



## 2.17 DEALING WITH INFECTIOUS DISEASES

### Purpose Statement

The National Quality Standard requires early childhood education and care services to implement specific strategies to minimise the spread of infectious illness and maintain a healthy environment for all staff, Educators, children and families. The spread of infections in early childhood environments is facilitated by microbial contamination of the environment, as well as the greater exposure to young children who are still developing hygienic behaviours and habits. Windermere Family Day Care will minimise children's exposure to infectious diseases by ensuring Educators and staff adhere to all recommended guidelines from relevant authorities regarding the prevention of infectious diseases, promoting practices that reduce the transmission of infection, ensuring the exclusion of sick children and Educators, supporting child immunisation, and implementing effective hygiene practices.

### Scope

This policy applies to all salaried full time and part time staff (including casual), Educators, children, families and visitors (including contractors) of the Service.

### Definitions

*Infectious Disease:* any contagious condition that affects the body's normal functions and is caused by germs (bacteria or viruses or fungi) or parasites that can spread between living things or from the environment, including food and water.

*Immunisation Schedule:* a routine schedule of vaccines provided for children, adolescents and adults at risk of vaccine preventable disease.

*WFDC:* Windermere Family Day Care.

*AIR:* The Australian Immunisation Register.

*Telstra Desktop Messaging:* a web application that allows SMS (short message service) & MMS (multimedia message service) messages to be sent to multiple people at the same time, from a computer, laptop, tablet or mobile phone.

*PPE:* Personal Protective Equipment.

*Body Fluids:* urine, faeces, mucus, saliva, vomit, blood and breastmilk.

### Policy Statement

WFDC HAS A DUTY OF CARE TO ENSURE THAT EDUCATORS, CHILDREN, FAMILIES AND VISITORS OF THE SERVICE ARE PROVIDED WITH A HIGH LEVEL OF PROTECTION DURING THE HOURS EDUCATION AND CARE IS PROVIDED. WE AIM TO MINIMISE CROSS CONTAMINATION AND THE SPREAD OF INFECTIOUS ILLNESSES BY IMPLEMENTING BEST PRACTICE STANDARDS OF PERSONAL HYGIENE WITHIN WFDC ENVIRONMENTS.

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### Procedures

#### **Responsibilities of the Approved Provider/Nominated Supervisor/ Responsible Person:**

1. To ensure that obligations under the Education and Care Services National Law and National Regulations are met.
2. To ensure WFDC Educators, staff and families have knowledge of and adhere to this policy and associated procedures.
3. To ensure an Immunisation History Statement, from the AIR, is collected on enrolment of a child and is updated, as required. For further information, refer to the Immunisation policy.
4. To ensure that all information regarding the prevention and transmission of infectious diseases is sourced from a recognised health authority, such as the Australian Government Department of Health
5. To ensure exclusion periods for people with infectious diseases recommended by Government Authorities and/or [Staying healthy: Preventing infectious diseases in early childhood education and care services- 6th Edition](#) (refer to link in the links section below) are implemented for all Staff, Educators and children.
6. To notify the Department of Health and Human Services immediately on 1300 651 160, and the Regulatory Authority within 7 days, of any incidence of a notifiable infectious illness or disease diagnosed within a WFDC service.
7. To forward any WFDC Educator Incident Report Forms submitted, relating to a notifiable infectious illness or disease diagnosed within a WFDC service to: [ohs@windermere.org.au](mailto:ohs@windermere.org.au) within 24 hours of the notification.
8. To notify families if an outbreak of a vaccine-preventable disease occurs within a WFDC service, as soon as practical, via email or Telstra Desktop Messaging, whilst maintaining the privacy of the ill/infectious child.
9. To exclude any child, who is not immunised, from the WFDC Service, if and when an outbreak of a vaccine-preventable disease occurs, to protect that child and to prevent further spread of infection.
10. To advise families who have chosen not to vaccinate their child due to their beliefs, that, under Victorian law, the service is NOT allowed to enrol the child without acceptable documentation (i.e. medical exemption – for further information refer to the immunisation policy).

#### **Responsibilities of the Educator:**

1. To ensure a healthy and clean environment is provided and infection control measures are implemented, as recommended in [Staying healthy: Preventing infectious diseases in early childhood education and care services- 6th Edition](#). Refer to link in the links section below.
2. To ensure that any child suspected of having an infectious illness is responded to and their health and emotional needs supported at all times.



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3. To ensure families are informed of the need to collect their unwell child/ children as soon as practicable from the WFDC Service.
4. To ensure any child suspected of having an infectious illness is isolated from other children and supervised whilst waiting for collection by parent/guardian or emergency contact person.
5. To ensure that appropriate health and safety procedures are implemented when treating ill children (i.e. wear disposable gloves, face mask or other PPE if needed).
6. To submit an Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Record, and/or a WFDC Educator Incident Report Form to: [EducatorSupport@windermere.org.au](mailto:EducatorSupport@windermere.org.au) as soon as possible (but within 12 hours) of becoming aware of any circumstance which may affect or pose a risk to the health, safety and wellbeing of children, including infectious diseases. Refer to the Incident Reporting procedure for further information.
7. To ensure exclusion periods for infectious diseases recommended by Government Authorities and/or [Staying healthy: Preventing infectious diseases in early childhood education and care services- 6th Edition](#) (refer to link in the links section below) are implemented for all Educators, family members or residents of the WFDC home, children, parents/guardians and visitors. NOTE: Educators who have an infectious disease (including diarrhoea) should not handle food for others and are not to return to work until they have been symptom free for 48 hours.
8. To ensure all resources or items touched by a child with a suspected illness are thoroughly cleaned and disinfected, including cushions, pillows, toys etc.
9. To routinely role model and promote good hygiene practices, such as hand washing, sneezing and cough etiquette and ensure children practice these also.
10. To ensure infection control practices are implemented during nappy changing and toileting routines.
11. To ensure their own immunisation status is maintained.

#### **Responsibilities of the Parent/Guardian:**

1. To adhere to the Service's Dealing with Infectious Diseases and Immunisation policies.
2. To advise the WFDC Educator if their child is diagnosed with an infectious illness, including COVID-19.
3. To keep their child at home for the recommended minimum exclusion period if they are diagnosed with an infectious illness or display symptoms of an infectious illness or disease. Refer to 'Exclusion for common or concerning conditions' in the links section below. NOTE: children must also be well for at least 24hrs before returning to the WFDC Service, to minimise the chance of disease/illness spreading.
4. To adhere to exclusion periods in the event their child is diagnosed with a vaccine preventable disease or if there is a diagnosed vaccine preventable disease within the WFDC service and their child is not fully immunised.
5. To adhere to the restrictions of entry into an approved WFDC residence and/or venue in the event of an outbreak of an infectious disease or virus.



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6. On enrolling a child into WFDC, provide the Coordination Unit with a copy of one or more of the following documents:
  - a. An AIR Immunisation History Statement which shows that the child is 'up to date' with their scheduled vaccinations; or
  - b. An AIR Immunisation History Form on which the immunisation provider has certified that the child is on a recognised catch-up schedule; or
  - c. An AIR Immunisation Medical Exemption Form which has been certified by a GP.
7. To provide the Coordination Unit with an updated copy of their child's current immunisation record every 6 months, or when the next scheduled immunisation has been completed. For further information refer to the Immunisation Policy.
8. To provide sufficient spare clothing for their child, particularly if they are toilet training.
9. To adhere to the WFDC Service's risk minimisation strategies if their child has complex medical needs, in the event of an outbreak of an infectious disease or virus.

### **How Infections Occur:**

1. An infection occurs when harmful germs (microorganisms) enter the body, multiply and cause disease. The chain of infection refers to how germs spread (Figure 1.1).
2. When an infection occurs, three things are involved:
  - a. the source – the germs and where they live
  - b. spread – how the germs get out of one person and move to a new person
  - c. the new host – a susceptible person (someone who can be infected) with a way for the germs to get in.

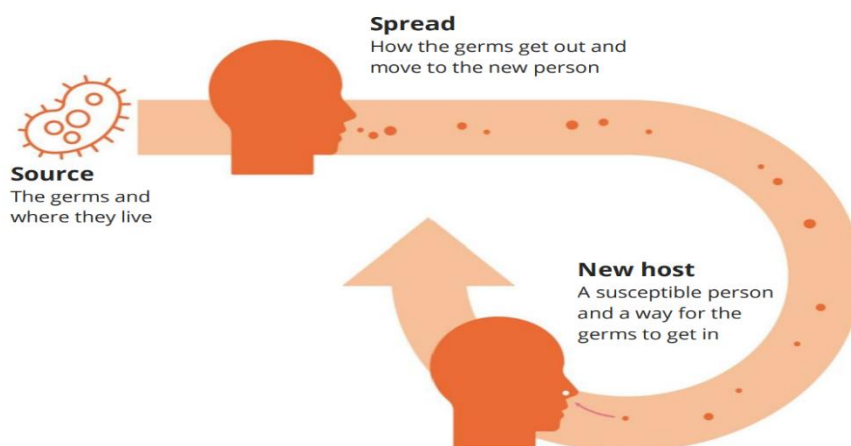


Figure 1.1 The chain of infection

**NOTE:** All the steps in the chain need to occur for germs to spread from a source to a susceptible person. By breaking the chain at any stage, you can prevent the spread of infection.



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### **Breaking the Chain of Infection:**

1. Infection control practices are actions that can break the chain of infection. The most important actions to break the chain of infection and stop the spread of diseases are:
  - a. Preventing infection with personal strategies. Actions you can take for yourself or in interactions with other people:
    - I. immunisation (refer to the immunisation policy for more information)
    - II. hand hygiene - washing hands with soap and water then drying hands or using hand sanitiser (refer to the hand hygiene policy for more information)
    - III. respiratory hygiene - covering your mouth and nose when you cough or sneeze, into your inner elbow or with a tissue to limit airborne germs and the transmission of respiratory diseases
    - IV. wearing gloves and masks - physical barriers can help prevent the transmission of germs
    - V. hygienic nappy changing and toileting procedures (refer to the nappy changing and toileting policy for more information)
    - VI. safely dealing with wounds and body fluids (refer to the OH&S policy for more information)
    - VII. taking care with animals - all animals carry germs that can cause infections if a person is bitten or scratched. Animal faeces also carry germs (refer to the Pets & Animals policy for more information)
    - VIII. protecting pregnant Educators, staff and visitors ++++++
  - b. Environmental strategies. Actions you can take to improve the environment:
    - I. ventilation
    - II. cleaning
    - III. food safety
  - c. Exclusion (i.e. action to limit infection sources).

### **Fever:**

A temperature over 38°C indicates a fever in a child. Normal temperature is between 36.5°C and 38°C. Fever can cause sweating, shivering, muscle aches and a headache.

Fever is a common symptom for children and is usually caused by an infection. Fever can be concerning; however, it is usually more important to determine what is causing the fever rather than the temperature itself.

Most fevers are not a sign of a serious disease.

1. If you think a child has a fever, check their temperature. If their temperature is:
  - a. between 37.5 °C and 37.9 °C – retest within 30 minutes



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- b. 38.0 °C and over – notify a parent (or authorised person, if a parent is not available) and ask them to pick the child up as soon as possible.
- c. be quarantined from the other children. Where able, provide the child with a quiet space to rest under supervision until they are collected. Encourage all other children to maintain distance and provide space for the sick child. NOTE: an Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Record will need to be completed and submitted.
- d. ensure good respiratory and hand hygiene is practiced and that appropriate cleaning practices are used.
- e. exclude until the child's temperature remains normal, unless the fever has a known non-infectious cause.
- f. if the child has gone home from the service with a fever but their temperature is normal the next morning, they can return to the service.
- g. if the child wakes in the morning with a fever, they should stay home until their temperature remains normal.
- h. if a doctor diagnoses the cause of the child's fever, follow the exclusion guidance for that disease.

### Relevant Legislation/Standards

- National Quality Framework for Early Childhood Education and Care Services including:
  - Education and Care Services National Law 2011 (Amended 2024)
  - Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011 (Amended 2024)
- Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008
- Public Health and Wellbeing Regulations (2009) (Amended 2019)
- Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004
- Australian Children's Education & Care Quality Authority. (2014)
- 'No Jab, No Play' legislation

### Related Policies & Links

- WFDC Policies/Procedures:
  - 1.08 Enrolment
  - 2.02 Immunisation
  - 2.21 Occupational Health and Safety
  - 2.23 Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness
  - 2.24 Managing Medical Conditions
  - 7.03 Incident Reporting
- [No Jab No Play for early childhood education and care services | health.vic.gov.au](https://www.health.vic.gov.au/no-jab-no-play)
- [No Jab No Play - Better Health Channel](#)



## 2.17 DEALING WITH INFECTIOUS DISEASES

- [School exclusion table for primary schools and children's services | health.vic.gov.au](https://www.health.vic.gov.au/school-exclusion-table-for-primary-schools-and-childrens-services)
- [Staying-healthy-guidelines 6th Edition 2024.pdf](#)
- [Exclusion for common or concerning conditions Staying healthy poster \(A3\)](#)