



INFECTIOUS DISEASES POLICY



POLICY RATIONALE

This policy applies to TeamKids management, staff, educators, parents/guardians, children, volunteers and students involved with TeamKids.

Infectious diseases commonly affect children. Children are at greater risk of exposure at an Early Childhood/Outside School Hours Care 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 by the method of notification and the information required. A Minimum Period of Exclusion from Schools and Children's Services for Infectious Diseases Cases and Contacts was developed to protect 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 Act of the state in which it operates, including the Public Health and Wellbeing Regulations 2008 (Victoria), Public Health Amendment (Review) Act 2017 (New South Wales) & Public Health Act 2005 (Queensland)

The COVID-19 pandemic has become an infectious disease that impacts all elements of Education and Care Services. TeamKids have a detailed COVID-19 management policy which should be considered in partnership with this policy.

An immunisation program is also in place to assist in the prevention and spread of infectious diseases. A standard immunisation calendar is provided as a link to this policy. Families are required to confirm if the child has been immunised at the time of his/her enrolment. As this program is considered an Outside School Hours Care (OSHC) program, the vaccination requirements for early childhood services in each state do not apply to TeamKids services.

POLICY OBJECTIVES

TeamKids is committed to:

- Providing a safe and healthy environment for all children, educators and any other persons participating in the program
- Responding to the needs of the child who presents with symptoms of an infectious disease or head lice infestation while attending the service.
- Providing up-to-date information and resources for families and staff regarding the protection of all children from infectious diseases, immunisation programs and management of head lice infestation.

PROCEDURES

If the service is notified that a child has suffered or is suffering from an infectious illness, the service will exclude the child from attending the service for the time specified in the exclusion table within the Nationally based document, 'Staying Healthy in Child Care (5th edition)'.

TeamKids staff and educators will be able to request a clearance certificate from a medical practitioner to verify that a child is no longer suffering from a contagious illness or infectious disease.

TeamKids, Compliance & Licensing Manager is responsible for:

- Informing the relevant State Regulatory Authority and State Communicable Diseases Control Unit, within twenty-four hours of receiving confirmation, that a child is suffering, or they believe a child is suffering from a vaccine-preventable disease, or a child who has not been immunised against such a disease has been in contact with a person at the service who is infected with that disease, as per the relevant State Legislation. Any exclusion will be based on firm medical evidence following diagnosis of a vaccine-preventable disease or on recommendations from the Communicable Diseases Control Unit. Note that this may be a different contact method for each state or territory.

The Responsible Person/Person in day to day charge is responsible for:

- Contacting the parent or guardian of the child they suspect may be suffering from an infectious or vaccine-preventable disease, or that their child who is not immunised has been in contact with someone who has a vaccine-preventable disease and requesting the child be collected from the service as soon as possible. Those parents will be required to keep their child/ren at home when an infectious disease has been diagnosed at the service until there are no more occurrences of that disease and the exclusion period has ceased.
- Establishing good hygiene and infection control procedures and making them part of the routine for everyone in the workplace.
- Placing a sign at the main entrance of the service notifying any families, staff and visitors of any infectious diseases that may be harmful. (R 173)
- Ensuring the exclusion requirements for infectious diseases are adhered to as per the Communicable diseases exclusion table.
- Notifying the TeamKids and parents/guardians of an outbreak of an infectious disease within the service.
- Advising parents/guardians on enrolment that the Communicable diseases exclusion table will be followed regarding the outbreak of any infectious diseases.
- Requesting parents/guardians notify the service if their child has an infectious disease
- Providing information and resources to parents to assist in the identification and management of infectious diseases and infestations. This may include tip sheets from 'Staying Healthy In Child Care (5th Edition)'.
- In the case of a head lice outbreak, families/guardians will be contacted to collect their child for treatment if head lice are detected.
- Maintaining confidentiality at all times.

The parents/guardians are responsible for:

- Notifying the service if their child has an infectious disease or has been in contact with a person who is infected with an infectious disease, as per the Communicable Diseases Exclusion table
- Providing accurate and current information regarding the immunisation status of their child/ children when they enrol and any subsequent changes to this while they are attending the service.
- Complying with the Communicable diseases exclusion table.
- Keeping their child at home when an infectious disease has been diagnosed at the service and their child is not fully immunised until there are no more occurrences of that disease and the exclusion period has ceased.
- Regularly checking their child's hair for lice or lice eggs and regularly inspecting all household members and then treating if necessary as well as ensuring their child does not attend the service with untreated head lice.
- Notifying the service if head lice have been found in their child's hair and when treatment has started.

IMPORTANT LINKS

Staying Healthy in ChildCare (5th Addition) - Communicable diseases exclusion table

https://www.nhmrc.gov.au/_files_nhmrc/publications/attachments/ch55e_exclusion_period_poster_130701.pdf

National Immunisation Program Schedule

<https://beta.health.gov.au/file/7831/download?token=u7ac8cG>

REFERENCES

- Public Health and Wellbeing Regulations 2008 (Victoria), R 85
- Public Health Amendment (Review) Act 2017 (New South Wales), R 85
- Public Health Act 2005 (Queensland), R 85
- Staying Healthy in Childcare – 5th Edition (2013)
- Department of Health and Human Services www.dhhs.vic.gov.au
- Education and Care Services National Law Act (2010), S 165, S 167
- Education and Care Services National Regulations (2011), R 87, R 173
- ACECQA National Quality Framework Resource Kit (2012)
- Quality Area 2 – Children's health and safety
- Quality Area 7 – Leadership and Service Management

Version control Date: 25 August 2016

Reviewed: August 2023

To be reviewed: August 2024

Infectious diseases Policy No. PO-0015

Infectious diseases Procedures No. PR-001