



# **Blackall-Tambo**

## Regional Council

# **Tambo Child Care Centre, Illness and Infectious Disease Policy**

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Policy Compiled by: Director of Finance Corporate & Community Services	
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## **AIM**

We aim to maintain the health of all children, staff, and their families, ensuring a healthy environment and minimising cross contamination and the spread of infectious illnesses.

The service will minimise the spread of potentially infectious diseases between children by excluding children, educators/staff, and visitors, who may have an infectious disease or are too ill to attend the education and care service.

The service aims to promote a healthy environment for learning and working. In order to prevent the spread of infection, children, staff and visitors with infectious diseases and illnesses will be excluded in accordance with the guidelines set by the Department of Health.

It is the responsibility under the Public Health Act for the service to report all notifiable diseases to the Public Health Unit and act as according to their directions.

## **IMPLEMENTATION**

Our Service has adopted the Staying Healthy in Child Care – Preventing Infectious disease in child care (Fifth Edition) publication, developed by the National Health and Medical Research Council. We aim to provide families with up to date information regarding specific illnesses and ways to minimise the spread of infection within the Service.

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 enhance 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

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imperative that families preserve a focus not only on the well-being of their own child but also upon the well-being of other children and the child care professionals at the Service.

The need for exclusion and the length of time a person is excluded depend on how easily the infection can spread, how long the person is likely to be infectious and how severe the disease can be. To protect the health of children and staff within the Service, it is important that children and staff who are ill are kept away from the Service for the recommended period.

Our Educators and Staff are not medical practitioners and are not able to diagnose whether or not a child has an infectious illness. However, if an infectious illness is suspected, our Service 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.

### **Children arriving at the Service who are unwell**

Management will not accept a child into care if they

- Are visibly unwell
- Unable to participate in normal activities or require additional attention.
- Have had a temperature, vomiting and/or diarrhoea in the last 24 hours
- Have a contagious illness or disease
- Have been given Paracetamol or Ibuprofen in the morning before attending

### **Children who become ill at the Service**

Children may become unwell throughout the day, in which Management and Educators will respond to children's individual symptoms of illness.

- Educators will monitor and document the child's symptoms on the illness record.
- A child who has passed two runny stools/vomited whilst at the Service will be sent home and may only return once no vomiting or runny stools for 24hrs and to be returned with a medical clearance.
- Educators will take the child's temperature. If the child's temperature is 37.5°C or higher, management will contact the child's parents/guardian/emergency contacts as soon as possible to have the child picked up.
- While Educators wait for the child to be collected, they will attempt to lower the child's temperature by
  - Taking off their shoes and socks
  - Applying a cool washer behind their neck and on their forehead
  - Removing extra clothing layers (jumpers etc)
  - Place the child in a lukewarm bath



- Place the child in a quiet area where they can rest, whilst being supervised
- Continue to document any progressing symptoms
- Complete Illness Record, ensuring the form has been completed correctly and signed by the parent/guardian/emergency contact

### Reporting Outbreaks to the Public Health Unit

Outbreaks of communicable diseases represent a threat to public health. To prevent outbreaks it is important to monitor the number of people who contract certain infectious diseases and their characteristics, and to work with patients and their doctors to help prevent spread to other people.

Management is required to notify the local public health unit (PHU) by phone (call 1300 066 055) as soon as possible after they are made aware that a child enrolled at the school or facility is suffering from one of the following vaccine preventable diseases:

- Diphtheria
- Mumps
- Poliomyelitis
- Haemophilus influenzae Type b (Hib)
- Meningococcal disease
- Rubella ("German measles")
- Measles
- Pertussis ("whooping cough")
- Tetanus
- An outbreak of gastrointestinal or respiratory illness

### Common Colds and Flu

The common cold (Viral upper respiratory tract infections) are very common in children occurring 6-10 times a year on average with the highest number usually being during the first 2 years in child care, kindergarten or school. Symptoms may include coughing, runny nose and a slight temperature.

In circumstances where a child appears to have a cold or flu symptoms, management will determine if the child is well enough to continue at the service or if the child requires parental care. Our Service aims to support the family's need for child care, however families should understand that a child who is unwell will need one-on-one attention which places additional pressure on staff ratios and the needs of other children.

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## Excluding children from the Service

- When a child has been diagnosed with an illness or infectious disease, the Service will refer to Staying Healthy in Childcare (5th Edition) to find the recommended exclusion period and also request a medical clearance from the GP stating that the child is cleared to return to the childcare setting.
- When an infectious disease has been diagnosed, the Service will display appropriate documentation and alerts for families including information on the illness/disease, symptoms, infectious period and the exclusion period. (This information can be obtained from Staying Healthy In Child Care 5th Edition)
- Children that have had diarrhoea and vomiting will be asked to stay away from the Service for 24 hours after symptoms have ceased to reduce infection transmission as symptoms can develop again after 24 hours in many instances.

## Notifying families and Emergency Contact

- It is a requirement of the Service that all emergency contacts are able to pick up an ill child as quickly as possible
- In the incident that the ill child is not collected in a timely manner or should parents refuse to collect the child a warning letter will be sent to the families outlining Service policies and requirements. The letter of warning will specify that if there is a future breach of this nature, the child's position could be terminated.

## Management and Educators will ensure

- Effective hygiene policies and procedures are adhered to at all times
- Effective environmental cleaning policies and procedures are adhered to all times
- All families will have access to relevant policies upon enrolment which will be explained by management including; Control of Infectious Diseases Policy, Sick Children policy, Injury and Accident policy and Medical Emergency Policy.
- Any child who registers a temperature of 37.5°C or above will need to be collected from the Service as soon as possible and will be excluded for 24 hours since the last elevated temperature or until the Service receives a doctors clearance letter stating that the child is cleared of any infection and able to return to child care.



## **Illness and Infectious Disease Policy**

- A child who has not been fully immunised will be excluded from the Service if; an infectious disease is reported within the Service community and that child is deemed to be in danger of contracting the illness. Please refer to our Control of Infectious Diseases Policy.

### **Families Responsibility**

In order to prevent the spread of disease, families are required to monitor their child's health, in particular:

- Constant runny nose
- Green, runny nose
- High temperature
- Diarrhoea
- Red, swollen or discharging eyes
- Vomiting
- Rashes
- Irritability, unusually tired or lethargic

### **Returning to care after surgery**

- Children who have undergone any type of surgery will need to take advice from their doctor/surgeon as to when it is appropriate to return to care.
- Children will require a medical clearance stating the child is fit and able to return to the Service and participate in daily activities.

### **Teething:**

Many children may show mild symptoms that could be related to teething. These symptoms could include irritability, drooling, nappy rash, red cheeks, earaches, high temperatures and diarrhea.

Although these symptoms may relate to the child's teething it is important for parents to seek medical advice to ensure that their child is well. If children show signs of being unwell and parents feel it is related to teething, parents are still asked to keep their children absent from the Service until they are well again.

*Please Note:* Children are not to be administered Panadol / paracetamol at any time when in a long day care service, unless in an emergency and parent / guardian permission has been sought. Children will need to be collected from care or seek medical assistance.