Hills Grammar

Dealing with Infectious Diseases Policy

Policy Statement

Ensuring the health and safety of children and educators is important in the ECEC. Educators in the ECEC need to be aware of the likelihood of young children being exposed to an infectious disease whilst in care. Maintaining hygiene practices within the ECEC and teaching young children about health and hygiene will assist in the prevention of infectious diseases. Providing families with timely and current information will further support this process.

Rationale

Educators will prioritise children's exposure to infectious diseases by following the recommended guidelines from Public Health and Staying Healthy in Childcare regarding the prevention of infectious diseases. Educators will promote practices such as hand washing to reduce the transmission of infection. The ECEC will also provide families with relevant information regarding the importance of immunisation.

Strategies

The way that children interact with each other within the ECEC means that diseases can spread quickly in a variety of ways. Whilst it is not possible to prevent the spread of all infections and diseases, minimizing the risk is enhanced through;

- Effective hand washing.
- Exclusion of ill children, educators and other staff.
- Immunisation.

Immunisation

- Families will be required to provide an Australian Immunisation Register (AIR) Immunisation History Statement upon enrolment and each time the immunisations occur. The immunisation statement must be an approved copy provided by Medicare.
- Children will not be able to commence at the ECEC until they have provided their current up to date AIR Immunisation History Statement to enrolments.
- Under the Public Health Act 2010, from 1 January 2018, the ECEC cannot enroll a child unless the parent / guardian has provided an approved immunisation form that shows the child:
    - Is fully immunised for their age, or;
    - Is on a recognised catch-up schedule if the child has fallen behind with their immunisations.

Infectious Diseases

In order to prevent the spread of infectious diseases through interpersonal contact, the ECEC will adhere to the exclusion period table, published by the Department of Health. The table is also displayed in the hallway of ECEC for all families, staff and educators to access.

Fever

In children, a temperature over 38 degrees indicates a fever. A fever is usually caused by an infection somewhere in the body. Some types of infections that lead to fever include viral or bacterial infections.

In order to prevent the spread of infection and ensure wellbeing, children with a temperature above 38 degrees will be excluded from ECEC. If a child gets a temperature while at ECEC, educators will contact the child's family and ask them to collect their child.

The Nominated Supervisor will:

- Ensure the ECEC operates in line with the Education and Care Services National Law and National Regulations.
- Ensure that a minimum of one staff with current approved first aid qualifications is rostered on.
- Contact the parent / guardian of a child suspected of suffering from an infectious or vaccine – preventable disease and ask them to collect their child from the ECEC.
- Oversee the exclusion requirements for infectious diseases are adhered to as per the recommended minimum exclusion periods.
- Notify the regulatory authority as soon as possible and within 24 hours of a serious incident including when a child becomes ill with an infectious disease notifiable to Public Health at the ECEC or if emergency medical attention is sought while the child is attending the ECEC.
- Inform and implement the advice of Public Health regarding Infectious Diseases as required.
- Oversee relevant records regarding the current status of children's immunisation records are maintained.
- Record medical conditions of staff and children in a confidential manner.
- Advise staff of the recommended immunisations for people working with children as per the Staying Healthy in Childcare Guidelines (6th edn).
- Provide information to staff regarding the exclusion of children and educators for infectious diseases.
- Communicate any changes to the exclusion table or immunisation schedule to staff and families in a timely manner.
- Display any relevant information from Staying Healthy in Childcare (5th edn) for parents so they are aware of the infectious disease.
- Request that families notify the ECEC if their child has, or is suspected of having, an infectious disease.
- Ensure that incident/injury/trauma/illness forms are completed as soon as practicable and within 24 hours.
- Support staff to maintain a hygienic environment.
- Where possible implement recommendations from Staying Healthy in Childcare – Preventing Infectious Diseases in Childcare (6th edn) to prevent the spread of infectious diseases.
- In the event that a child becomes ill with symptoms of vomiting, inform families that their child needs to remain at home for 24hours after the last onset.

Educators will:

- Guide and support children's developing awareness and understanding of health and hygiene.
- Remain up to date with relevant immunisation guidelines for children and themselves.
- Respond to any children who are suspected of having an infectious illness and support their health and emotional needs at all times.

- Ensure that families are aware of the need to collect their child as soon as practical to ensure the child's comfort if they become unwell or show symptoms of a suspected infectious disease.
- Implement appropriate health and safety procedures when tending to ill children.
- Provide various opportunities for children to engage in hygiene practices, including routine opportunities and intentional practice.
- Advise families that they will need to alert the ECEC if their child is diagnosed with an infectious illness.
- Take into consideration the grouping of children to reduce the risk of acquiring an infectious illness when planning the routines of the day.
- Wash all linen after each use.
- Clean all mouthed toys.
- Maintain a hygienic environment.
- Role model appropriate hand washing procedures. Remind children to wash their hands frequently throughout the day.
- In the event that a child becomes ill with symptoms of vomiting, inform families that their child needs to remain at home for 24hours after the last onset.
- Maintain own immunisation status.

Exclusion:

- All information regarding the prevention of infectious diseases is sourced from a recognised health authority such as: Staying Healthy in Child Care (6th Edn) and/or NSW Health.
- The implementation of exclusion periods will be sourced from Staying Healthy in Child Care (6th edn) and or NSW Health.
- The recommended exclusion periods for infectious diseases will be available for families.
- The recommended exclusion periods for infectious diseases will be adhered to in an effort to avoid the spread of infection.
- In the event that a child becomes ill with symptoms of vomiting, inform families that their child needs to remain at home for 24hours after the last onset. In the event that there is an outbreak at ECEC, families will be asked to keep their children at home for 48hours after the last onset as per Public Health advise.
- The Public Health Unit will be notified by the Nominated Supervisor if an outbreak of gastroenteritis (2 or more cases) occurs within the ECEC.

Families will:

- Keep children at home if they are unwell or if they are recovering from an excludable infectious disease.
- Keep children at home if they have a temperature of 38 degrees and over and keep their children at home if they administered Panadol or Nurofen within the past 24 hours for a temperature.
- Understand and follow the procedures on all policies related to children's health.
- Inform ECEC if their child becomes unwell or is staying away from ECEC due to an infectious disease.
- Provide ECEC with the AIR Immunisation History Statement on enrolment and as administered.

Statutory Legislation and Considerations

Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010

Education and Care Services National Regulations

Guide to the National Quality Standard ACECQA

Sources

Community Early Learning Australia www.cela.org.au

Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA) www.acecqa.gov.au

Australian Childcare Alliance www.childcarealliance.org.au

NSW Health https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/

Staying Healthy in Childcare 6th Edition

Department of Health www.nhmrc.gov.au

Review

This policy is reviewed by management, employees and families as required or when legislative requirements change.

Families and staff are essential stakeholders in the policy review and will be given opportunity and encouragement to be actively involved.