



Management of Infectious Disease Policy

Policy Statement:

Pennant Hills Before and After School Care Service is committed to protecting children's health while upholding their rights, dignity and emotional wellbeing during periods of illness, exclusion or infectious disease management. Children are supported with sensitivity and reassurance, and educators use non-stigmatising, respectful language always, so no child feels singled out or blamed for illness. The service maintains strict privacy when managing health information, ensuring that personal details are shared only on a need-to-know basis and handled in accordance with regulatory requirements. All decisions and practices prioritise children's comfort, safety and sense of belonging.

Definitions:

Infectious Disease - An illness caused by bacteria, viruses, fungi or parasites that can be transmitted from one person to another through direct contact, airborne droplets, bodily fluids or contaminated surfaces.

Notifiable Disease - A condition that must be reported to NSW Health under the Public Health Act. These diseases require immediate action, guidance and sometimes exclusion or outbreak management.

Exclusion Period - The minimum time a child or staff member must remain away from the service to prevent transmission of infectious illness, based on NSW Health and NHMRC guidelines.

Bodily Fluids - Substances such as blood, vomit, urine, faeces, saliva and nasal discharge that may contain infectious agents and require universal precautions when handled.

Universal Precautions - Standard infection-control practices applied at all times, assuming all individuals may be potentially infectious.

Considerations:

- National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) - *Staying Healthy: Preventing infectious diseases in early childhood education and care services*
- NSW Health - Communicable Diseases Guidelines
- NSW Health - Immunisation Schedules and Outbreak Management Advice

- Education and Care Services National Law (2010)
 - Section 3(2)(a) – Rights and best interests of the child
 - Section 165 – Offence to inadequately supervise children
 - Section 167 – Offence relating to protection of children from harm and hazards
- Education and Care Services National Regulations (2011)
 - Regulations 85 - 90 – Incident, injury, trauma and illness policies and procedures, notifications, record-keeping and medical conditions
- National Quality Standard
 - 2.1.1 – Wellbeing and comfort: Each child’s health and physical wellbeing is supported
 - 2.1.2 – Health practices and procedures: Effective illness management and hygiene practices
 - 2.2.1 – Supervision: Children are supervised effectively
 - 2.2.2 – Incident and emergency management: Plans to effectively manage incidents and emergencies
 - 3.1.1 – Fit for purpose: Environments that support health, hygiene and safety
 - 6.1.1 – Engagement with families: Families receive relevant information about their child’s health and wellbeing
 - 7.1.2 – Management systems: Records, policies and procedures support effective governance

Policy:

Illness & Infectious Diseases:

General illness is managed through the Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Policy, while infectious diseases require a different response because they are transmissible, may require exclusion and may be notifiable to NSW Health. Educators monitor children closely for early symptoms and escalate concerns promptly. The Nominated Supervisor determines whether the situation requires general illness management or infectious disease procedures and guides educators and families through the appropriate pathway.

Criteria for Illness:

Illness is identified through observable symptoms and the likely source of the condition. The Nominated Supervisor determines whether exclusion is required, and families are expected to collect their child without delay when exclusion applies. During periods of increased risk – such as gastroenteritis outbreaks, influenza season, respiratory clusters or measles exposure – the Nominated Supervisor may implement heightened measures, and educators follow these directions to minimise transmission.

Indicators of infectious illness include:

- Fever
- Persistent cough, sneezing or difficulty breathing
- Lethargy or unusual tiredness
- Vomiting or diarrhoea
- Rashes, spots or skin lesions
- Sore throat, ear pain or general discomfort
- Reduced appetite or refusal to eat
- Abdominal pain or repeated complaints of feeling unwell

Types of infectious illness may include:

- Viral infections (including COVID-19-like respiratory illnesses)
- Bacterial infections
- Food-borne pathogens
- Blood-borne diseases

Exclusion Periods & Return to Care:

Exclusion periods and return-to-care requirements follow NSW Health and NHMRC guidelines. Educators provide factual information without offering diagnosis, and the Nominated Supervisor ensures exclusion decisions are consistent with current health advice. Families and staff must comply with exclusion requirements. Return to care is based on symptom-free periods outlined in NHMRC guidelines, and the Nominated Supervisor confirms when clearance requirements have been met.

Illness Procedures & Documentation:

Illness procedures and documentation follow the Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Policy. Educators record symptoms, actions taken and communication with families. Exposure to bodily fluids is reported to the Director. All records are stored confidentially, and the Nominated Supervisor reviews documentation to ensure accuracy and compliance.

Notifiable Diseases:

Notifiable diseases require immediate action. Conditions such as measles, whooping cough and meningococcal disease must be reported to NSW Health. The Nominated Supervisor completes this reporting, educators escalate concerns promptly and families notify the service if their child receives a diagnosis. Families are informed of confirmed cases while confidentiality is maintained, and no individual is discriminated against based on health status.

Immunisation:

Family Responsibilities:

Families must provide their child's immunisation status on enrolment and whenever updates occur. Valid exemption documentation is required for medical contraindications. The Nominated Supervisor maintains current immunisation records and ensures compliance with health requirements. Families are notified when a reportable disease is identified in the service.

Exclusion of Non-Immunised Children:

During an outbreak, the Nominated Supervisor implements exclusion requirements based on NSW Health advice. Children who are not immunised or significantly behind schedule may be excluded for the duration of the outbreak. Families must comply with exclusion directions.

Staff Immunisation:

Staff are encouraged to maintain NSW Health-recommended immunisations to support a safe environment. The service may store staff immunisation records for health planning. Management promotes immunisation, and staff provide updates to keep records current.

Immunisation expectations of staff will be reviewed in line with NSW Health advice and role requirements as required.

Recommended immunisations include:

- Measles-mumps-rubella (for non-immune staff)
- Pertussis (as part of the diphtheria and tetanus combination vaccine)
- Annual influenza vaccination
- Varicella (for non-immune staff)
- Hepatitis A

Blood-Borne Illnesses (HIV/AIDS, Hepatitis):

Non-Discrimination & Confidentiality:

The service maintains strict confidentiality and non-discrimination. No child, family member or staff member is treated differently based on health status. Information relating to HIV, hepatitis or other blood-borne conditions is confidential, and breaches are disciplinary matters. Staff do not discuss individual health information around children or unauthorised adults. The Nominated Supervisor ensures secure storage and controlled access to records.

Universal Precautions:

Universal precautions apply at all times, as all individuals are considered potentially infectious. Educators follow consistent hygiene practices, and management ensures adequate supplies are available.

Universal precautions include:

- Wearing gloves for all contact with blood or bodily fluids
- Covering staff cuts or open wounds and using gloves
- Washing hands after glove removal
- Cleaning spills immediately with disinfectant
- Handling soiled clothing with gloves and sealing it for families
- Using cold or tepid water when cleaning blood

Exposure to Blood/Bodily Fluids Procedure:

Exposure procedures are followed immediately to reduce infection risk. Educators wash the affected area with soap and water, encourage gentle bleeding if the skin is broken and rinse eyes or mouth with clean water if exposed. CPR masks or shields are used during resuscitation, and the first aid kit must contain a barrier device. All exposure incidents are reported to the Director, and the Nominated Supervisor coordinates follow-up and documentation.

Hygiene & Outbreak Management:

Preventative Practices:

Preventative practices minimise illness transmission and maintain a hygienic environment. Educators model and supervise these routines, and management ensures adequate supplies.

Regular hygiene procedures include:

- Daily cleaning and disinfecting of toilets, basins and kitchen areas
- Daily cleaning of floors and frequently touched surfaces
- Disinfecting all surfaces at the end of each session
- Regular washing and disinfecting of toys and equipment (dress-ups, smocks, hats, tea towels, soft toys)
- Daily rubbish disposal and bin disinfection
- Consistent handwashing routines for staff and children
- Appropriate use of PPE

Outbreak Response, Communication & Authorisation:

The service responds promptly when a reportable disease or outbreak is identified. Families are informed as soon as possible, with confidentiality maintained. Notifications are approved and sent

by the Nominated Supervisor, and educators provide factual updates without disclosing individual health information.

When multiple cases occur, the service follows a structured outbreak response. This includes liaising with NSW Health, implementing enhanced hygiene and environmental controls, monitoring symptoms and excluding non-immunised children during vaccine-preventable outbreaks. The Nominated Supervisor leads the response, educators implement required measures and families follow instructions.

Outbreak response steps include:

- Liaising with NSW Health for advice
- Increasing hygiene and environmental controls
- Monitoring symptoms across the service
- Excluding non-immunised children during vaccine-preventable outbreaks

Communication and authorisation processes ensure illness trends, exclusion periods and outbreak actions are documented and communicated clearly. The Nominated Supervisor is the only person authorised to notify families or contact NSW Health. Information provided includes symptoms, case numbers, relevant dates and immunisation relevance. All communication and advice received are recorded and shared with educators and families to support consistent action.

Version	Action	Date
V.1	Original endorsement	16 th February 2026
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