may come in contact with faeces, urine, saliva, vomit or blood.
- If educators do come in contact with body fluids but gloves are not available, it is important to thoroughly wash hands with soap and water as soon as possible.
- **How to remove disposable gloves;**
  - Pinch the outside of one glove near the wrist and peel the glove off so it ends up inside out.
  - Keep hold of the peeled-off glove in your gloved hand while you take off the other glove—put one or two fingers of your un-gloved hand inside the wrist of the other glove. Peel off the second glove from the inside, and over the first glove, so you end up with the two gloves inside out, one inside the other.
  - Put the gloves in a plastic-lined, hands-free lidded rubbish bin, and wash your hands.

### **Cleaning**

- Educators should use colour-coded cloths and mops in each area and keep them separate. A colour code chart should be displayed in all locations where cleaning occurs.
- Educators must ensure cleaning products including mop heads, vacuum cleaners and cloths are well maintained, cleaned and stored appropriately between uses.
- Cleaning can be achieved by using ordinary detergents or detergent-based products to help to loosen the germs so that they can be washed away. Sanitising is an additional step for reducing micro-organisms and can be achieved with heat or chemical.
- Detergent and water should be made up fresh daily in a clean, dry container which should be labelled with the time it was made, the date and the type of detergent. They should not be topped up as this may dilute the detergent mix.
- Spray Bottles are not recommended as the fine spray is not sufficient to dislodge germs.
- Staying Healthy in Childcare recommend the following method for cleaning surfaces;
  - use a container of fresh detergent and water,
  - immerse a cloth
  - wring it out
  - then clean the area with a vigorous rubbing action

- o Rinse and dry area
- Particular attention should be paid to cleaning toileting facilities. Disposable paper towel is the most hygienic cloth to use for these facilities.
- Nominated Supervisors and educators should consult when devising cleaning schedules to suit their individual service's needs. Staying Healthy Edition 5 provides guidance to assist educators.

	Wash daily plus when visibly soiled	Wash weekly plus when visibly soiled
Bathrooms – wash tap handles, toilet seats, toilet handles and door knobs. Check the bathroom during the day and clean if visibly dirty	√	
Toys and objects put in mouth	√	
Surfaces the children have frequent contact with, for example, bench tops, taps, cots and tables	√	
Mattress, beds, cots, covers and linen, if each child does not use the same mattress cover each day	√	
Door Knobs	√	
Floors	√	
Low shelves		√
Other surfaces often touched by children		√

Please note 'Other surfaces often touched by children' includes non-mouthed toys and classroom furniture, shelving and equipment etc.

- Disinfectants are only necessary if a surface is known to be contaminated with potentially infectious material. Detergent is required to clean the surface first. It is recommended to use detergent to clean first, then (if required) disinfect.
- **Staying Healthy Edition 5 provide the following to be considered when deciding on the need to use disinfectant;**
  - o Has the surface been contaminated with blood or body substances from someone with a known or suspected infectious disease?
    - If NO – use detergent and water
    - If YES - use detergent and water followed by either:
      - disinfectant (for spot blood spills and other body substances)
      - bleach (for small and large blood spills)

### Learning resources and materials cleaning procedures

Toys should be washed at least weekly with children 3-5 years of age.

- First wash with detergent and water (warm water if possible), if visibly dirty use a brush to dislodge dirt and germs, if not visibly dirty vigorous rub with a clean cloth.
- Rinse materials thoroughly with fresh clean water.
- If it is necessary to completely soak in water or materials become saturated, allow to dry in direct sunlight.
- A dishwasher may also be used but not at the same time as dishes.
- Books or materials that are made of wood should be inspected for visible dirt. They can be cleaned by wiping with a moist cloth with detergent on it and allowing to dry. Keep damp or wet books out of use until they are dry.
- Oil-preserved toys and items such as Jouncing Boards should be re-oiled after they have been sanded at least annually.
- Educators should have a box/tub for placing materials to be washed. Any materials contaminated by a child sneezing or placing in the mouth should be placed in the box.

### **Carpets, mats and curtains**

- Carpets and mats should be vacuumed daily and steam cleaned at least every 6 months.
- Spot clean carpets, mats and curtains if they are visibly dirty in a small area.

### **Other Items including furniture**

- Children's tables should be cleaned after each use and before being used for meal times. Tables should be cleaned with a detergent and rubbed vigorously with a clean cloth.
- Children's chairs and classroom furniture should be cleaned weekly or when visibly soiled. Use a detergent and rub vigorously with a clean cloth. If required use a brush to dislodge dirt and germs.
- Outdoor yards must be checked for cleanliness prior to use EACH DAY as per safety checklist.

### **Dealing with spills of bodily fluids**

- Educators should avoid direct contact with blood or other fluids by using gloves at all times when bodily fluids are present or may be present.
- The following strategies must be employed by educators to prevention spills of body fluids;
  - o regularly toileting children
  - o excluding children with vomiting or diarrhoea
- Cover any cuts and abrasions on your hands with a waterproof dressing.
- Where blood does come into contact with another child or adult the educator should wash the area of contact thoroughly with soap and warm water and ensure that families are advised using the Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Form
- Having a spill kit readily accessible will assist in the prompt clean up. A spill kit may include;
  - o Disposable gloves
  - o Paper towel
  - o Disposable cloths
  - o Detergent
  - o Disposable scraper and pan to scoop
  - o Bleach
- Children must be effectively supervised at all times without restricting unnecessarily the development of their own risk management skills and understanding. If a child is bleeding, you need to:
  - o Respond to the child immediately.
  - o Allow the first-aid officer to dress the wound (if appropriate)
  - o Check that no-one else has come in contact with the blood
  - o Check the area the child was in (classroom or outdoor playground) for any evidence of bodily fluids that need to be cleaned.
  - o Clean up the blood.
- **Responding to the child**
  - o Avoid contact with the blood.
  - o Comfort the child and move them to safety, away from other children.
  - o Put on gloves, if available – If gloves are not available, take the first opportunity to get someone wearing gloves to take over from you. Then **wash your hands**.
  - o Apply first aid for the type of injury and send for the first-aid officer (if appropriate).

- When cleaning or treating a child's face that has blood on it, do not put yourself at eye level with the child—their blood could enter your eyes or mouth if the child is crying or coughing.
- Educators should take the following steps when cleaning up a spill of bodily fluids;
  - Wear gloves
  - Use disposable paper towel or cloths that must be disposed of to soak up the majority of the spill, sand could be used to absorb for a larger spill.
  - Place the soiled paper towel or cloth into a plastic bag and seal prior to placing in the rubbish bin and dispose of gloves at this time.
  - Put on new gloves and clean the area with a detergent based cleaner and dry.
  - Remove and discard gloves and wash hands thoroughly with soap and warm water.
  - For larger spills of blood, wipe the area with diluted bleach and allow to dry.

### **Preparing bleach solution**

Always prepare bleach solutions according to the manufacturer's instructions. Because bleach loses strength over time, always make up new dilutions of bleach when required. Any diluted bleach that is not used within 24 hours of preparation should be discarded.

### **Safe use of bleach**

Always:

- Read and follow the safety and handling instructions on the label.
- Dilute bleach according to directions.
- Wear gloves when handling and preparing bleach.
- Check the use-by date before using bleach, because it can lose effectiveness during storage.
- Make up a new batch of bleach each time you disinfect—it loses its effectiveness quickly once it has been diluted.

Never:

- Use bleach in a spray bottle.
- Use hot water to dilute bleach.
- Mix bleach with any other chemicals.
- Use bleach on metals other than stainless steel—bleach is corrosive.

### **Nasal Discharge;**

- **Children in the early learning classrooms are encouraged by Educators at all times to wipe their own noses.**
- Educators must wash their hands every time they wipe a child's nose using either soap and water or an alcohol-based hand rub as per the Handwashing Policy.
- While Staying Healthy Edition 5 says it is not necessary to wear gloves when wiping a child's nose educators should assess each situation and use gloves where appropriate.
- When gloves are used educators must wash their hands or use an alcohol-based hand rub afterwards.
- Dirty tissues must be disposed of immediately.

### **Sandpits**

- Sandpits must be well maintained and kept clean.
- Educators must ensure sandpits are closely covered at the end of each day to prevent contamination from animal faeces or inappropriately discarded sharp or dangerous objects.
- Educators must rake sandpits before each use to screen for foreign objects.

- Where sand is contaminated by animal or human faeces, blood or other body fluids it should be removed using a shovel and disposed of in a plastic bag. The remaining sand should be raked over at intervals during the day and left exposed to the sun.
- Where extensive contamination has occurred such as through a large spill of body fluids all sand must be replaced.
- Adults and children are encouraged to wash their hands with soap and water or use an alcohol-based hand rub before and after playing in the sandpit where practicable.
- It is recommended that sandpits are exposed to the sun daily. As this is not possible with the location of the sandpit in the MIC Playscape, weekly disinfection of the sandpit needs to occur. On Friday afternoons when the Playscape playground closes, educators will complete the playground checklist that includes disinfection of the sandpit.

**Staying Healthy in Child Care 5<sup>th</sup> Edition provides further information on recommended health and hygiene practices and should be consulted regularly.**

## **COMMUNICATION AND CONSULTATION**

- Educators and families will have access to this policy at all times.
- Educators and families will be provided with opportunities to be involved in the review of this policy.
- Educators will be provided with this policy upon employment and will be provided with information on current practised throughout the year.
- Families will have access to current information from recognised health authorities at the service and Nominated Supervisors will include health and hygiene topics in newsletters and displays.

## **RELATED FORMS AND DOCUMENTS**

- Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Form
- Cleaning schedules and checklists designed by the service
- Other related Health and Hygiene Policies
- *"5<sup>th</sup> Edition Staying Healthy Preventing Infectious Diseases in Early Childhood Education and Care Services"*

## **SCOPE AND ENFORCEMENT**

The Failure of any person to comply with this policy in its entirety may lead to;

- Performance management of an employee which may lead to termination

## **RECOGNISED AUTHORITIES AND DOCUMENTS WHICH GUIDE POLICY**

- *"5<sup>th</sup> Edition Staying Healthy Preventing Infectious Diseases in Early Childhood Education and Care Services"* Australian Government National Health and Medical Research Council 2013
- *"Cleaning Wooden Toys – Caring for Wooden Toys: Disinfecting and Sanitizing"* Karen Weppner, Family Tree Toys 2000
- *"Keeping Pets and Animals in Education and Care Services"* ACECQA National Quality Standard Information Sheet Feb 2018 (accessed on-line April 2020)  
[https://www.acecqa.gov.au/sites/default/files/2019-07/QA3\\_InfoSheetKeepingPetsAndAnimalsInEducationAndCareServices.pdf](https://www.acecqa.gov.au/sites/default/files/2019-07/QA3_InfoSheetKeepingPetsAndAnimalsInEducationAndCareServices.pdf)
- *"Guide to the National Quality Framework"* Australian Children's Education & Care Quality Authority Jan 2020



**DATE CREATED:** November 2011

**REVIEW DETAILS:**

Review Date	Details of Changes
January 2012	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sandpits must be covered when not in use</li> <li>• Additional information around animals at the service as per the request from Nominated Supervisor and educators</li> </ul>
January 2013	No changes made, sources updated where applicable. Awaiting release of <i>Staying Healthy in Childcare</i> edition 5
March 2013	This policy has been updated with current information from <i>"5<sup>th</sup> Edition Staying Healthy Preventing Infectious Diseases in Early Childhood Education and Care Services"</i> Australian Government National Health and Medical Research Council 2012. As there were numerous changes it is recommended that this policy is reissued to educators and centre procedures are reviewed to ensure compliance.
January 2014	No changes made, sources updated where applicable
May 2015	No changes made, sources updated where applicable
April 2016	No changes made, sources updated where applicable
May 2017	Sources updated. Additional information on animals in rationale and implementation.
April 2018	<p>Sources updated. Additional information on animals in rationale and implementation including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prior to the introduction of any animals to the service, the Nominated Supervisor should consider if a specific policy and set of procedures are required for each type of animal to ensure health, safety, hygiene and to enhance learning outcomes.</li> <li>• Policies and procedures should be developed in collaboration with all stakeholders and should be developed to realistically support the co-existence of pets and children.</li> </ul> <p>Additional information in Implementation on learning outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Our service has a range of policies which provide specific information and procedures on health and hygiene topics. These should be referred to in conjunction with this policy.</li> <li>• Educators should actively support children to develop health and hygiene practices through planned and spontaneous activities and discussions and by providing children with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Opportunities to take increasing responsibility for self-help and basic health routines</li> <li>o Encouragement to participate in physical activities</li> <li>o Support to implement effective hygiene practices to control the spread of infectious diseases</li> <li>o Opportunities for sleep, rest and relaxation</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Services can also support children's health and hygiene practices by educating and supporting families with information and guidance on a range of health topics and agencies contacts.</li> </ul>
March 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Updated Sources</li> </ul>
April 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Updated sources and weblinks</li> </ul>