

Sick Children Policy



Policy Relevant to:	Educators, Team Members, and Families
Policy linked to	Sick Children Procedure
Last Reviewed:	October 2024
Next Review:	October 2026
ECS National Law:	
ECS National Regulation:	r77, r85-88, r90, r92, r93, r168, r175 (2)(c)
NQS	2.1, 2.1.1, 2.1.2

Rationale

In an Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) setting, children come into contact with other children and adults, increasing their exposure to others who may be sick or carrying an infectious illness. The National Quality Standard requires ECEC services to minimise the spread of infectious disease and maintain a healthy environment for all children, staff and families.

We acknowledge that keeping children at home or away from childcare when they are sick can create additional pressures for parents. However, we have an obligation to minimise the transmission of infectious diseases by adhering to regulations and policies protecting the health of all children, staff, families and visitors.

Purpose

Adventure Patch aims to maintain the health and wellbeing of all children, staff and families, ensuring a healthy environment and minimising cross-contamination and the spread of infectious disease by implementing high standards of personal hygiene within our services.

Implementation

The National Health and Medical Research Council has developed a guideline for the ECEC sector to help limit the spread of illness and infectious disease (*Staying Healthy: Preventing Infectious Diseases in Early Childhood Education and Care Services (Fifth Edition)*). Adventure Patch has adopted the recommendations and guidance contained in this as part of our practice. We aim to provide families with up-to-date information regarding specific illnesses and ways to minimise the spread of infection within our services and at home.

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.



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

- Dealing with Infectious Diseases Policy
- Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Policy
- Medical Conditions Policy and
- Handwashing Policy

[Staying healthy: Preventing infectious diseases in early childhood education and care services – 6th Edition | ACECQA](#)) explains how infections are spread as 'The Chain of Infection'.

There are three steps in the chain:

- The germ has a source
- The germ spreads from the source
- The germ infects another person

The chain of infection can be broken at any stage to help prevent and control the spread of diseases.

The germ has a source

Germs can be picked up directly from an infected person or from the environment. It is important to understand that an infected person may not show any signs or symptoms of illness.

The germ spreads from the source

Germs can spread in several ways, including through the air by droplets, through contact with faeces and then contact with mouths, through direct contact with skin, and through contact with other body secretions (such as urine, saliva, discharges or blood).

Some germs can spread directly from person to person, others can spread from the infected person to the environment. Many germs can survive on hands and on objects such as toys, door handles and bench tops. The length of time a germ can survive on a surface (including the skin) depends on the germ itself, the type of surface it has contaminated and how often the surface is cleaned. Washing hands and surfaces regularly with detergent and water is a very effective way of removing germs and preventing them spreading through the environment.

(Source: *Staying healthy: Preventing infectious diseases in early childhood education and care services*, 5th Edition, 2013 p: 7)

The germ infects another person

When the germ has reached the next person, it may enter the body through the mouth, respiratory tract, eyes, genitals, or broken or abraded skin. Whether a person becomes ill after the germ has entered the body depends on both the germ and the person's immunity.

Illness can be prevented at this stage by stopping the germ from entering the body (for example, by making sure that all toys that children put in their mouths are clean, by washing children's hands, by covering wounds), and by prior immunisation against the germ.

Source: *Staying healthy: Preventing infectious diseases in early childhood education and care services*, 5th Edition, 2013 p: 7)

Minimising the Spread of Infections and Diseases

We understand that it can be difficult for families to know when their child is sick. Families may experience problems taking time off work or study to care for their child at home. Obtaining leave from work or study can contribute to negative attitudes in the workplace which can cause stress on families. Families may also experience guilt when they send their child to care who is not well.

However, it is imperative that families maintain a focus not only on the well-being of their own child but also upon the well-being of other children and the early childhood professionals at Adventure Patch services. To protect the health of children and staff within our services, it is important that children and staff who are ill are kept away from the service for the recommended period.

At times, an outbreak of a new or 'novel' virus or infection, may require exclusion from a service that is not specified in general exclusion periods for common infectious illnesses. Information, education and recommendations regarding any 'novel' virus will be provided by the Australian Government Department of Health and/or local public health unit.

The need for exclusion and the length of time a person is excluded 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.

Our educators and staff are not medical practitioners and are not able to diagnose whether or not a child has an infectious disease. However, if an infectious disease is suspected, we may ask the family to collect their child from care as soon as possible or not bring the child to care.

Management and educators may request families seek medical advice and provide a medical certificate stating that the child is no longer infectious prior to returning to care.

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 Adventure Patch Management.

Related Policies

Administration of First Aid Policy Administration of Medication Policy Dealing with Infectious Diseases Policy Handwashing Policy	Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Policy Medical Conditions Policy Enrolment Policy
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Source


Australian Children's Education & Care Quality Authority. (2014).
 Australian Government Department of Education *Belonging, Being and Becoming: The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia*. (2009).
 Australian Government- Department of Health <https://www.health.gov.au/>
 Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010. (Amended 2018).
[Education and Care Services National Regulations](#). (2011).
 Guide to the National Quality Standard. (2020)

National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC): <https://www.nhmrc.gov.au/>
 National Health and Medical Research Council. (2012) (updated June 2013). *Staying healthy: Preventing infectious diseases in early childhood education and care services.*
 NSW Public Health Unit: <https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/Infectious/pages/phus.aspx>
 Public Health Act 2010
 Raising Children Network: <https://raisingchildren.net.au/guides/a-z-health-reference/fever>
 Revised National Quality Standard. (2018).
 The Royal Childrens Hospital. (2021). [Fever in children by Royal Childrens Hospital](#)
 Safe Work Australia
 Victoria Department of Education and Training (2020).
<https://www.coronavirus.vic.gov.au/early-childhood-education-and-care>

Review History

Policy Reviewed By:	Lindy Davis	Manager LDC	October 2024
POLICY REVIEWED	October 2024	NEXT REVIEW DATE	October 2026
Modifications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minor updates • Hyperlinks checked 		
POLICY REVIEWED	PREVIOUS MODIFICATIONS		NEXT REVIEW DATE
October 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New Policy, replacing Unwell Child Protocol 		October 2024

Signed

CEO:	
Manager:	