

Infectious Diseases Policy

Purpose

To protect and promote the health, safety, and wellbeing of all children in ECMS services and minimise the risk of injury, illness and the spread of infections.

To inform and educate the service, families, and community on how to manage childhood illness, safety, and wellbeing in an early childhood environment.

Scope

This policy applies to:

- The Approved Provider, persons with management or control, Centre Director, Nominated Supervisor, and persons in day-to-day charge.
- Early Childhood teachers, educators, staff, contractors, students, volunteers, parents/guardians, children, and others enrolled and participating in ECMS programs and services, including during offsite excursions and activities.
- All ECMS-operated Early Learning Centres and Kindergarten programs.

Policy Principles

ECMS is a not-for-profit organisation committed to providing accessible, affordable, and high-quality early childhood education. ECMS is committed to an anti-bias approach in early childhood. ECMS operates within a framework of social justice and equity - this means we celebrate family and cultural diversity and aim to be supportive, responsive, and inclusive of all children. ECMS is committed to:

- Identifies three main aspects of managing infectious diseases: exclusion, immunisation, and effective hygiene practices.
- Strongly encourages other preventative strategies to prevent the spread of infection such as correct hand hygiene procedures, cough and sneeze etiquette, appropriate use of personal protective equipment (PPE) and effective environmental cleaning.
- Respects the primary role of families; their values and expectations will be considered when assessing risk and making decisions about infection control and other health issues.
- Complies with all directions and advice from the Federal Department of Education, the Federal Department of Employment and Workplace Relations (DEWR), the Federal Department of Health, Disability and Ageing (DHDA), the Department of Health Victoria (DH), and the Department of Education Victoria (DE) concerning any outbreak of a communicable disease or pandemic.

- Values and nurtures the uniqueness of each child, consults with children and includes them in decision making and actions.
- Responds to the specific and unique needs of the children; each child will be considered individually when assessing risk and making decisions about infection control and other health issues.
- Provides access to resources and opportunities for learning; families will be provided with information about health promotion, illness and injury prevention.
- Recognises that children are both vulnerable and capable; children will be taught to care for their own and others' health and wellbeing.
- Ensures the commitment to child health and safety is clear and shared by all.
- Educates staff, students, and volunteers about child health and safety.

Managing Infectious Diseases

Children

- Services must follow the Minimum Period of Exclusion for Infectious Diseases as published by the Department of Health Victoria.
- Families must notify the service immediately if their child is diagnosed with an infectious disease.
- Children who are unwell or suspected of having an infectious disease must not attend until the exclusion period has passed and/or a medical clearance has been provided.
- Families must provide up-to-date Immunisation History Statements for enrolment and throughout attendance (refer to *Immunisation Policy*).
- During an outbreak, unimmunised children may be excluded, in accordance with Department of Health directions.

Staff

- Staff must not attend work if they have, or are suspected of having, an infectious illness that could pose a risk to children, families, or colleagues.
- Staff must notify their manager immediately if diagnosed with an infectious disease.
- Staff exclusion periods will mirror those required for children in the Department of Health.

Exclusion Table.

- ECMS may request medical clearance before a staff member returns to work following certain illnesses.
- Staff are encouraged, and in some cases required, to maintain current immunisations to reduce risk of outbreaks (refer to *Immunisation Policy*).

Infection Control Practices

- All services must maintain effective handwashing and hygiene practices for staff and children.
- Cleaning and sanitising routines must be implemented daily, and immediately after any contamination with bodily fluids.

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- Personal protective equipment (PPE) must be used when handling bodily fluids or cleaning contaminated areas.
- Educators must teach and model safe hygiene practices with children, including handwashing and respiratory etiquette.

Roles & Responsibilities

Approved Provider/ Executive Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oversee policy governance, implementation and compliance. • Ensure systems are in place to implement this policy consistently across all ECMS services. • Provide resources, training, and support to services for managing infectious diseases.
Area Managers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor compliance with exclusion periods and documentation. • Ensure staff and families are aware of their responsibilities under this policy and informed of infectious disease outbreaks. • Keep records of infectious diseases and report to public health authorities, where required.
Nominated Supervisors/ Centre Directors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement this policy at service-level and ensure all educators/staff adhere to the policy and procedures set out within. • Ensure Immunisation History Statements are presented at the time the child is enrolled and updated thereafter. Copies of these are to be kept on the children's files/enrolments. • Monitor children with exemptions to immunisations (include those children on a catch-up schedule or within a grace period) and exclude these enrolled children, if there is a vaccine-preventable disease outbreak. • Notify all staff and parents/guardians of any outbreak of an infectious disease as soon as possible. • Notify ECMS Compliance Desk (as soon as possible) of any infectious diseases (except head lice) where exclusion from the service is required. • Assist educators to complete required Compliance Desk documentation for the Department of Education.
Educators, Staff, Students on Placement, Volunteers and Contractors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Follow exclusion requirements if unwell. • Support and educate children in effective hygiene practices. • Immediately report any suspected or confirmed cases of infectious disease. • Follow all infection control procedures and use PPE where required.

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Parents/Guardians

- Inform the service if their child is diagnosed with an infectious disease.
- Adhere to exclusion periods as advised by the Department of Health.
- Provide updated immunisation records as required.

Related Legislation, Regulations and Resources

- Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010 (Sections 165, 167, 169, 172, 174)
- Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011 (Regs 4, 77-80, 85-98, 102, 136, 137, 146, 147, 160-162, 167-173, 176-178, 181, 183, 184)
- Child Safety and Wellbeing Act 2005 (Vic)
- Health Records Act 2001
- Health Infectious Diseases Regulations 2001
- Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004 (Vic)
- Occupational Health and Safety Regulations 2011 (Vic)
- Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008 (Vic)
- Public Health and Wellbeing Regulations 2009 (Vic)
- Privacy and Data Collection Act 2014 (Vic)
- Privacy Act 1988 (Cth)
- National Quality Framework – Quality Area 2
- Child Safe Standards – Standard 2
- [Staying healthy: Preventing infectious diseases in early childhood education and care services - 6th Edition](#) – National Health and Medical Research Council, 2024

Related Policies and Procedures

- Child Health and Hygiene Policy
- Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy
- Code of Conduct
- Complaints and Feedback Policy
- Immunisation Policy
- Incident Reporting & Reportable Conduct Policy
- Nutrition, Food, Beverages & Dietary Requirements Policy
- Participation of Students and Volunteers Policy
- Privacy and Confidential Information Policy
- Risk Management Framework

Document Version History			
Version	Reason for Amendment	Approved by	Approval date
7.0	Policy reviewed, consulted and updated	ECMS Executive	September 2025

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