



# CONTROL OF INFECTIOUS DISEASES POLICY

Related Quality Area	QA2: Children’s Health and Safety
Related Policies	<p>Immunization Policy</p> <p>Hand Washing Policy</p> <p>Health and Safety Policy</p> <p>Incident, Illness, Accident, and Injury Policy</p> <p>Medical Conditions Policy</p>

## PURPOSE

Nightcliff Family Centre (the Centre) will minimize children’s exposure to infectious diseases by adhering to all recommended guidelines from relevant government 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 immunization, and implementing effective hygiene practices.

The Centre has a duty of care to ensure that children, families, educators, and visitors at the Centre are provided with a high level of protection during the hours of operation. We aim to manage illnesses and prevent the spread of infectious diseases throughout the Centre.

## SCOPE

This policy applies to children, families, staff, management, and visitors to the Centre.

## IMPLEMENTATION

The Centre is committed to minimizing the spread of infectious diseases and viruses by implementing recommendations stated in the *Staying healthy: Preventing infectious diseases in early childhood education and care services* (Fifth Edition).

We are guided by decisions regarding exclusion periods and notification of infectious diseases by the Northern Territory Department of Health Public Health Unit as per the Public Health Act.

The need for exclusion and the length of time a person is excluded from the Centre depends on:

- how easily the infection can spread,
- how long the person is likely to be infectious; and
- the severity of the infectious disease or illness.

*This policy should be read in conjunction with our other Quality Area 2 policies:*

- Immunisation Policy
- Sick Children Policy
- Incident, Illness, Accident, and Trauma Policy
- Medical Conditions Policy
- Handwashing Policy

Children enter education and care services when their immune systems are still developing. They have not been exposed to many common germs and therefore are susceptible to bacteria that may cause infections. Given the close physical contact, children have with other children in early childhood care, it is very easy for infectious diseases and illnesses to spread through normal daily activities.

Our Centre implements practical hygienic practices to limit the spread of illness and infectious diseases, including:

- Effective hand washing hygiene.
- Cough and sneeze etiquette.
- Appropriate use of gloves.
- Exclusion of children, educators, or staff when they are unwell or displaying symptoms of an infectious disease or virus.
- Effective environmental cleaning including toys and resources (including bedding).
- Display of signage encouraging parents and visitors to wash their hands with soap and water or hand sanitizer upon arrival and departure at the Centre.
- Physical distancing where able.

### Immunization requirements

Immunization is a reliable way to prevent many childhood infectious diseases.

*Refer to Immunisation Policy for more information.*

### Reporting Outbreaks to the Public Health Unit

Outbreaks of communicable diseases and contagious viruses represent a threat to public health. To help prevent outbreaks, the Department of Health monitors the number of people who contract certain infectious diseases and their characteristics, the recent travel or attendance of infected people in a public place or on public transport and works with health specialists and doctors to help prevent the transmission of diseases to other people.

The Public Health Act 2010 lawfully requires and authorizes doctors, hospitals, laboratories, school principals, and childcare center directors to confidentially notify [NSW Health](#) of patients with certain conditions and to provide the required information on the notification forms. Specialist trained public health staff review this information and if necessary, contact the patient's doctor, and sometimes the patient, to provide advice about disease control and to complete the collection of information.

All information is held confidentially to protect the patient's privacy. Both the NSW and Commonwealth Privacy Acts only release/disclose patient information where it is lawfully required or authorized.

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 Service is suffering from one of the following vaccine-preventable diseases **or any confirmed case of COVID-19**

- Diphtheria
- Mumps
- Poliomyelitis
- Haemophilus influenzae Type b (Hib)
- Meningococcal disease
- Rubella ('German measles')
- Measles
- Pertussis ('whooping cough')
- Tetanus
- An outbreak of 2 or more people with gastrointestinal or respiratory illness

Management will closely monitor health alerts and guidelines from Public Health Units and the Australian Government- Department of Health for any advice and emergency health management in the event of a contagious illness outbreak- eg (COVID-19)

### Management will ensure:

- All information regarding the prevention and transmission of infectious diseases is sourced from a recognized Government Health authority e.g. Northern Territory Government Public Health Unit.
- Exclusion periods for people with infectious diseases recommended by Government Authorities are implemented for all staff, children, parents, families, and visitors.
- **the Service implements recommendations from [Staying healthy: Preventing infectious diseases in early childhood education and care services](#) to maintain a healthy environment**
- Advice and recommendations from Safe Work Australia will be implemented where reasonably possible
- Children are protected from harm by ensuring relevant health and safety policies and procedures are followed.
- Required enrolment information, including health and immunization records of enrolled children is collected, maintained, and appropriately and securely stored.
- A staff immunization record that documents each staff member's previous infection or immunizations (including dates) is developed and maintained.
- **For Educators and other staff at our Service** the annual Influenza (flu) vaccine is compulsory and all adults are encouraged to receive COVID-19 vaccinations.
- The Public Health Unit is notified in the event of an outbreak of viral gastroenteritis. Management must document the number of cases, dates of onset, and duration of symptoms. An outbreak is when two or more children or staff have a sudden onset of diarrhea or vomiting within 2 days. (NSW Government- Health 2019)

### A nominated supervisor/responsible person will ensure:

- A hygienic environment is promoted and maintained.
- Children are supported in their understanding of health and hygiene practices throughout the daily program and routine (hand washing, cough and sneeze etiquette).
- Educators and staff are aware of relevant immunization guidelines for children and themselves.
- Immunisation charts are displayed at the Centre.
- An immunization History Statement for each child is collected on enrolment.
- Families are provided with relevant sourced materials and information on infectious diseases, health, and hygiene including the current NT immunization schedule and any information regarding any infectious diseases in general and information regarding any specific infectious illnesses that are suspected/present in the Centre.
- Families are provided with information about an infectious disease by displaying and emailing the Infectious Diseases.
- Families are advised that they must alert the Centre if their child is diagnosed with an Infectious Illness.
- All educators are mindful and maintain the confidentiality of individual children's medical circumstances.
- That opportunities for educators to source pertinent up-to-date information from trusted sources on the prevention of infectious diseases and maintaining health and hygiene are provided.
- That opportunities for staff, children, and families to have access to health professionals by organizing visits/guest speakers to attend the service to confirm best practices are provided.
- To complete the register of *Illness, Accident, or Trauma* and/or document incidents of infectious diseases no later than 24 hours of an illness or infectious disease occurring in the Service.
- Educators or staff who have diarrhea or an infectious disease do not handle food for others and are not to return to work until they have been symptom-free for 48 hours.

- Any risk to a child or adult with complex medical needs is minimized in the event of an outbreak of an infectious disease or virus. This may require a risk assessment and decision-making regarding the suitability of attendance of the child or staff member during this time.

#### Educators will ensure:

- That any child suspected of having an infectious illness is responded to and their health and emotional needs supported at all times
- Any child suspected of having an infectious illness is isolated from other children and supervised whilst waiting for collection by parents or guardians.
- That appropriate health and safety procedures are implemented when treating ill children
- Families are aware of the need to collect their unwell child/ children as soon as practicable from the Centre.
- All resources or items touched by a child with a suspected illness are thoroughly cleaned and disinfected (e.g. cushions, pillows, toys).
- Their immunization status is maintained, and the Approved Provider/Nominated Supervisor is advised of any updates to their immunization status.
- Opportunities are provided for children to participate in hygiene practices, including routine opportunities, and intentional practices such as hand washing, sneezing, and cough etiquette.
- Consideration is given to the combination of children to decrease the risk of attaining an infectious illness when planning the routines/program of the day.
- They adhere to the Centre's health and safety policies.
- They maintain up-to-date knowledge concerning Health and Safety through ongoing professional development opportunities.
- Children do not share beds at the same time.
- Paper towel and disinfectant is used to clean beds after each use
- That all play dough is freshly made every week. If there is an outbreak of vomiting and/or diarrhea, or any other contagious communicable disease, play dough is to be discarded at the end of each day and a new batch is made each day for the duration of the outbreak **or avoided completely.**
- Children wash their hands before and after using play dough.

#### Prevention strategies for minimizing the spread of disease within our Centre include all staff ensuring:

- Mops used for toilet accidents are to be soaked in disinfectant in a bucket in the laundry sink and then air-dried
- That a daily clean is carried out on other surfaces that may transmit germs such as high-touch objects including doorknobs, tables, light switches, handles, remotes, play gyms, low shelving, etc. This will be increased to several times a day if an outbreak of an infectious disease/virus has been recorded in the Centre or to minimize the risk of transmission of a virus such as COVID-19.
- That if a child has a toileting accident, the items are placed in a plastic bag and put into the child's bag to take home.
- Cloths are color coded so that a separate cloth is used to clean floors, bathrooms, art and craft, and metal surfaces.
- That any toy that is mouthed by a child is placed immediately in the 'toys to be washed' basket located on the top shelf in the nappy change area and washed with warm soapy water at the end of the day. All washable toys out on display for the children are to be washed every week to decrease the risk of cross-contamination and recorded with the date and a signature as evidence.

- Toys and equipment (that are difficult to wash) will be washed with detergent (or soap and water) and air-dried in sunlight
- Washable toys and equipment will be washed in detergent and hot water or the dishwasher and aired to dry (toys will not be washed in the dishwasher at the same time as dishes). All toys and equipment that have been cleaned will be recorded on the toy cleaning register.
- A 'Dummy Basket' is located by the sign-in sheet that requires all children that use a dummy to place the dummy in the basket in an individual container, small zip-locked plastic bag, or a protector with the child's name clearly stated to reduce the risk of cross-contamination
- All cleaning procedures will be recorded on the Service's Cleaning Checklist
- Furnishings, fabric tablecloths, and pillowcases will be laundered at the end of each week
- Floor surfaces will be cleaned daily after each meal and at the end of each day
- Toilets/bathrooms will be cleaned in the middle of the day, at the end of the day, and whenever needed throughout the day using disinfectant and paper towel.
- Disposable paper towels and disinfectants are used to clean bodily fluids off beds, floors, bathrooms, etc.
- Pregnant staff members should not change nappies or assist in toileting or cleaning up toileting accidents to prevent unexpected cross contamination and risk of contracting Cytomegalovirus (CMV).

#### Families will:

- Adhere to this policy regarding sick children and exclusion requirements.
- Adhere to the Centre's restrictions of entry, in the event of an outbreak of an infectious disease or virus.
- Adhere to the Centre's Hand Washing policy.
- Exclude their child from care if they display symptoms of an infectious illness or disease or in the event of a vaccine-preventable disease occurring in the Centre and their child is not immunized fully.
- A clearance notification needs to be given to the center if the child had an infection or disease to go back into care
- Advise the Centre of their child's immunization status, by providing a current Immunisation History Statement recorded on the Australian Immunisation Register (AIR) for the Centre to copy and place in the child's file.
- Advise the Centre when their child's medical action plan is updated.
- Provide sufficient spare clothing, particularly if the child is toilet training.
- Adhere to the Service's risk minimization strategies if their child has complex medical needs in the event of an outbreak of an infectious disease or virus.
- Contacts to be aware of and information that should be displayed at the Centre:

INFORMATION	WEBSITE	PHONE NUMBER
National Immunisation Program (NIP) Service	<a href="https://beta.health.gov.au/initiatives-and-programs/national-immunisation-program">https://beta.health.gov.au/initiatives-and-programs/national-immunisation-program</a>	1800 020 103
NT Childhood vaccination schedule	<a href="https://nt.gov.au/wellbeing/healthy-living/immunisation/child-vaccinations">https://nt.gov.au/wellbeing/healthy-living/immunisation/child-vaccinations</a>	

Northern Territory Government Department of Health – vaccinations recommendations for childcare workers	<a href="https://immunisationhandbook.health.gov.au/vaccination-for-special-risk-groups/vaccination-for-people-at-occupational-risk">https://immunisationhandbook.health.gov.au/vaccination-for-special-risk-groups/vaccination-for-people-at-occupational-risk</a>	1800 020 103
Staying healthy in childcare	<a href="https://www.nhmrc.gov.au/about-us/publications/staying-healthy-preventing-infectious-diseases-early-childhood-education-and-care-services">https://www.nhmrc.gov.au/about-us/publications/staying-healthy-preventing-infectious-diseases-early-childhood-education-and-care-services</a>	
Northern Territory Public Health Unit, Department of Health	<a href="https://health.nt.gov.au/professionals/centre-for-disease-control/cdc-contacts">https://health.nt.gov.au/professionals/centre-for-disease-control/cdc-contacts</a>	8922 8044

#### REVIEW

POLICY REVIEWED	August 2021	NEXT REVIEW DATE	August 2022
MODIFICATIONS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No Modifications but we add the Covid 19 Safety Plan to this Policy</li> </ul>		

#### REVIEW

POLICY REVIEWED BY	Judy Rondon	Director	August 2022
POLICY REVIEWED	August 2022	NEXT REVIEW DATE	August 2024
MODIFICATIONS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Policy reviewed as per review cycle</li> <li>No modifications were made</li> </ul>		
POLICY REVIEWED BY	Judy Rondon	Director	August 2024
POLICY REVIEWED	August 2024	NEXT REVIEW DATE	August 2026
MODIFICATIONS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Policy reviewed as per review cycle</li> <li>Modification made to be according with the Vaccination Policy:</li> <li><i>“For Educators and other staff at our Service the annual Influenza (flu) vaccine is compulsory, and all adults are encouraged to receive COVID-19 vaccinations”.</i></li> </ul>		

