

Background

Parents, staff and visitors to childcare services need to cooperate to ensure anyone entering the service is in good health so that the possibility of infections spreading to others is minimised.

Policy statement

The Policy details the service's practices for managing unwell children and adults at the Service to minimise the spread of infection to others.

The philosophy of Petit Early Learning Journey (Petit) is to provide a safe and healthy environment for children to grow and learn about the world around them. In providing this Petit recognizes that the application of preventative measures is the best way of infection control.

The most important ways of preventing the spread of infectious diseases are:

- enhanced personal hygiene for children, staff and parents including effective hand washing;
- exclusion of unwell children, staff and visitors;
- social distancing; and
- immunisation.

Other strategies to prevent infection include:

- cough and sneeze etiquette;
- appropriate use of gloves, face masks or coverings and other protective personal equipment; and
- effective environmental cleaning.

Strategies and practices

- The *Managing Infectious Diseases Policy* is explained to parents when they enrol their child in the Service, and their attention is specifically drawn to their responsibilities under the Policy. Information about infectious conditions and minimum exclusion periods for these conditions is included in the enrolment pack.
- Educators are informed of the symptoms of excludable illnesses and disease and of infection control through staff meetings and professional development, and are provided with educational materials. They are alert to the signs of illness in children and respond accordingly. The signs include:
 - severe, persistent or prolonged coughing
 - breathing difficulties (e.g. noisy, wheezy)
 - yellowish skin or eyes
 - irritated eyes, eye lining red, pus from eyes
 - unusual spots or rashes
 - vomiting and/or diarrhoea
 - temperature over 38 degrees Celsius
 - behaviour exhibited that is not 'normal' for the child (e.g. sleeping, being unable to participate in the daily activities as usual).

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- The service's roster ensures sufficient educators with first aid qualifications are on site at all times children are present.
- All instances of illnesses and infectious diseases (children and staff) are recorded in the Illness and Infectious Disease Register so that they may be tracked and any spread minimised. The Register is kept in the service's office area.
- Educators intentionally teach children health and safety practices to prevent the spread of contagious diseases.
- The service strictly adheres to the National Health and Medical Research Council's recommended minimum exclusion periods for infectious conditions. The Time Out Poster – Queensland Health and/or the Recommended Minimum Exclusion Periods Poster – NHMRC detailing these periods is displayed prominently in the foyer and in other areas of the Service.
- The service is guided by explicit decisions regarding exclusion periods and notification of any infectious disease by the Australian Government- Department of Health and local Public Health Units in their jurisdiction under the Public Health Act. COVID-19 is a notifiable condition in all states and territories of Australia.
- If an outbreak of an infectious disease occurs in the Service, parents are informed verbally, by notices displayed throughout the Service and by email. Information given to parents will include the nature of the illness, symptoms, incubation and infectious periods and the Service's exclusion requirements for the illness.
- The Service maintains a Non-Immunised Children – Register and a Non-Immunised Staff – Register. Where an outbreak is a vaccine preventable disease, the Service will notify the relevant health authority, and will follow that authority's recommended guidelines and directives. Children and staff who are not immunised may be excluded from the Service for the duration of the outbreak. Refer to the *Immunisation for Children and Staff Policy* and *Employee Health and Safety Policy*.
- In the case of serious ill health or hospitalisation, the child or staff member may be asked to provide a medical certificate verifying that they are sufficiently recovered to return to the Service. However, the Nominated Supervisor has the final say on whether the child or a staff member may return.
- Parents are asked not to bring any unwell child into the service, and not to enter the service if they are unwell themselves. The Nominated Supervisor can refuse entry to any child or adult (including a staff member) who comes to the service clearly unwell.
- Should a child become unwell during the day, the parents or authorised person are contacted immediately to collect the child. The parent will be asked to sign the Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Record. If appropriate, the parent will be provided with a Parent/Doctor Report.
- Staff who become unwell during the day are sent home and replaced.
- To ensure the safety of other children, staff and visitors, parents are asked to inform the service if their child has been exposed to any infectious disease.
- Vaccinations are an effective control measure in stopping the spread of infectious diseases. Some people can experience mild or severe side effects after receiving vaccinations which may take several hours to appear. Because of this Petit require that children do not attend the service on the day they received a vaccination.

- The Approved Provider will notify the Regulatory Authority of a serious illness injury or trauma for which a child attended, or should have attended a hospital.

“Public health staff play a critical role in protecting people from infectious diseases and preventing harm from hazards involving chemicals, poisons or radiation. Public health units carry out disease surveillance and control initiatives, including responding to disease outbreaks. They also make sure that public health laws are followed. Public health staff provide advice and support to education and care services about infectious disease, infection control practices and public health issues. They also work with and support a range of other organisations, including health services, government departments, local governments, nongovernment agencies, research institutions and local communities.

Each state and territory maintains a list of diseases that the public health unit must be told about if the diseases occur; these are known as notifiable diseases. These diseases are notifiable so that public health staff can investigate and prevent further cases of rare and severe diseases, identify outbreaks, and help implement control measures. Some of the important diseases that public health units can provide advice on and help to control are measles, meningococcal disease, hepatitis A, pertussis (whooping cough) and outbreaks of gastroenteritis.

Education and care services should keep a copy of the list of notifiable diseases for their State or Territory – your local public health unit can provide the list, or you can check their website. The service benefits from talking to public health units about notifiable diseases because public health staff may be able to explain to educators and other staff:

- *The consequences of an infection to children, parents and those working in education and care services*
- *How to control further spread of the infection*
- *Appropriate infection control measures (e.g. vaccination, exclusion, education, environmental cleaning).”*

Extract from Staying Healthy: Preventing Infectious Diseases in Early Childhood Education and Care Services Fifth Edition, National Health and Medical Research Council

- All Educators follow mandatory reporting requirements as listed in the *Managing Reporting Requirements and Notifications Policy*.

Additional strategies and practices for COVID-19

- Educators at the service are committed to assist in COVID-19 infection prevention controls and have completed COVID-19 infection control training.
- any person visiting the service must sign the Visitor Health Declaration confirming that they have not come into close contact with anyone with a positive COVID-19 diagnosis in the past 14 days or travelled overseas or interstate in the past 14 days noting that interstate self-isolation only applies to some States and may change from time to time.
- new families must complete a Health Direction immediately prior to their child/ren’s first attendance at the service (including orientation).

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- any person who has been in close contact with someone who has a positive diagnosis of COVID-19 must self-isolate for 14 days. Household members of a person who has a confirmed case (including children) of COVID-19 must also be isolated from the childcare service and general public.
- in the event of a staff member, parent, child or visitor confirmed as testing positive for COVID-19 the Public Health Unit will be contacted, will conduct contact tracing and provide further advice to our Service if required. The Regulatory Authority will also be contacted and appropriate notifications provided if the service is directed to close for any period.
- any person (staff member, parent / carer, visitor or contractor) who is displaying symptoms of COVID-19 should be refused entry, encouraged to be tested and not allowed attend the service until they can provide medical clearance for their return.
- parents / carers and visitors to agree to having their temperature taken prior to entry to the service.
- upon request, staff members agree to check their own temperatures at the commencement of their rostered shift, again during their break and at any time during the day should they become unwell or display any symptoms of COVID-19.
- upon request, parents to agree to having their child's temperature taken by a staff member prior to entry to the service and again at any time during the day should they become unwell or display any symptoms of COVID-19.
- parents agree to have their child excluded if their child's temperature is equal to or above 37.5°C and action taken in accordance with the following table:

Temperature reading	Required action
Less than 37.5°	Child able to attend service.
Equal to or greater than 37.5° on first reading	The child should be asked to wait in a separate room and have their temperature re-checked in 15 minutes. If the child is wearing outerwear, the educator should suggest the child remove this once they are indoors.
Equal to or greater than 37.5° on second reading	The child should return home with their parent/carer. If their parent/carer is not present, the child will need to be isolated and the parent/carer contacted to collect them from the service as soon as possible. Families should be encouraged to seek the advice of their healthcare professional who can advise on next steps and coronavirus (COVID-19) testing.

Additional safe practices for infants

- To take extra care to adhere to all health and safety procedures (e.g. nappy change, bottle preparation) at the first sign of any outbreak of illness in the Service.

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Responsibilities of parents

- To keep the Service informed of their child's current immunisation status.
- To provide, if requested, a medical certificate verifying that the child who has been unwell has sufficiently recovered to return to the service.
- To keep unwell children away from the service.
- To remain away from the service when they themselves are unwell.
- To arrange prompt collection of their unwell child if contacted by the service.
- To inform the service at any time their child has been exposed to an infectious disease.

Links to other policies

- HR36-PR001 COVID-19 Safe Plan
- OP21 Enrolment and Orientation Policy
- HR24 Employee Health and Safety Policy
- OP34 Immunisation for Children and Staff Policy
- OP35 Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Policy
- OP40 Managing Reporting Requirements and Notifications Policy
- OP52 Risk Management Policy

Links Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011, Revised National Quality Standard 2018

Regs	77	Health, hygiene and safe food practices
	85	Incident, injury, trauma and illness policies and procedures
	86	Notification to parents of incident, injury, trauma and illness
	87	Incident, injury, trauma and illness record
	88	Infectious diseases
	90	Medical conditions policy
	162	Health information to be kept in enrolment record

QA	2.1	Each child's health and physical activity is supported and promoted
	2.1.2	Effective illness and injury management and hygiene practices are promoted and implemented.
	2.2.1	At all times, reasonable precautions and adequate supervision ensure children are protected from harm and hazard.
	2.2.2	Plans to effectively manage incidents and emergencies are developed in consultation with relevant authorities, practised and implemented
	7.1.2	Systems are in place to manage risk and enable the effective management and operation of a quality service

Sources

- Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011.
- Revised Guide to the National Quality Standard 2018.
- National Health and Medical Research Council. (2012). *Staying Healthy: Preventing infectious diseases in early childhood education and care services. 5th edition.*

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http://www.nhmrc.gov.au/files_nhmrc/publications/attachments/ch55_staying_healthy_childcare_5th_edition_0.pdf accessed 6 February 2016

- Queensland Health. *Public Health Act 2005*. <https://www.health.qld.gov.au/PublicHealthact/> accessed 6 February 2016
- Queensland Health. (2014). *Time Out Poster*. https://www.health.qld.gov.au/ph/documents/cdb/timeout_poster.pdf accessed 6 February 2016

Further reading and useful websites

- Department of Health (Australian Government). *Immunise Australia Program*. <http://www.immunise.health.gov.au/>
- National Health and Medical Research Council – <http://www.nhmrc.gov.au/>
- NCAC. (2011). *NCAC Factsheet for Families: Immunisation and child care*. http://ncac.acecqa.gov.au/educator-resources/pcf-articles/P24_FFImmunisation_June11.pdf accessed 6 February 2016
- Queensland Health – <http://www.health.qld.gov.au/> accessed 6 February 2016
- Royal Children’s Hospital Melbourne – <http://www.rch.org.au/home/> accessed 6 February 2016

State Health Department Contact Details

ACT

ACT Health

Phone 13 2281

<https://www.health.act.gov.au/sites/default/files/2019-04/Health%20Services%20Directory%202019.pdf>

NSW

Ministry of Health

Phone (02) 9391 9000

<https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/Pages/default.aspx>

Queensland

Queensland Health

Phone 13 74 68

www.health.qld.gov.au

Victoria

Department of Health and Human Services

Phone 1300 650 172

<https://www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/contact-us>

National Coronavirus (COVID-19) Health Information Line
1800 020 080 Call 131 450 for translating and interpreting service
Health Direct 1800 022 222
Public Health Unit- Local state and territory health departments https://www.health.gov.au/about-us/contact-us/local-state-and-territory-health-departments

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Policy review

The service encourages staff and parents to be actively involved in the annual review of each of its policies and procedures. In addition, the service will accommodate any new legislative changes as they occur and any issues identified as part of the service's commitment to quality improvement. The service consults with relevant recognised authorities as part of the annual review to ensure the policy contents are consistent with current research and contemporary views on best practice.

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