

INFECTIOUS DISEASES POLICY – inc COVID-19

November 2021

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 SERVICES 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

Purpose

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. While it is not possible to prevent the spread of all infections and diseases, minimising the risk is enhanced through:

- effective hygiene practices; hand washing, sanitising, covering coughs, wiping noses
- exclusion of ill children, educators and other staff for a [minimum of 48hours and until ALL symptoms have subsided.](#)
- Immunisations up to date (flu shot recommended)
- wearing masks when greeting families

Our Service has a duty of care to ensure that children families, educators, and visitors of the Service are provided with a high level of protection during the hours of the Service's operation.

In order to prevent the spread of infectious diseases through interpersonal contact, our service will adhere to the exclusion period table, published by the Department of Health.

Responsibilities of the Approved Provider

- Ensure the service operates in line with the Children (Education and Care Services) National Law (NSW) 2010 and Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011.
- Ensure children are protected from harm by ensuring relevant policies and procedures are followed regarding health and safety within the Service.
- Collect, maintain, and appropriately store the required enrolment documents and enrolment information, including health and immunisation records of children in the Service.
- Ensuring that where there is an occurrence of an infectious disease at the service, reasonable steps are taken to prevent the spread of that infectious disease (**National Regulation 88(1)**).

- Ensuring that where there is an occurrence of an infectious disease at the service, a parent/guardian or authorised emergency contact of each child at the service is notified of the occurrence as soon as is practicable.
- As soon as practicable, a family member or authorised emergency contact of each child being cared for must be notified of the occurrence (**National Regulation 88(2)**).
- Ensuring that information from the Department of Health about the recommended adhered to in the event of an outbreak of an infectious disease.
- Ensuring that a child with a medical exemption or on a catch up schedule who is not immunised against a vaccine-preventable disease does not attend the service when an infectious disease is diagnosed, and does not return until there are no more occurrences of that disease at the service and the recommended minimum exclusion period has ceased.
- Notifying the Regulatory Authority and parent/guardian within 24 hours of a serious incident including when a child becomes ill at the service or medical attention is sought while the child is attending the service (**National Regulation 86**).
- Ensuring that appropriate and current information and resources are provided to staff and parents/guardians regarding the identification and management of infectious diseases, blood-borne viruses and infestations.
- Ensure the medical conditions policy is available to families.
- Keeping informed about current legislation, information, research and best practice.
- Ensuring that any changes to the exclusion table or immunisation schedule are communicated to families and staff immediately.

Responsibilities of the Nominated Supervisor

- CONTACT THE PUBLIC HEALTH UNIT ON 1300 066 055 immediately if we are notified that a child, family member or staff member who attended our service has been diagnosed with COVID-19.
- Any persons tested for COVID-19 (including staff and children) are immediately EXCLUDED from the centre until a negative result has been concluded and symptoms subside. Any immediate family/persons living in the same household tested for COVID-19 OR in isolation are EXCLUDED for this period too. Children and/or staff cannot return to the centre without confirmation of a negative result.
- If any staff member, child or household contact are on stay at home orders as directed by NSW Health, you MUST stay home for the mandatory 14 day order or as directed by NSW Health.
- Educators and children who have been deemed CLOSE contacts can not return to the service until they have completed their isolation period and Gidgilys requires a NEGATIVE PCR COVID-19 test for them to return to the centre.
- Contacting the parents/guardians of a child suspected of suffering from an infectious or vaccine- preventable disease, or of a child not immunised against a vaccine-preventable disease that has been detected at the service, and requesting the child be collected as soon as possible.
- Notifying a parent/guardian or authorised emergency contact person when a symptom of an excludable infectious illness or disease has been observed.
- Ensuring that a minimum of one staff with current approved first aid qualifications is in attendance and immediately available at all times the service is in operation (**National Regulation 136**).
- Establishing good hygiene and infection control procedures, and ensuring that they are adhered to by everyone at the service.

- Ensuring the exclusion requirements for infectious diseases are adhered to as per the recommended minimum exclusion periods, notifying the Approved Provider and parents/guardians of any outbreak of infectious disease at the service, and displaying this information in a prominent position.
- Advising parents/guardians on enrolment that the recommended minimum exclusion periods will be observed in regard to the outbreak of any infectious diseases or infestations.
- Requesting that parents/guardians notify the service if their child has, or is suspected of having, an infectious disease or infestation.
- Providing information and resources to families to assist in the identification and management of infectious diseases and infestations.
- Maintaining confidentiality at all times.
- Provide relevant sourced materials to families.
- Ensuring that an “Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness” record is completed as soon as practicable or no later than 24 hours of the illness occurring (**National Regulation 86**).
- A hygienic environment is maintained.
- Children do not attend the Service if they are unwell. If a child has been sick, they must be well for 24hrs before returning to the Service.
- Cloths are colour coded so that a separate cloth is used for floors, bathroom, art and craft, and meal surfaces.
- Toys and equipment will be washed with detergent and air-dried in sunlight.
- Floor surfaces will be cleaned daily.
- 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 a red cloth.
- Furnishings, fabric tablecloths and pillowcases will be laundered regularly.

Responsibilities of the Educators

- Social distancing is enforced within the entry foyer and where practical within the class environment/outdoors.
- Ensure families who enter the premises sign in with the QR codes and are wearing a mask.
- 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.
- Implement appropriate health and safety procedures, when tending to ill children.
- Ensure that families are aware of the need to collect their children if unwell as soon as practicable to ensure the child’s comfort.
- Maintain their own immunisation status and advise the Approved Provider/Nominated Supervisor of any updates to their immunisation status.
- Provide varied opportunities for children to engage in hygiene practices, including routine opportunities, and intentional practice.
- Observing signs and symptoms of children who may appear unwell and informing the Nominated Supervisor.
- Providing access to information and resources for parents/guardians to assist in the identification and management of infectious diseases and infestations.
- Monitoring any symptoms in children that may indicate the presence of an infectious disease.
- Maintaining confidentiality at all times.

Responsibilities of the Families

- Social distancing is enforced within the entry foyer. No family member is to enter the classrooms.
- All families entering the premises are required to wear a face mask as directed by NSW Health and sign in using the QR code.
- Providing Immunisation documentation upon enrolment and as the child receives subsequent immunisations.
- Keep their children at home if they are unwell or have an excludable infectious disease.
- Where a child has an acceptable exemption, keep the children at home when an infectious disease has been confirmed at the service and the child is not fully immunised against that infectious disease, until there are no more occurrences of that disease and the exclusion period has ceased.
- Inform the service if their child has an infectious disease or has been in contact with a person who has an infectious disease.
- A doctor's clearance may be requested by educators before your child returns to the service if they have been unwell. Gidgilys educators reserve the right to exclude your child with a clearance if the child continues to display signs of being unwell and cannot practice good hygiene. e.g. runny nose, coughing, sneezing, lethargic.
- Any persons tested for COVID-19 (including staff and children) are immediately EXCLUDED from the centre until a negative result has been concluded and symptoms subside. Any immediate family/persons living in the same household tested for COVID-19 OR in isolation are EXCLUDED for this period too. Children and/or staff cannot return to the centre without confirmation of a negative result.
- Any child who has been excluded from the centre and has been considered a close contact will require a NEGATIVE PCR COVID-19 test to return to care after 14 days isolation.

Immunisation Requirements

COVID-19 Recommendations – All staff and children attending the centre are advised to have the influenza vaccination

COVID-19 Vaccination is mandatory for Early Childhood Educators.

[https://www.legislation.nsw.gov.au/file/Public%20Health%20\(COVID-19%20Vaccination%20of%20Education%20and%20Care%20Workers\)%20Order%202021_211020_5.23pm.pdf](https://www.legislation.nsw.gov.au/file/Public%20Health%20(COVID-19%20Vaccination%20of%20Education%20and%20Care%20Workers)%20Order%202021_211020_5.23pm.pdf)

From the 1st of January 2018 all children attending a centre-based service must be up to date with their vaccinations and provide an up to date AIR Immunisation History Statement provided through Medicare on the MyGov account to the service upon enrolment or when immunisations have been updated. Should a child not be up to date then the family will not receive any benefit from the government. Enrolling children who are not immunised could result in a financial penalty to the Approved Provider.

Children who cannot be fully vaccinated due to a medical condition or who are on a recognised catch-up schedule will still be able to be enrolled upon presentation of the appropriate form signed by a medical practitioner.

To find out more information visit NSW Health website in the link below where they offer a toolkit with relevant information regarding the requirements for immunisation.

References and information for families and educators

<https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/Infectious/factsheets/Pages/advice-for-contacts.aspx>

<https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/Infectious/factsheets/Pages/covid-19-casual-contact.aspx>

<https://education.nsw.gov.au/early-childhood-education/coronavirus/advice-for-services-and-providers>

Definitions, Terms & Abbreviations

Term	Meaning
Infectious	Likely to spread or influence others in a rapid manner
Infestation	Unusually large number of insects or animals typically to cause disease (Lice)
Exclusion	Deny access to a place or group
Exemption	The action of freeing or state of being free from an obligation or liability imposed on others

Related Statutory Obligations & Considerations

Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA)

<http://www.acecqa.gov.au/>

Australasian Society of Clinical Immunology and Allergy e-Training

<https://etraining.allergy.org.au/login/index.php>

Children (Education and Care Services) National Law (NSW) No 104a

<https://www.legislation.nsw.gov.au/#/view/act/2010/104a/full>

Department of Education

<http://www.dec.nsw.gov.au/what-we-offer/regulation-and-accreditation/early-childhood-education-care>

Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF)

http://files.acecqa.gov.au/files/National-Quality-Framework-Resources-Kit/belonging_being_and_becoming_the_early_years_learning_framework_for_australia.pdf

Education and Care Services National Regulation

<http://www.legislation.nsw.gov.au/#/view/regulation/2011/653>

Department of Health

<http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/Infectious/Pages/default.aspx>,

<http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/Infectious/controlguideline/Pages/default.aspx>

Department of Health Immunisation Toolkit

<http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/immunisation/Publications/immunisation-enrolment-toolkit.pdf>

National Quality Framework (NQF)

<http://acecqa.gov.au/national-quality-framework/>

National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC)

https://www.nhmrc.gov.au/_files_nhmrc/publications/attachments/ch55e_exclusion_period_poster_130701.pdf

National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC)

<https://www.nhmrc.gov.au/guidelines-publications/ch55>

Occupational Health and Safety Act 2000

<http://www.legislation.nsw.gov.au/#/view/act/2000/40/whole>

Related Telephone Numbers

- Early Childhood Directorate - 1800 619 113
- Department of Health (ACT) - 1800 020 103
- Emergency Services - 000

Amendment History

Date	Amendment	Notes of Amendment
12 th Nov 2018	Policy Created	
9 th January 2019	Reviewed and amended	- Clearance required added
20 th February 2020	Reviewed and amended	- Additional Points added - Grammar errors fixed - Formatting - NQS & Regulations Added
16 th March 2020	Reviewed by licensee's and director	-
14 th April 2020	COVID-19 information added	-COVID-19 information from NSW Government Health added.
5 th July 2021	Updated COVID-19 protocols	COVID-19 masks enforced and new QR protocols
14 th August 2021	Reviewed and amended	Updated current stay at home orders and essential work guidelines
25 th November 2021	Reviewed and updated	- COVID-19 positive case - close and casual contacts of COVID-19 at the centre - Mandatory PCR Test requirements for Gidgilys

This policy will be updated to ensure compliance with all relevant legal requirements every year. Appropriate consultation of all stakeholders (including staff and families) will be conducted on a timely basis. In accordance with Regulation 172 of the *Education and Care Services National Regulation*, families of children enrolled will be notified at least 14 days and their input considered prior to any amendment of policies and procedures that have any impact on their children or family.

Date:	25 th November 2021
Version:	008
Last Amended By:	Kylie Showman & Catherine Fairfield-Smith
Next Review:	January 2022
Position:	Director & Nominated Supervisor / Approved Provider