

DEALING WITH INFECTIOUS DISEASES

POLICY

PURPOSE

Village Early Education is committed to protecting the health, safety and wellbeing of children, families, educators, staff and visitors by preventing and minimising the spread of infectious diseases within our Services.

Young children are particularly susceptible to infection because their immune systems are still developing and they have close contact with other children, educators and their environment.

Infection may also be transmitted before a person shows obvious signs or symptoms.

Village Early Education will use evidence-based infection prevention and control practices consistent with *Staying Healthy: Preventing infectious diseases in early childhood education and care services, 6th Edition*, Victorian public health requirements and advice from relevant health authorities.

Our approach includes:

- effective hand and respiratory hygiene
- safe nappy changing and toileting practices
- appropriate use of personal protective equipment
- routine and responsive environmental cleaning
- safe management of body fluids
- appropriate food safety practices
- immunisation
- exclusion of children, educators and staff where required
- timely identification and management of infectious illness
- appropriate communication with families
- outbreak management and notification

PREVENTING THE SPREAD OF INFECTION

Village Early Education will maintain infection prevention and control practices consistent with current health guidance.

This includes:

- regular and effective hand hygiene by children, educators and staff

- supporting children to develop age-appropriate hygiene practices
- respiratory hygiene and cough and sneeze etiquette
- appropriate use of gloves and other personal protective equipment
- infection-control practices during nappy changing and toileting
- routine cleaning of the environment, equipment and frequently touched surfaces
- prompt and appropriate cleaning of blood, vomit, faeces, urine and other body fluids
- hygienic management of toys, bedding, sensory materials and other shared resources
- safe food preparation and handling
- appropriate ventilation
- reducing opportunities for cross-contamination
- increased infection-control measures during outbreaks.

Children will be supported to participate in hygiene practices in ways that are respectful, developmentally appropriate and maintain their dignity.

IDENTIFYING INFECTIOUS ILLNESS

Educators are not expected to diagnose infectious diseases.

Where a child appears unwell, educators will consider the child's symptoms, behaviour, comfort and ability to participate in the program.

Symptoms may include:

- fever
- diarrhoea or vomiting
- respiratory symptoms
- rash
- eye discharge
- unusual tiredness or lethargy
- pain
- poor feeding or appetite
- changes in behaviour or wellbeing
- other signs that the child may be unwell.

Symptoms must be considered together and in the context of what is usual for the individual child.

Educators will call 000 immediately if a child has serious symptoms such as difficulty breathing, unresponsiveness, severe drowsiness, seizure, blue or very pale appearance, sudden collapse, or any other condition requiring urgent medical attention.

For concerning but non-emergency symptoms, educators will monitor the child closely, contact the family, and arrange collection where the child is not well enough to participate comfortably or there is a risk of infection to others.

EXCLUSION FROM THE SERVICE

Exclusion is an important strategy for reducing the spread of infectious disease.

Children, educators and staff must not attend, or may be required to leave the Service, where:

- they have a diagnosed infectious disease and are within the required exclusion period
- their symptoms meet an applicable exclusion requirement
- they are not well enough to participate comfortably in the program
- their condition requires a level of care that cannot reasonably be provided without affecting the care or supervision of other children
- their attendance may present an unacceptable infection risk to others
- exclusion is directed by a Public Health Unit or other authorised health authority.

The Service will apply exclusion periods in accordance with Staying Healthy (6th Edition), public health requirements and advice from the local Public Health Unit. Exclusion decisions will be based on the identified illness or symptoms and will not be extended beyond current guidance unless there is a specific health, safety or public health reason.

Medical clearance may be requested where necessary to clarify whether a condition is infectious, where a child has ongoing unexplained symptoms, following significant illness or surgery, or where required by public health advice.

A medical clearance does not override a prescribed exclusion period.

Families must inform the Service when their child has been diagnosed with an infectious disease so that appropriate exclusion, notification and infection-control measures can be implemented.

DIARRHOEA, VOMITING AND GASTROENTERITIS

Staying Healthy (6th Edition) defines diarrhoea as: frequent passing of loose, watery faeces.

A single loose bowel motion does not, by itself, mean that a child has diarrhoea or require automatic collection.

If a child has one isolated loose bowel motion and is otherwise well, educators will:

- record and monitor the bowel motion and the child's general wellbeing
- consider whether the stool is unusual for that child, including the child's age, usual bowel pattern, diet and any known medical information
- maintain strict hand hygiene, nappy changing/toileting and cleaning practices
- continue to observe for further loose or watery bowel motions or other symptoms.

Parents/guardians must be contacted and collection arranged as soon as possible where the child develops diarrhoea, meaning frequent loose and watery bowel motions occurring within a short period, or where loose stools occur together with vomiting, fever, abdominal pain, lethargy, blood or mucus in the stool, signs of dehydration, or other concerning symptoms.

Any vomiting that is not clearly attributable to a known non-infectious cause must be treated as a potential symptom of gastroenteritis. The family will be contacted and collection arranged as soon as possible.

Children and staff with diarrhoea or vomiting must be excluded until there has been no diarrhoea or vomiting for at least 24 hours. If norovirus is confirmed, or a longer exclusion period is directed by the Public Health Unit, the applicable exclusion period must be followed. Staff who have had diarrhoea or vomiting must not prepare food for others until they have been symptom-free for at least 48 hours. Where two or more children or staff experience diarrhoea and/or vomiting within a short period, the Centre Manager will seek advice from the local Public Health Unit and implement outbreak controls, including enhanced cleaning, case recording and any directed exclusion requirements.

CARING FOR A CHILD WHO BECOMES UNWELL

A child who is unwell and awaiting collection will be made comfortable and supervised at all times. Where practical, the child will be positioned away from the main group while remaining within sight and hearing of an educator. Educators will offer fluids where appropriate, monitor symptoms and provide reassurance.

Families or emergency contacts are expected to arrange collection as soon as practicable. If the child's condition worsens while waiting, educators will seek medical assistance or call 000 as required.

IMMUNISATION

Immunisation is an important measure for reducing the risk and spread of vaccine-preventable disease.

Children's enrolment and immunisation requirements will be managed in accordance with Victorian legislation and the Village Early Education Immunisation Policy.

Current immunisation information will be maintained as required.

Educators and staff are encouraged to maintain immunisation in accordance with current recommendations for people working in early childhood education and care.

Where a vaccine-preventable disease occurs, children, educators or staff who are not adequately immunised may be excluded in accordance with public health requirements.

Particular consideration will be given to children or staff who may be at increased risk of serious illness, including people who are immunocompromised or pregnant.

CHILDREN WITH INCREASED HEALTH RISKS

Where a child is immunocompromised or has another medical condition that may increase their risk during an infectious disease outbreak, the Service will work with the family and relevant medical practitioners to identify appropriate risk-management strategies.

Where required, the child's Medical Management Plan and Risk Minimisation Plan should identify any additional precautions or circumstances in which the child should not attend during an outbreak.

Individual medical advice may require precautions that differ from general exclusion guidance.

INFECTIOUS DISEASE NOTIFICATION AND COMMUNICATION

Families are required to inform the Service where their child has been diagnosed with an infectious disease so appropriate infection-control, exclusion and notification requirements can be implemented.

Where an infectious disease occurs at the Service, families will be informed as required and provided with relevant information regarding:

- the illness or symptoms
- signs and symptoms to monitor
- relevant exclusion requirements
- actions families should take where appropriate.

The identity and personal information of affected children, families or staff will remain confidential unless disclosure is authorised or required by law.

Where prescribed information about an infectious disease is required to be displayed at the Service, this will be completed in accordance with the National Regulations.

OUTBREAK MANAGEMENT

Where an outbreak of infectious disease is suspected or confirmed, Village Early Education will act promptly to minimise transmission.

Actions may include:

- seeking advice from the relevant Public Health Unit
- identifying and recording cases
- implementing increased cleaning and infection-control measures
- reviewing attendance and illness information
- communicating with families and staff
- implementing additional exclusion requirements
- reviewing immunisation information where relevant
- limiting particular activities, resources or access to areas where advised
- implementing any other controls directed by public health authorities.

For gastroenteritis, two or more related cases of vomiting and/or diarrhoea occurring within 48 hours may indicate an outbreak and must be escalated in accordance with Victorian Department of Health requirements.

NOTIFICATION TO AUTHORITIES

The Approved Provider will ensure infectious diseases and outbreaks are notified to the relevant health or regulatory authority where required by legislation or public health requirements.

This includes notification of suspected gastroenteritis outbreaks and prescribed infectious diseases in accordance with Victorian Department of Health requirements.

The Regulatory Authority will also be notified within the prescribed timeframe where an infectious disease, outbreak or other circumstance meets the notification requirements of the Education and Care Services National Law and Regulations, including where circumstances pose a significant risk to the health, safety or wellbeing of children.

RESOURCES

[Gastro Pack NSW Health](#)

[Common cold fact sheet](#)

[Exclusion for common or concerning conditions](#)

NSW Health [Stopping the spread of childhood infections factsheet.](#)

Pregnancy Birth and Baby. [Cytomegalovirus \(CMV\) during pregnancy.](#)

[RSV Fact Sheet](#)

[Time Out Keeping your child and other kids healthy!](#) (Queensland Government)

Time Out Brochure [Why do I need to keep my child at home?](#)

CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT/REFLECTION

Our *Dealing with Infectious Diseases Policy* will be reviewed on an annual basis or earlier if there are changes to legislation, ACECQA guidance or any incident related to our policy. Feedback will be requested from children, families, staff, educators and management. All families will be notified 14 days before any policy change that may have a significant impact on the provision of education and care to any child enrolled at the Service or the family's ability to utilise the Service.

NATIONAL QUALITY STANDARD (NQS)

QUALITY AREA 2: CHILDREN'S HEALTH AND SAFETY		
2.1	Health	Each child's health and physical activity is supported and promoted.
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 LAW AND NATIONAL REGULATIONS

S. 2A	Paramount consideration - safety, rights and best interests of children
Sec. 172	Offence to fail to display prescribed information
Sec.174 (2)(a)	Serious incident- any emergency for which emergency services attended
12	Meaning of serious incident
77	Health, hygiene and safe food practices
83	Staff members and family day care educators not to be affected by alcohol or drugs
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

89	First aid kits
90	Medical conditions policy
92	Medication record
93	Administration of medication
162	Health information to be kept in enrolment record
168	Education and care service must have policies and procedures
170	Policies and procedures to be followed
173	Prescribed information to be displayed
175(2)(c)	Prescribed information to be notified to the Regulatory Authority - (2) any circumstance arising at the service that poses a risk to the health, safety or wellbeing of a child or children attending the service

SOURCES

Australian Children's Education & Care Quality Authority. (2026). [Guide to the National Quality Framework](#)

Australian Children's Education & Care Quality Authority. (2021). [Dealing with infectious diseases Policy and procedures guidelines.](#)

Department of Human Resources: [National Immunisation Program Schedule](#)

Early Childhood Australia Code of Ethics. (2016).

Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010. (Amended 2023).

[Education and Care Services National Regulations.](#) (Amended 2023).

National Health and Medical Research Council. (2024). [Staying healthy: Preventing infectious diseases in early childhood education and care services. 6th Edition.](#)

Public Health Act 2010

Public Health Amendment Act 2017

Public Health Regulation 2012

Public Health and Wellbeing Regulations 2019 Victoria

Safe Work Australia

REVIEW

POLICY REVIEWED BY	Kelsey Pearce		
POLICY REVIEWED	AUGUST 2026	NEXT REVIEW DATE	MARCH 2027
VERSION NUMBER	V20.08.26		
MODIFICATIONS	- restructured for clarity and reduced duplication - clarified exclusion, return-to-care and gastroenteritis outbreak requirements - sources and legislative references updated		