Dealing with Infectious Diseases Policy

Purpose

Peak Sports and Learning will provide a safe and hygienic environment that will promote the health and wellbeing of the children and educators. This is achieved by preventing and reducing the spread of infectious diseases through the implementation of procedures that are consistent with guidelines of NSW State Health Authorities. We also ensure that we are meeting all reporting and regulatory requirements to support the health and wellbeing of children, families and staff in our services. The safety, health, rights and best interests of children are the paramount consideration in all decisions about illness, exclusion and outbreaks. Unwell children will be supervised and cared for in a way that protects their dignity, privacy and emotional wellbeing.

Considerations

Education and Care Services National Regulations	National Quality Standard/s	Other Service policies/documentation	Other
Regulations: 12, 85, 86, 87, 88, 175(2)(c), 176 Law: Sections 2A, 3A (NSW)	Standard 2.1.2	- Enrolment Handbook - Staff Handbook - Enrolment and Orientation Policy - Providing a Child Safe Environment Policy - Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Policy	- Disability Discrimination Act 1992 - NSW Anti-discrimination Act 1977 - Work Health and Safety Act 2011 - Staying Healthy: Preventing Infectious Diseases in Early Childhood Education and Care Services (6th Edition, 2024) - NSW Health guidelines and Public Health Act 2010 (NSW)

Procedures

Prevention

- Universal precautions will be consistently applied across service practices to ensure prevention of the spread of infections is effective.
- Department of Health guidelines on infectious diseases information will be regularly available at the service for reference by staff, management and families. This is available at: https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/Infectious/factsheets/Pages/childhood.aspx
- If a child is showing symptoms of an infectious disease whilst at home, families are not permitted to bring the child to the service. Children who appear unwell when being signed in by their family will not be permitted to be left at the service.

- Parents/Guardians are to be informed at the time of enrolment that it is their responsibility to inform the service immediately of an infectious disease that has been discovered in their family. This is important to minimise the risk of spread of the illness.

Management of an Outbreak of Infectious Disease

- Where there is an outbreak of an infectious disease, each enrolled child's family/emergency contact will be notified within 24 hours under ordinary circumstances. The service will maintain confidentiality when issuing the notification and ensure it is not prejudicial or identify any children.
- The Regulatory Authority will be notified within 24 hours of any notifiable infectious disease or other circumstance at the service that poses a risk to the health, safety or wellbeing of children (Regulations 175(2)(c) and 176).
- In the event of an outbreak of vaccine-preventable disease at the service or school attended by children at service, children not immunised will be required to stay at home for the duration of the outbreak, for their own protection.
- If a child develops symptoms of a possible infectious disease whilst at the service, their family will be contacted to take the child home. Where they are not available, emergency contacts will be called to ensure the child is removed from the service promptly.
- While waiting to be collected, the child will be kept apart from other children and supervised by an educator. Educators will comfort the child and protect their dignity and privacy while managing their symptoms.

Exclusion of Children with infectious Disease

- Children and staff with infectious diseases will be excluded from the service for the period recommended by the Department of Health. Recommended Minimum Periods of Exclusion are outlined in *Staying Healthy – Preventing Infectious Diseases in Early Childhood Education and Care Services 6th edition*, Commonwealth of Australia 2024. This information is also available at: *https://www.nhmrc.gov.au/about-us/publications/staying-healthy-guidelines#download*
- The decision to exclude or re-admit a child or staff member will be the responsibility of the Nominated Supervisor based on the child's symptoms, medical opinion and Department of Health guidelines for children who have an infectious disease or who have been exposed to an infectious disease.
- The Centre Supervisor on duty has the right to refuse access if concerned about the child's health.
- Children and staff who have had diarrhoea and/or vomiting will be excluded until there has been no diarrhoea or vomiting for at least 24 hours. If norovirus is confirmed, this increases to at least 48 hours. Staff who handle food will be excluded for up to 48 hours after symptoms stop (Staying Healthy, 2024).
- Decisions about exclusion will consider the child's wellbeing, family circumstances and public health advice, while putting the safety of all children and staff first.

Children returning to the Service after Contracting an Infectious Disease

- Children who have had an infectious disease can return to the service once the recommended exclusion period in Staying Healthy has passed and they are well enough to participate. A medical certificate is only needed where Staying Healthy, NSW Health or the Public Health Unit requires medical clearance for that particular condition.

- If there is a difference of opinion between Parents/Medical Practitioner and the educators about whether a child is well enough to return to the service, the Nominated Supervisor should seek advice from the services local Public Health Unit in attempt to resolve this issue.

Management of HIV/AIDS/Hep B and C

- Under the Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth) and the Anti-Discrimination Act 1977 (NSW), there will be no discrimination based on a child's/family/educator's HIV status.
- A child with AIDS shall be treated as any other child and will have the same level of physical contact with educators as other children in the centre.
- Where educators are informed of a child, family member or another educator who has HIV/AIDS or Hep B or C, this information will remain confidential at all times. The service has no obligation to advise other families attending the service of a child's or educators HIV status.
- Proper safe and hygienic practices will be followed at all times and implementation of procedures to prevent cross infection as identified in this policy will be consistently implemented.
- Educators and families will be encouraged to participate in AIDS and Hepatitis education.

Infectious Diseases requiring Notification to the local Public Health Unit

- Nominated Supervisors will notify their local public health unit (PHU) by phone (call 1300 066 055) as soon as possible (within 24 hours) after they are made aware that a child enrolled at the service is suffering from one of the following vaccine preventable diseases:
    - Diphtheria
    - Mumps
    - Poliomyelitis
    - Haemophilus influenzae Type b (Hib)
    - Meningococcal disease
    - Rubella ("German measles")
    - Measles
    - Pertussis ("whooping cough")
    - Tetanus
    - Gastroenteritis, where two or more people are affected and an outbreak is suspected

Precautions to Prevent Cross Infection and Spread of Disease

- Hand washing will be practiced by all educators and children upon entering the service, before preparing or eating food and after all dirty tasks such as toileting, cleaning up any items, wiping a nose, before and after administering first aid, playing outside or handling an animal.
- The service will be cleaned daily and rosters maintained as evidence of the cleaning tasks being undertaken.
- All toilet facilities will have access to a basin or sink with running water, soap and paper towel for washing and drying hands.
- Women and girls will have access to proper feminine hygiene disposal.
- Soap and paper towel will also be available in the kitchen area.
- All toilets, hand basins and kitchen facilities used by the service will be cleaned and disinfected daily. General surfaces will be cleaned with detergent after each activity and at the end of the day and all contaminated surfaces will be disinfected.
- Toys will be washed, cleaned and disinfected on a regular basis with material items such as dress ups and cushion covers laundered as required but a minimum of quarterly.

- Educators will maintain and model appropriate hygiene practices and encourage the children to adopt effective hygiene practices. As part of children taking increasing responsibility for their own health and physical wellbeing, educators should acknowledge children who are modelling hygiene practices.
- Informal education in proper hygiene practices will be conducted on a regular basis, either individually or as a group through conversations, planned experiences, inclusion in service routines and reminders. Health and hygiene practices will be highlighted to parents, and where appropriate information sheets or posters will be used by educators to support these practices.
- Educators will aim to provide a non-judgmental approach to differences in hygiene practices and standards between families in order to support children's developing sense of identity. Where practices differ to standards expected in the service remind children that these are practices to be followed in the service but they may be different for them at home.
- All educators will be advised upon appointment to the position to maintain their immunity to common childhood diseases, tetanus and Hepatitis B through immunisation with their local health professional
- All staff dealing with open sores, cuts and bodily fluids shall wear disposable gloves and practice universal precautions.
- Staff with cuts, open wounds or skin diseases such as dermatitis should cover their wounds and wear disposable gloves.
- Disposable gloves will be properly and safely discarded and staff are to wash their hands after doing so.
- If a child has an open wound it will be covered with a waterproof dressing and securely attached.
- If bodily fluids or blood gets on the skin but there is no cut or puncture, wash away with hot soapy water.
- In the event of exposure through cuts or chapped skin, promptly wash away the fluid, encourage bleeding and wash in cold or tepid soapy water.
- In the event of exposure to the mouth, promptly spit it out and rinse mouth with water several times.
- In the event of exposure to the eyes, promptly rinse gently with cold or tepid tap water or saline solution.
- In the event of having to perform CPR, disposable sterile mouth masks are to be used, or if unavailable a piece of cloth. The staff person in charge of the first aid kit will ensure that a mask is available in the kit at all times.
- Any exposure should be reported to the Centre Supervisor/Nominated Supervisor and management to ensure proper follow up procedures occur.
- In instances where assisting children with toileting and changing, staff will ensure that they wear gloves and wash their hands afterwards. They will also encourage the child to wash their hands.
- Staff will consider the resources they are using when assisting school age children when toileting to ensure they are age appropriate and ensure privacy for the child and ease of use by staff.
- Any soiled clothing shall be handled using disposable gloves and be placed in a sealed plastic bag for the parents to take home for laundering. The service will never rinse soiled clothing.
- Any blood or bodily fluid spills will be cleaned up immediately, using gloves and the area fully disinfected. Cloths used in cleaning will be wrapped in plastic bags and properly disposed of according to current infection control guidelines.

Responding to Outbreaks of Infectious Diseases that are Declared as Public Health Emergencies

In times where an infectious disease outbreak is considered of particular risk to the community, Peak will continue to implement the above-mentioned procedures to reduce the risk of spreading disease. Existing procedures will be examined and revised to ensure compliance and all educators will be reminded of their importance. Hygiene practices of children will be emphasised and closely monitored.

In addition, Peak Directors will closely monitor NSW Health alerts and daily reports at www.health.nsw.gov.au to determine further measures required in particular circumstances. These may include:

- Implementing additional cleaning and sanitising procedures and communicating these to centre staff for action.
- NSW Health alert information will be communicated to staff and families through email and signage at the centre.
- Implementing periods of exclusion of children, staff and families according to guidelines specified by NSW Health.
- Guidelines specified by NSW Health and the Department of Education will be adhered to including decisions to temporarily cease operations of centres.

Version Control Table

Version Control	Date Released	Next Review	Approved by	Amendment
1	Jan 2017	March 2018	Directors	Nil – small amendments to procedures
2	August 2018	August 2019	Directors	Rewritten and edited to reflect 2018 updated Quality Standards. Addition of procedures for preventing cross infection and the spread of disease, Management of HIV and Hepatitis, confidentiality
3	August 2019	August 2020	Directors	Inclusion of the most recent NSW Health information and website links
4	February 2020	March 2021	Directors	Links reviewed and still relevant. Moved to new document review timeline.
5	March 2020	March 2022	Directors	New section added on Public Health Emergencies in response to COVID-19.
6	March 2022	March 2024	Directors	Small amendments to cross contamination measures
7	March 2024	March 2025	Directors	Update in line with 2024 release, 6th Edition, Staying Healthy guide.
8	March 2025	March 2026	Directors	Reviewed, no significant updates.
9	March 2026	March 2027	Directors	Added paramount consideration (Sections 2A and 3A NSW) and child safe practice for unwell children. Updated exclusion periods for diarrhoea and vomiting in line with Staying Healthy (6th Edition). Added 24 hour timeframes for Public Health Unit and Regulatory Authority notifications and gastroenteritis outbreaks.