

# SICK CHILDREN POLICY

Children encounter many other children and adults within Happy Haven OSHC service's, increasing their exposure to others who may be sick or carrying an infectious illness. The National Quality Standard requires Out of School Hours services to implement specific strategies to minimise the spread of infectious illness and maintain a healthy environment for all children, educators and families. Happy Haven OSHC acknowledges the difficulty of keeping children at home or away from school and OSHC when they are sick and the pressures this causes for parents, however our services aim to minimise the transmission of infectious diseases by adhering to regulations and policies protecting the health of all children, staff, families and visitors.

## NATIONAL QUALITY STANDARD (NQS)

QUALITY AREA 2: CHILDREN'S HEALTH AND SAFETY		
2.1	Health	Each child's health and physical activity is supported and promoted.
2.1.1	Wellbeing and comfort	Each child's wellbeing and comfort is provided for, including appropriate opportunities to meet each child's need for sleep, rest and relaxation.
2.1.2	Health practices and procedures	Effective illness and injury management and hygiene practices are promoted and implemented.

EDUCATION AND CARE SERVICES NATIONAL REGULATIONS	
77	Health, hygiene and safe food practices
88	Infectious diseases
86	Notification to parents of incident, injury, trauma and illness
87	Incident, injury, trauma and illness record
90	Medical conditions policy
92	Medication record
93	Administration of medication
96	Self-administration of medication
168	Education and care service must have policies and procedures

## RELATED POLICIES

<p>Administration of First Aid Policy Administration of Medication Policy Control of Infectious Diseases Coronavirus- COVID-19 Management Policy Enrolment Policy Family Communication Policy</p>	<p>Handwashing Policy Immunisation Policy Medical Conditions Policy Trauma Management Policy Serious Incident Policy Incident and Injury Management Policy Illness Management Policy</p>
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## PURPOSE

Happy Haven OSHC aims to maintain the health and wellbeing of all children, staff and their families, ensuring a healthy environment and minimising cross contamination and the spread of infectious illnesses by implementing best practice and high standards of personal hygiene within each of our services.

## SCOPE

This policy applies to children, families, staff, and visitors of Happy Haven OSHC.

## IMPLEMENTATION

Happy Haven OSHC has adopted the information on infectious diseases developed by the National Health and Medical Research Council and the Australian Government and published in *Staying healthy: Preventing infectious diseases in early childhood education and care services* (Fifth Edition). We aim to provide families with up-to-date information regarding specific illnesses and ways to minimise the spread of infection within each Happy Haven OSHC service and at home.

Happy Haven OSHC are guided by decisions regarding exclusion periods and notification of infectious diseases by the Australian Government- Department of Health and local public health units (e.g SA Health) in our jurisdiction as per the Public Health Act.

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

- Control of Infectious Diseases Policy
- Immunisation Policy
- Incident, Illness, Accident and Trauma Policy
- Medical Conditions Policy and

- Handwashing Policy

*Staying Healthy: Preventing infectious diseases in early childhood education and care services (2013) explains how infections are spread as 'The Chain of Infection'.*

There are three steps in the chain:

- The germ has a source
- The germ spreads from the source
- The germ infects another person

#### The germ has a source

Germs can be picked up directly from an infected person or from the environment. It is important to understand that an infected person may not show any signs or symptoms of illness.

#### The germ spreads from the source

Germs can spread in several ways, including through the air by droplets, through contact with faeces and then contact with mouths, through direct contact with skin, and through contact with other body secretions (such as urine, saliva, discharges or blood).

Some germs can spread directly from person to person; others can spread from the infected person to the environment. Many germs can survive on hands, and on objects such as toys, door handles and bench tops. The length of time a germ can survive on a surface (including the skin) depends on the germ itself, the type of surface it has contaminated and how often the surface is cleaned. Washing hands and surfaces regularly with detergent and water is a very effective way of removing germs and preventing them spreading through the environment.

(Source: *Staying healthy: Preventing infectious diseases in early childhood education and care services*, 5<sup>th</sup> Edition, 2013 p: 7)

#### The germ infects another person

When the germ has reached the next person, it may enter the body through the mouth, respiratory tract, eyes, genitals, or broken or abraded skin. Whether a person becomes ill after the germ has entered the

body depends on both the germ and the person's immunity. Illness can be prevented at this stage by stopping the germ from entering the body (for example, by washing children's hands, by covering wounds), and by prior immunisation against the germ.

(Source: *Staying healthy: Preventing infectious diseases in early childhood education and care services*, 5<sup>th</sup> Edition, 2013 p: 7)

### **Minimizing the spread of infections and diseases in Out of School Hours Care Services**

Happy Haven OSHC understand that it can be difficult for families to know when their child is sick. Families may experience problems taking time off work or study to care for their child at home. Obtaining leave from work or study can contribute to negative attitudes in the workplace, which can cause stress on families. Families may also experience guilt when they send their child to care who is not well.

However, it is imperative that families maintain a focus not only on the wellbeing of their own child but also upon the wellbeing of other children and the educators of Happy Haven OSHC. To protect the health of children and educators within our OSHC services, it is important that children and educators who are ill are kept away from the OSHC service for the recommended period.

At times, an outbreak of a new or 'novel' virus or infection, such as COVID-19, may require exclusion from the service that is not specified in general exclusion periods for common infectious illnesses. Information, education and recommendations regarding any 'novel' virus will be provided by the Australian Government Department of Health and/or local public health unit (SA Health).

(see Excluding Children from the Service section)

The need for exclusion and the length of time a person is excluded 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.

Our educators are not medical practitioners and are not able to diagnose whether or not a child has an infectious illness. However, if an infectious illness is suspected, Happy Haven OSHC may ask the family

to collect their child from care as soon as possible. Senior Leadership and educators may request families seek medical advice and provide a medical certificate stating that the child is no longer infectious prior to returning to care. **Please note: it is not always possible to obtain a doctor's certificate or clearance for suspected cases of an illness. The decision to approve a child's return is up to the Approved Provider/Nominated Supervisor**

To help minimise the spread of illness and infectious diseases Happy Haven OSHC implements rigorous hygiene and infection control procedures and cleaning routines including:

- Effective hand washing hygiene
- Cough and sneeze etiquette
- Use of protective gloves
- Providing sufficient cleaning and first aid supplies
- Exclusion of children, educators or staff when they are unwell or displaying symptoms of an infectious disease or virus
- Effective environmental cleaning including surfaces, toys, dress-up clothing, tea-towels, cushion covers and resources
- Requesting parents, educators, children and visitors to wash their hands with soap and water or hand sanitizer upon arrival and departure at the Service
- Physical distancing and/ or mask wearing (when recommended by Australian Health Protection Principal Committee [AHPPC], SA Health or Safe Work Australia)
- Providing clean drinking and eating utensils
- Sanitising food preparation and serving areas prior to and following use
- Emptying and cleaning bins daily
- Ensuring access to hygiene facilities for appropriate disposal of sanitary pads and tampons
- Ensuring toilets, toilet flushing and hand washing facilities are accessible for all children and educators
- Keeping any animals and their enclosures in a clean and healthy condition by:
  - applying Standard Operating Procedures for the use of Animals in Schools, Preschools and Child Care Centres <https://www.education.sa.gov.au/doc/standard-operating-procedures-use-animals-schools-preschools-and-childcare-centres>
  - Complying with rules and regulations set out in the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1985

- Ensuring all areas are well ventilated
- Monitoring food and fridge temperatures
- Increased cleaning frequencies during pandemic periods (as recommended by recognised agencies such as Department for Education, SA Health, Australian Health Protection Principal Committee or Safe Work Australia)

### CHILDREN ARRIVING AT THE OSHC SERVICE WHO ARE UNWELL

The Nominated Supervisor/ Responsible Person/ Senior Leadership will not accept a child into care if they:

- Have or appear to have a contagious illness or infectious disease
- Have been in close contact with someone who has a positive confirmed case of COVID-19
- Have a temperature above **37.5°C when assessed prior to entry to the service (effective during a pandemic or outbreak of an infectious disease)**
- Are unwell and unable to participate in normal activities or require additional attention
- Have had a temperature in the last 24 hours
- Have vomited or had diarrhoea in the last 48 hours
- Have started a course of anti-biotics or new medication in the last 24 hours
- Have been given medication for a temperature (Panadol etc.)

### Children who become ill at the OSHC service

Children may become unwell while at the OSHC service, in which case the Nominated Supervisor, the Responsible Person and educators will respond to children's individual symptoms of illness.

- Educators will closely monitor and document the child's symptoms on the *Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Record*
- Educators will refer to 'Staying Healthy in Childcare' for details on the symptoms the child is presenting with – educators will not make a diagnosis, however may share the information with the child's family
- Children who are unwell at the OSHC service will be able to rest in a supervised area away from other children until parents or the emergency contact person is able to collect them
- The Responsible Person will contact the parents/guardian if their child has passed runny stools/vomited whilst at the Service to be picked up and may only return once a Doctor's Certificate has been produced

- Educators will take the child's temperature. If the child's temperature is 38°C or higher, The Responsible Person will contact the child's parents/guardian/emergency contacts as soon as possible to have the child picked up
- Educators will attempt to lower the child's temperature by:
  - Asking the child to remove excess clothing- shoes and socks, jumpers etc.
  - Encouraging the child to take small sips of water
  - Applying dampened paper-towel or cloth to the back of the child's neck
- Educators will continue to document any progressing symptoms and follow any necessary First Aid guidelines
- Educators will complete the *Incident, Injury, Trauma or Illness Record* ensuring the form has been completed correctly and signed by the parent/guardian/emergency contact.
- Educators will thoroughly clean and disinfect any toys, surfaces, resources or equipment that may be contaminated by a sick child.

### Common colds and flu

The common cold or flu (viral upper respiratory tract infections) are very common in children occurring 6-10 times a year on average with the highest number usually being during the first 2 years in childcare, kindergarten or school. Symptoms may include coughing, runny nose and a slight temperature.

In circumstances where a child appears to have cold or flu symptoms, the Senior Leadership/ Nominated Supervisor/ Responsible Person will determine if the child is well enough to continue at the OSHC service or if the child requires parental care.

Happy Haven OSHC aims to support the family's need for care however, families should understand that a child who is unwell will need one-on-one attention which places additional pressure on staff ratios and the needs of other children.

Children who are generally healthy, will recover from a common cold in a few days. Keeping a child home and away from OSHC, helps to prevent the spread of germs.

Influenza is a highly contagious illness and can spread to others for 24 hours before symptoms start. To prevent the spread of influenza Happy Haven OSHC encourages staff and children to be vaccinated once a year.

### Reporting outbreaks to the Department of Health Communicable Disease Control Branch (CDCB)

Senior Leadership is required to notify the Department of Health Communicable Disease Control Branch by phone (call 1300 232 272) as soon as possible after they are made aware that a child enrolled at a Happy Haven OSHC service is suffering from one of the following vaccine preventable diseases, any confirmed case of COVID-19 or outbreak of gastroenteritis.

- 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.

Senior Leadership will closely monitor health alerts and guidelines from SA Health and the Australian Government- Department of Health for any advice and emergency health management in the event of a contagious illness outbreak.

### Excluding children from the OSHC service

When a child has been diagnosed with an illness or infectious disease, Happy Haven OSHC will refer to information about recommended exclusion periods from SA Health and request a medical clearance from the GP stating that the child is cleared to return to the Out of School Hours Service.

- [Recommended exclusion periods- Poster](#) Staying Healthy: Preventing Infectious diseases in early childhood education and care services
- [Minimum periods for exclusion from childcare services \(South Australia\)](#)

- When an infectious disease has been diagnosed, the OSHC service will display appropriate documentation and alerts for families including information on the illness/disease, symptoms, infectious period and the exclusion period. The method of alerts will be determined by Senior Leadership and confidentiality will be ensured for the child/ family. This documentation can also be obtained from *Staying healthy: Preventing infectious diseases in early childhood education and care*.
- If a vaccine preventable disease occurs in the OSHC service, children who have not been fully immunised may be excluded from care
- **A medical clearance from the child's General Practitioner stating that the child is cleared to return to the childcare setting will also be required before the child returns to care.**
- Children that have had diarrhoea and vomiting will be asked to stay away from the OSHC service for 48 hours after symptoms have ceased to reduce infection transmission as symptoms can develop again after 24 hours in many instances
- Children who have a suspected case of COVID-19 and meet the criteria for testing (fever, cough, sore throat, shortness of breath) are required to contact their GP or COVID-19 testing clinic. Exclusion periods will apply if they have a confirmed case.

#### Notifying families and emergency contact

It is a requirement of Happy Haven OSHC that all emergency contacts can pick up an ill child within a 30-minute timeframe.

If the ill child is not collected in a timely manner, or should parents refuse to collect the child a warning letter will be sent to the families outlining service policies and requirements. The letter of warning will specify that if there is a future breach of this nature, the child's position may be terminated.

#### SENIOR LEADERSHIP/ NOMINATED SUPERVISOR/ RESPONSIBLE PERSON/ EDUCATORS WILL ENSURE:

- Effective hygiene policies and procedures are adhered to at all times
- Effective environmental cleaning policies and procedures are adhered to all times
- All families are provided access to relevant policies upon enrolment including: *Control of Infectious Diseases Policy, Sick Children policy, Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Policy, Handwashing Policy and Medical Conditions Policy*
- That any child who registers a temperature of **38°C** or above is collected from the OSHC service and excluded for 24 hours since the last elevated temperature or until the service

receives a doctor's clearance letter stating that the child is cleared of any infection and able to return to child care

- A child who has not been immunised will be excluded from the OSHC service if an infectious disease is reported within the service community and that child is deemed to be in danger of contracting the illness. Please refer to our *Control of Infectious Diseases Policy*.
- Families of a child with complex and chronic medical conditions will be notified in the event of an outbreak of an illness or infectious disease that could compromise their health
- Families are notified to pick up their child if they have vomited or had diarrhoea whilst at the service.
- **Note:** Given that the children are enrolled in formal schooling they will be governed by their school's vaccination requirement policy and procedures.

#### THE APPROVED PROVIDER/ NOMINATED SUPERVISOR WILL ENSURE:

- Notification is made to the Regulatory Authorities within 24 hours of any incident involving serious injury or trauma to, or illness of, a child while being educated and cared for by an Education and Care Service, which:
  - (i) A reasonable person would consider required urgent medical attention from a registered medical practitioner or
  - (ii) For which the child attended, or ought reasonably to have attended, a hospital. For example: whooping cough, broken limb and anaphylaxis reaction
- Any incident or emergency where the attendance of emergency services at the Education and Care service premises was sought, or ought reasonably to have been sought (eg: severe asthma attack, seizure or anaphylaxis)
- Carers or guardians are notified as soon as practicable and no later than 24 hours of the illness, accident, or trauma occurring.
- Notification is made to the Public Health Unit on 1800 020 080 of any confirmed cases of COVID-19
- Notification is made to the Regulatory Authority within 24 hours of any confirmed cases of COVID-19

### FAMILIES WILL:

- In order to prevent the spread of disease, families are required to monitor their child's health and not allow them to attend OSHC if they have an infectious illness or display symptoms of an illness.
- For children who have ongoing medical needs such as asthma or anaphylaxis, parents should regularly review their child's health care action plans to ensure educators and other staff are able to manage their individual needs as required.
- Families should implement effective hygiene routines at home such as regular handwashing and sneeze and cough routines (use of tissues, covering their mouth with coughing, sneezing into a tissue or elbow).
- Families should notify the OSHC service if your child has been unwell in the past 24 hours or someone in the family is/has been sick. This is particularly critical during a pandemic such as COVID-19.
- Signs of illness in young children may include:
  - Runny, green nasal discharge
  - High temperature
  - Diarrhoea
  - Red, swollen or discharging eyes (bacterial conjunctivitis)
  - Vomiting
  - Rashes (Red/Purple)
  - Irritability, unusually tired or lethargic
  - Drowsiness
  - Breathing difficulty
  - Poor circulation
  - Poor urine output
  - A stiff neck or sensitivity to light
  - Pain
  - Mouth sore
  - Impetigo
  - National Health and Medical Research Council. (2012) (updated June 2013). *Staying healthy: Preventing infectious diseases in early childhood education and care services.*

- Caregivers should seek medical attention should your child (or other family members) develop symptoms such as:
  - High fever
  - Uncontrolled coughing or breathing difficulties
- Families should keep up to date with their child's immunisation, providing a copy of the updated immunisation schedule to the OSHC service.

#### Returning to care after surgery

- Children who have undergone any type of surgery will need to take advice from their doctor/surgeon as to when it is appropriate and safe to return to OSHC.
- A medical clearance statement may be required to ensure the child is fit and able to return to the OSHC and participate in regular activities.

## SOURCE

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Safe Work Australia (April 2020). *Early childhood education*, accessed on 21 January 2022, <https://covid19.swa.gov.au/covid-19-information-workplaces/industry-information/early-childhood-education>

## REVIEW

POLICY REVIEWED	JUNE 2022	NEXT DATE REVIEW	JUNE 2023
MODIFICATIONS	Minor editing and formatting changes.		
POLICY REVIEWED	PREVIOUS MODIFICATIONS	NEXT DATE	REVIEW DATE
February 2022	New Policy using ChildCare Desktop format - content also derived from previous policy Immunisation, Infectious Diseases and Infestations.	January 2023	
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