

# Illness Policy

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## 1. Policy statement

### Values

This centre is committed to:

- As far as practicable, providing a safe and healthy environment for all children, staff, and any other persons participating in the program.
- Responding to the needs of the child if the child becomes ill, or is traumatised whilst attending the centre.
- Ensuring safe and appropriate administration of medication in accordance with legislative requirements.
- Providing up-to-date information for parents/guardians and staff regarding immunisation and the protection of all children from infectious diseases.
- Complying with the exclusion requirements for infectious diseases set out in the DHS Communicable Diseases Exclusion Table (refer to Infectious Diseases Policy, Appendix 2).

### Purpose

This policy will clearly define:

- Procedures to be followed if a child becomes sick
- Responsibilities of staff, parents/guardians and committee/board.

## 2. Scope

This policy applies to the committee/board, staff, parents/guardians, children, volunteers and students involved with the centre.

## 3. Background and Legislation

- *Children's Services Act 1996.*
- *Children's Services Regulations 1998.*
- *Health (Infectious Diseases) Regulations 2001.*
- *Occupational Health and Safety Act 2000.*

## 4. Definitions

**Exclusion:** Unable to attend or participate in the program.

**DHS:** Department of Human Services

**Illness:** Any sickness and/or associated symptoms that affect the child's normal participation in the program.

**Immunisation status:** The extent to which a child has been immunised in relation to the recommended immunisation schedule.

**Infectious disease:** A disease that could be spread by air, water, interpersonal contact etc.

**Injury:** Any harm or damage to a person.

**Medication:** Any substance that is administered for the treatment of an illness or condition.

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## 5. Procedures

### Administrative and operational procedures

#### **The committee/board is responsible for:**

- Providing and maintaining a suitably equipped First Aid Kit.
- Rostering at least one staff member with the required first aid qualification on duty whenever children are being cared for or educated by the centre.
- Providing appropriate equipment and materials for the implementation of the *Step-by-Step Infection Control Procedure Relating to Blood Borne Viruses* (refer to Appendix 1, *HIV/AIDS and Hepatitis Policy*).
- Ensuring completed medication, accident, injury and illness records are archived and stored securely for 25 years.

#### **The staff are responsible for:**

- Maintaining children's enrolment records regarding their current immunisation status.
- Ensuring children's enrolment forms provide authorisation for the centre to seek emergency medical treatment by a medical practitioner, hospital or ambulance service.
- Ensuring that the *Step-by-Step Procedure for Infection Control Procedure Relating to Blood Borne Viruses* is displayed in a prominent position within the centre and implemented at all times.

#### **The parents/guardians are responsible for:**

- Providing authorisation in their child's enrolment record for the centre to seek emergency medical treatment by a medical practitioner, hospital or ambulance centre.
- All costs associated with an ambulance service called to attend their child at the centre.
- Notifying the centre of any other medical conditions/or needs and any management procedure to be followed with respect to that condition or need.
- Implementing the centres *Step-by-Step Infection Control Procedures for Blood Borne Viruses* when assisting at the centre.

### Procedures when ill children are sent to the centre, or become ill at the centre

#### **The committee/board is responsible for:**

- Notifying, as soon as practicable, the regional DHS office of any illness requiring treatment by a registered medical practitioner or admission to a hospital and forwarding a copy of the accident, injury and illness record.
- Investigating possible causes of the illness or sources of infection and taking appropriate action if required. Refer to *Infectious Diseases Policy* if required.

#### **The staff are responsible for:**

- Notifying parents/guardians on arrival, or as soon as symptoms present, if they believe the child has:
  - o Gastroenteritis
  - o Respiratory infection (more than just the common cold)
  - o Hand, foot and mouth disease (when weeping blisters are present)
  - o Other symptoms as listed in Appendix 1 of this policy

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- o Any of the infectious diseases listed in the DHS *Communicable Diseases Exclusion Table* (refer to Infectious Diseases Policy, Appendix 2).
  - Advising parents/guardians will be advised that the child is not able to attend the program until better, or if an infectious disease, according to the DHS *Communicable Diseases Exclusion Table*.
  - Taking the child's temperature and recording this in the accident, injury and illness book.
  - Washing hands after wiping a child's nose or attending to a child who might be sick.
  - Keeping an ill child comfortable, away from other children and under observation until the parents/guardians or person authorised to collect the child from the centre arrives.
  - Recording details of the illness/symptoms shown by the child in the accident, injury and illness book.
  - Notifying the committee/board of any illness that requires treatment by a medical practitioner or an admission to hospital.

**The parents/guardians are responsible for:**

- Collecting their child from the centre as soon as possible after being notified their child is unwell.
- Keeping their child at home until well or until the specified exclusion time has elapsed.

6. Related documents

- DHS *Children's Services Guide*, [www.dhs.vic.gov.au/earlychildhood](http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/earlychildhood)
- DHS *Communicable Diseases Exclusion Table*, available from [www.health.vic.gov.au/ideas](http://www.health.vic.gov.au/ideas). Go to guidelines and scroll to table in list. Further information is obtainable from the DHS Communicable Diseases Unit on 1300 651 160
- DHS, *Community Service Organisations Insurance Manual 2005-2006* available on the Funded Agency Channel or [www.vmia.vic.gov.au](http://www.vmia.vic.gov.au)
- NHMRC(2005), *Staying Healthy in Child Care*, 4th edition, available at [www.nhmrc.gov.au/publications](http://www.nhmrc.gov.au/publications) or email [nhmrc.publications@nhmrc.gov.au](mailto:nhmrc.publications@nhmrc.gov.au) or telephone 1800 020 103 to request a free copy.

**Centre policies**

- Accident, Injury and Medical emergency
- Administration of Medication
- HIV/AIDS & Hepatitis, Appendix 1, *Step-by-Step Procedure for Infection Control Relating to Blood Borne Viruses*.
- Infectious Diseases, Appendix 2, *Communicable Diseases Exclusion Table*.

7. Authorisation

This policy was adopted by the Parkdale Preschool committee/board, at the committee/board meeting on 18<sup>th</sup> April 2007.

8. Review date

This policy will be reviewed annually, or varied earlier if necessary, and the committee/board will within 28 days of making any change, notify the parents/guardians of the children attending, of that change. (Regulation 20(3)).

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## 9. Evaluation

In order to assess whether the policy has achieved the values and purposes the committee/board will:

- Use a quality assessment tool, for example the Preschool Quality Assessment Checklist.
- If appropriate, conduct a survey in relation to this policy or incorporate relevant questions within the general parents/guardians survey.
- Take into account feedback from staff, parents/guardians regarding the policy.
- Monitor complaints and incidents regarding illnesses of children attending the centre.

The Children's Services Regulations 1998 (regulation 209(2)(g)) require centres to have procedures for dealing with illness and emergency care.

It is recommended to display these contact numbers at each telephone:

- Ambulance contact card
- DHS regional office
- Committee/board
- Asthma Victoria 03 9326 7055 or toll free 1800 645 130 [advice@asthma.org.au](mailto:advice@asthma.org.au)
- Police
- Victorian Poisons Information Centre 13 11 26
- Local Fire Brigade

## CHECKING FOR SYMPTOMS OF ILLNESS

Be aware of symptoms of illness throughout the day. The publication *Staying Healthy in Child Care* recommends the following things to look for:

- Severe, persistent or prolonged coughing (child goes red or blue in the face, and makes a high-pitched croupy or whooping sound after coughing)
- Breathing trouble
- Yellowish skin or eyes
- Unusual spots or rashes
- Patch of infected skin (crusty skin or discharging yellow area of skin)
- Feverish appearance
- Unusual behaviour (child is cranky or less active than usual, cries more than usual, seems uncomfortable or just seems unwell)
- Frequent scratching of the scalp or skin
- Sore throat or difficulty in swallowing
- Headache, stiff neck
- Loss of appetite