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|  | Dealing with Infectious Diseases Policy |
| Version No. | Version 3.0 November 2021 (approved) |
| Authorisation | General Manager Community Services |
| Expiry Date | Policy to be reviewed by 1 December 2024 |
| Responsible Officer | Manager Families and Children |
| Policy Owner | Early Childhood Coordinator |

1. Purpose

This policy outlines Melton City Council commitment to:

- a child attending Melton City Council children's services who shows symptoms of an Infectious Disease
- a child at Melton City Council children's services that has been diagnosed with an Infectious Disease
- managing and minimising the spread of Infectious Diseases, Illnesses and Infestations (including Head Lice)
- managing and minimising Infections relating to Blood-Borne Viruses.

1.1. This policy has been adapted from *PolicyWorks* Manual - National Quality Framework released by the Early Learning Association Australia.

2. Scope

This policy applies to services responsible for the direct education and care of children at Melton City Council programs including offsite excursions and activities. This policy applies to the Approved Provider, Nominated Supervisor, Person in day to day charge / Responsible Person's, Primary Nominee, Nominees, Certified Supervisor, educators, staff, students on placement, volunteers, parents/guardians, children and others attending Melton City Council programs and activities.

3. Background

Infectious Diseases are common in children. Children are at a greater risk of exposure to Infections in a children's service than at home due to the amount of time spent with a large number of other children.

Infectious Diseases are divided into four categories (A, B, C, D) on the basis of the method of notification and the information required. The Department of Health has developed a document "Minimum Period of Exclusion from Primary Schools and Children's Services Centres for Infectious Diseases Cases and Contacts" to assist in protecting the public by preventing, or containing, outbreaks of infectious conditions common in schools and other children's services and is regulated by the *Public Health and Wellbeing Regulations 2009*.

A registered/approved service must take reasonable steps to prevent the spread of Infectious Diseases at the service, and ensure that the parent/guardian, Authorised Nominee or emergency contact of each child enrolled at the service is notified of the occurrence of an Infectious Disease as soon as possible.

The service must have policies and procedures in place for dealing with Infectious Diseases (National Regulations 88). The service has a Duty of Care to ensure that everyone attending the service is provided with a high level of protection during all hours that the service is in operation.

Protection can include:

- notifying children, families and educators/staff when an excludable illness/disease is detected at the service
- complying with relevant health department Exclusion guidelines
- increasing educator/staff awareness of cross-infection through physical contact with others.

No Jab No Play-

The Victorian Government has passed immunisation legislation named '[No Jab, No Play](#)'. No Jab No Play is a commitment made by the Government to help protect children from serious and potentially life-threatening illnesses. Under the new law in effect from 1 January 2016, all children must be fully vaccinated in order to be enrolled in an Early Childhood program.

Only Children who cannot be vaccinated for medical reasons will be exempt.

“Conscientious Objection” will not be an exemption.

What does this mean?

You will be required to provide your selected care provider with a copy of your child’s immunisation history Statement. You can obtain a record of your child’s immunisation history from Australian Childhood Immunisation Register (ACIR) through the website below.

<https://www.humanservices.gov.au/customer/services/medicare/australian-childhood-immunisation-register>

Alternatively, you can call ACIR and request that a statement is sent to you.

Your child will not be eligible to attend the service until the Immunisation History is provided.

Vulnerable and disadvantaged children will be eligible to enrol in a service under a grace period - without having provided proof of up to date immunisation - to allow families to continue accessing services while they seek advice and assistance to get their child's vaccination schedule on track.

4. Definitions

The terms defined in this section relate specifically to this policy and related procedures. For commonly used terms e.g. Approved Provider, Regulatory Authority etc. refer to the *Glossary of Terms*.

| Word/Term | Definition |
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| Blood-Borne Virus (BBV) | A virus that is spread when blood from an infected person enters another person’s bloodstream. Examples of BBV include Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV), Hepatitis B, Hepatitis C and Viral Haemorrhagic Fevers. Where basic hygiene, safety, Infection control and First Aid procedures are followed, the risks of contracting a BBV is negligible. |
| Exclusion | Inability to attend or participate in the program/service. |
| Illness | Any sickness and/or associated symptoms that affect the child’s normal participation in the program/service. |
| Immunisation Status | The extent to which a child has been immunised in relation to the recommended immunisation schedule. |
| Infection | The invasion and multiplication of micro-organisms in bodily tissue. |
| Infectious Disease | A disease that can be spread, for example, by air, water or interpersonal contact. An Infectious Disease is designated under |

| Word/Term | Definition |
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| | Victorian Law or by a health authority (however described) as a disease that would require the infected person to be excluded from an education and care service. |
| Infestation | The lodgment, development and reproduction of Arthropods (such as Head Lice), either on the surface of the body of humans or animals, or in clothing. |
| Medication | Any substance, as defined in the <i>Therapeutic Goods Act 1989</i> (Cth) that is administered for the treatment of an illness or medical condition. |
| Pediculosis | Infestation of Head Lice that is transmitted by having head-to-head contact with another person who has Head Lice. Pediculosis does not contribute to the spread of any Infectious Diseases, and outbreaks of this condition are common in schools and childcare facilities. |
| Recommended Minimum Exclusion Period | The period recommended by the Department of Health for excluding any person from attending a children's service to prevent the spread of Infectious Diseases through interpersonal contact. The Exclusion table is published by the Department of Health and can be viewed on their website (see <i>Sources</i>). |
| Serious Incident | <p>An incident resulting in the death of a child, or an injury, trauma or illness for which the attention of a registered medical practitioner, emergency services or hospital is sought or should have been sought. This also includes an incident in which a child appears to be missing, cannot be accounted for, is removed from the service in contravention of the Regulations or is mistakenly locked in/out of the service premises (National Regulations 12).</p> <p>A Serious Incident should be documented in an <i>Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Record</i> (sample form available on the ACECQA website) as soon as possible and within 24 hours of the incident. The Regulatory Authority (Department of Education & Training (DET)) must be notified within 24 hours of a Serious Incident occurring at the service (National Regulations 176). Records are required to be retained for the periods specified in the National Regulations 183.</p> |

5. Policy

Melton City Council children's services is committed to:

- providing a safe and healthy environment for all children, staff and any other persons attending the service
- responding to the needs of the child or adult who presents with symptoms of an Infectious Disease or Infestation while attending the service
- complying with current Exclusion schedules and guidelines set by the Department of Health
- providing up-to-date information and resources for families and staff regarding protection of all children from Infectious Diseases and BBV's, management of Infestations and immunisation programs.

Melton City Council children's services supports the Immunise Australia Program and National Immunisation Program (NIP), which is currently recommended by the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) and supported by the Commonwealth Government.

All educators/staff at Melton City Council children's services are committed to preventing the spread of vaccine-preventable diseases through simple hygiene practices such as hand washing, effective cleaning procedures, monitoring immunisation records and complying with recommended Exclusion guidelines and timeframes for children and educators/staff.

6. Responsibility/Accountability

6.1. The Approved Provider, according to Regulations is responsible for the implementation of this policy. This will be achieved through the Leadership Group and their service staff:

- where there is an occurrence of an Infectious Disease at the service, reasonable steps are taken to prevent the spread of that Infectious Disease (National Regulation 88(1))
- where there is an occurrence of an Infectious Disease at the service, a parent/guardian or authorised emergency contact of each child at the service is notified of the occurrence as soon as is practicable (National Regulation 88(2))
- information from the Department of Health about the Recommended Minimum Exclusion Periods (refer to *Definitions*), is available to all stakeholders and is adhered to in the event of an outbreak of an Infectious Disease (as designated by the Department of Health – refer to *Definitions*)
- parent/guardian and DET are informed within 24 hours of becoming aware that an enrolled child is suffering from:
 - Pertussis
 - Poliomyelitis
 - Measles
 - Mumps
 - Rubella
 - Meningococcal C

as required under Regulation 84(1) of the *Public Health and Wellbeing Regulations 2009*.

Note: The Department of Health also recommends that services inform the Communicable Disease Prevention and Control Unit if there is an outbreak of three or more cases of respiratory or Gastrointestinal Illness at the service within a 72-hour period.

- a child who is not immunised against a vaccine-preventable disease does not attend the service when an Infectious Disease is diagnosed, and does not return until there are no more occurrences of that disease at the service and the Recommended Minimum Exclusion Period (refer to *Definitions*) has ceased (Regulation 85(2) of the *Public Health and Wellbeing Regulations 2009*)
- notifying DET within 24 hours of a Serious Incident (refer to *Definitions*), including when a child becomes ill at the service or medical attention is sought while the child is attending the service
- supporting the Nominated Supervisor, Primary Nominee, Nominees and the educators/staff at the service to implement the requirements of the Recommended Minimum Exclusion Periods
- information about the NIP immunisation schedule is displayed and is available to all stakeholders (refer to *Sources*)
- conducting a thorough inspection of the service on a regular basis, and consulting with educators/staff to assess any risks by identifying the hazards and potential sources of Infection

- Person in day to day charge / Responsible Person's, Certified Supervisors, Nominees, educators, staff and everyone at the service adheres to the *Hygiene Policy*
- appropriate and current information and resources are available to educators/staff and parents/guardians regarding the identification and management of Infectious Diseases, BBV's and Infestations
- keeping informed about current legislation, information, research and best practice
- any changes to the Exclusion table are communicated to educators/staff and parents/guardians in a timely manner.

6.2. The Nominated Supervisor, Person in day to day charge / Responsible Person's is responsible for:

- notifying the Approved Provider immediately on becoming aware that an enrolled child is suffering from:
 - Pertussis
 - Poliomyelitis
 - Measles
 - Mumps
 - Rubella
 - Meningococcal C
- contacting the parents/guardians of a child suspected of suffering from an infectious or vaccine-preventable disease, or of a child not immunised against a vaccine-preventable disease that has been detected at the service, and requesting the child be collected as soon as possible
- notifying a parent/guardian or authorised emergency contact person when a symptom of an excludable infectious illness or disease has been observed
- ensuring that a minimum of one educator with current approved First Aid qualifications is in attendance and immediately available at all times the service is in operation (refer to *Administration of First Aid Policy*)
- establishing good hygiene and Infection control procedures, and ensuring that they are adhered to by everyone at the service (refer to *Hygiene Policy*)
- ensuring the Exclusion requirements for Infectious Diseases are adhered to as per the Recommended Minimum Exclusion Periods (refer to *Definitions*), notifying the Approved Provider and parents/guardians of any outbreak of Infectious Disease at the service, and displaying this information in a prominent position
- advising parents/guardians on enrolment that the Recommended Minimum Exclusion Periods will be observed in regard to the outbreak of any Infectious Diseases or Infestations (refer to Department of Health Exclusion table in *Sources*)
- advising the parents/guardians of a child who is not fully immunised and does not meet the grace period or exemption for medical reasons that they will be required to keep their child at home when an Infectious Disease is diagnosed at the service, and until there are no more occurrences of that disease and the Exclusion period has ceased as per the requirements as stated in the No Jab, No Play legislation.
- requesting that parents/guardians notify the service if their child has, or is suspected of having, an Infectious Disease or Infestation
- providing information and resources to parents/guardians to assist in the identification and management of Infectious Diseases and Infestations
- on enrolment ensuring all families have authorised a consent to conduct Head Lice inspections

- maintaining confidentiality at all times (refer to *Privacy and Confidentiality Policy*).

6.3. All staff / educators are responsible for:

- encouraging parents/guardians to notify the service if their child has an Infectious Disease or Infestation
- observing signs and symptoms of children who may appear unwell, and informing the Nominated Supervisor
- providing access to information and resources for parents/guardians to assist in the identification and management of Infectious Diseases and Infestations
- monitoring any symptoms in children that may indicate the presence of an Infectious Disease and taking appropriate measures to minimise cross-Infection
- complying with the *Hygiene Policy* of the service
- maintaining confidentiality at all times (refer to *Privacy and Confidentiality Policy*).

6.4. Parents/Guardians are responsible for:

- keeping their child(ren) at home if they are unwell or have an excludable Infectious Disease
- keeping their child(ren) at home when an Infectious Disease has been diagnosed at the service and their child is not fully immunised against that Infectious Disease, until there are no more occurrences of that disease and the Exclusion period has ceased
- informing the service if their child has an Infectious Disease or has been in contact with a person who has an Infectious Disease
- providing accurate and current information regarding the Immunisation Status of their child(ren) when they enrol, and informing the service of any subsequent changes to this while they are enrolled at the service
- complying with the Recommended Minimum Exclusion Periods
- regularly checking their child's hair for Head Lice or lice eggs, regularly inspecting all household members, and treating any Infestations as necessary
- notifying the service if Head Lice or lice eggs have been found in their child's hair and when treatment was commenced
- complying with the *Hygiene Policy* when in attendance at the service.

6.5. Volunteers and students, while at the service, are responsible for following this policy and its procedures.

7. References, Sources, Links to Legislation and Other Documents

7.1. Please refer to Reference and Sources page located on the Melton City Council Website.

<http://www.melton.vic.gov.au/Services/People/Children/Childrens-Services-policies-and-procedures/Sources-and-References>

7.2. Related service policies:

- *Administration of First Aid Policy*
- *Administration of Medication Policy*
- *Dealing with Medical Conditions Policy*
- *MCC Child Safe Policy, Procedure and Code of Conduct*
- *Hygiene Policy*
- *Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Policy*

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- *Inclusion and Equity Policy*
- *Occupational Health and Safety Policy*
- *Privacy and Confidentiality Policy.*