

Title	ELC and SAC Management of Infectious and Immunisation Preventable Diseases Policy
Description of policy	Outlines the strategies and actions of Early Learning Centres (ELCs) and School Age Care (SAC) in relation to the management of infectious and immunisation and preventable diseases
Required because	To comply with the obligations under the Education and Care Services National Law and National Regulations and the Public Health Act 2000 and Regulations
Description of changes	• Clarified reporting requirements for notifiable illnesses • Reformatted to new template • Added a fact sheet • Included the new edition of Staying Healthy • Amended the headings • Included more in-depth information on prevention, notification and immunisation for families and staff.
Applies to	☐ Organisation-wide ☒ Specific (location, schools/ELCs & SACS, Service Area) ☐ Staff only ☐ Students only ☒ Staff and students
Status	☐ New ☐ Major revision of existing document ☒ Minor revision of existing document

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1. Summary

- 1.1 CECG decisions regarding exclusion periods and notification of infectious diseases is guided by the Australian Government Department of Health and Local Public Health Units in our jurisdiction as per the Public Health Act.
- 1.2 This policy outlines responsibilities and exclusion periods to assist Catholic Archdiocese of Canberra Goulburn Education Limited (CACGEL) Early Learning Centres (ELCs) and School Age Care services (SACs) to manage infectious diseases contracted by children and/or staff.
- 1.3 Under the Education and Care Services National Regulations, the approved provider must ensure policies and procedures are in place in relation to dealing with infectious diseases. (ACECQA, August 2021). CECG is committed to minimise the spread of infectious diseases by implementing recommendations as stated in the [Staying Healthy: Preventing infectious diseases in early childhood education and care services \(Sixth Edition\)](#) developed by the Australian Government National Health and Medical Research Council and Medical Research Council and advice provided from the Australian Health Protection Principal Committee (AHPPC).
- 1.4 This policy also outlines the requirements for record keeping, reporting and management of immunisation of preventable diseases.
- 1.5 This policy operates in conjunction with other CECG health and safety policies.

2. Prevention of Infectious Disease

- 2.1 The National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) suggests the three most effective methods to reduce the occurrence of infectious disease, and the risk of contagion are:
 - Immunisation
 - Exclusion of sick students, staff and visitors
 - Effective hygiene practices.
- 2.2 The NHMRC maintain the publication - *Staying Healthy, Preventing infectious diseases in early childhood education and care services* ([Staying Healthy 6th Edition](#)). The guidance in this publication is widely regarded as the best practice for education and care services staff and should be referenced to prevent infection.
- 2.3 Parents or carers must notify the ELC or SACS if their child is diagnosed with an infectious illness.
- 2.4 Under Health Regulations, a parent or carer must not allow a child enrolled at a CECG service to attend the ELC or SACS if they have an infectious disease as outlined in [Exclusion for common or concerning condition Staying Healthy Poster](#) for the period specified. Penalties apply under the Health Regulations for failing to comply (r17).
- 2.5 Children who have had gastroenteritis symptoms will be requested to stay away from the CECG service for 48 hours after symptoms have ceased to reduce infection transmission as symptoms can develop again after 24 hours in many instances.
- 2.6 The nominated supervisor will request families provide a medical clearance from a General Practitioner stating that the child is safe to return to the ELC or SAC service, for any illness that the nominated supervisor may deem to be communicable to other children.
- 2.7 Where an outbreak of a preventable disease has been identified, the nominated supervisor or the responsible person must check all children's immunisation records and alert parents or carers as required.

- 2.8 The need for exclusion and the length of time a person is excluded from an ELC or SAC service depends on:
- how easily the infection can spread
 - how long the person is likely to be infectious
 - the severity of the infectious disease or illness
 - the capacity for the child to participate fully in the program

3. Immunisation Records

- 3.1 The Health Practitioner Regulation National Law (ACT) Act 2010 sets out the requirements for obtaining and keeping up-to-date immunisation records including yearly influenza vaccinations for children attending ELCs and SACS. Here you will find the [National Immunisation Program Schedule](#).
- 3.2 The nominated supervisor must ensure a copy of the immunisation record is kept with every child's record in a form that is readily accessible to the Nominated Supervisor and the ACT Chief Health Officer.
- 3.3 Unvaccinated children who do not have an approved exemption may attend a CECG service, however they may need to be excluded from an ELC or SAC service in the event of an outbreak of a communicable disease for which they are not vaccinated. This also applies to staff and visitors.
- 3.4 Vaccination is important for children and adults, as not only can staff members and children catch a potentially serious infection such as measles or whooping cough, they could also inadvertently pass it onto other children or to women who are pregnant.
- 3.5 Exclusion periods and notification of infectious diseases are guided by the NHMRC - [Exclusion for common or concerning condition Staying Healthy Poster](#). These apply to children and staff at CECG ELC and SAC services.
- 3.6 Parents or carers must provide an up-to-date immunisation record setting out the immunisation status of the child for each vaccine preventable disease. Failure to do so constitutes grounds to refuse the child's enrolment.
- 3.7 Parents or carers must provide an appropriate form signed by a medical practitioner who meets the criteria stated by the Australian Government giving reasons why the child/ren cannot be fully vaccinated due to a medical condition or who are on a recognised catch-up schedule.

4. Notifications of Vaccine Preventable Diseases

- 4.1 The Public Health Act 1997 ([ACT Legislation Register](#)) requires and authorises doctors, hospitals, laboratories, school principals and childcare centre directors to confidentially notify ACT Health of a possible outbreak of a notifiable communicable disease by **Telephone: 6205 2155** and to provide the required information on the notification form. [ACT Government's early childhood education and care infectious disease notification form](#).
- 4.2 After confirmation that a child is suffering from an infectious disease, and as soon as practical, the family of each child enrolled in the ELC or SAC service must be notified. The nominated supervisor or responsible person must notify parents/carers via email or using Xplor information about the illness/disease, symptoms, infectious and exclusion period and must display a notice in the foyer with, and the number of cases in the service. Advice can be found in the [Staying Healthy 6th Edition](#).
- 4.3 The nominated supervisor must also notify the regulatory authority of any incidence of a notifiable infectious disease or illness outbreak through the [NQA-ITS Portal](#).

- 4.4 The ELC or SACS nominated supervisor must also require children or staff who are partially vaccinated, unvaccinated or immunocompromised to remain at home for a period during an outbreak of a vaccine-preventable disease if they are at higher risk.
- 4.5 Excluding people at higher risk of infection can reduce the risk of illness spreading, in line with the ELCs and SACS obligations under the Health Regulations.
- 4.6 The following diseases are vaccine preventable diseases under the Health Regulations:
- Diphtheria
 - Haemophilus influenza type b (hib) infection
 - Measles
 - Poliomyelitis
 - Rubella (German measles)
 - Tetanus
 - Pertussis (Whooping Cough)
 - Hepatitis B.
- 4.7 The approved provider and nominated supervisor will closely monitor health alerts and guidelines from State and Territory Health Departments and the Australian Government Department of Health for any advice and emergency health management in the event of a contagious illness outbreak.

5. ELC and SAC Management of Infectious Diseases

5.1 This is to be read and understood with the ELC and SACS Management of Infectious Disease Fact Sheet.

The approved provider (CACGEL) and nominated supervisor must ensure:

- Obligations under the Education and Care services National Law and National Regulations are met.
- An Immunisation History Statement for each child is collected on enrolment and any updates/changes to the child's immunisation status (AIR) and any medical conditions are recorded
- That all information regarding the prevention and transmission of infectious diseases is sourced from a recognised Government Health Authority or Australian Government Department of Health
- All employees, parents and carers are provided with a copy of the *ELC and SACS Management of Infectious Diseases policy and fact sheet*.
- All ELC and SACS staff, parents or carers and regular visitors and volunteers know and adhere to this policy and ensure relevant procedures are followed regarding health and safety within the ELC and SAC services.
- Health and safety practices are guided by [Staying Healthy 6th Edition](#) and is easily accessible to staff.

The ELC and SACS staff must ensure:

- Safe health and hygiene practices are always implemented throughout the day.
- All staff maintain confidentiality of individual children's medical circumstances.
- Children are taught health and hygiene practices and provided opportunities to practice this throughout the term.
- That any child suspected of having an infectious illness has their health and emotional wellbeing needs supported at all times.

- Any child suspected of having an infectious disease is isolated from other children and supervised whilst waiting for collection by their parents or authorised nominee
- Cloths are colour coded so that separate cloths are used to clean floors, bathroom, art and craft, and meal surfaces
- Floor surfaces are swept daily after each meal, spills or messy play and at the end of each day
- Toilets and bathrooms are cleaned in the middle of the day (for ELC's) and whenever needed throughout the day using appropriate cleaning materials.

ELC and SAC parents or carers must:

- Exclude their child from care if they display symptoms of an infectious illness or disease or in the event of a vaccine preventable disease occurs in the ELC or SAC service and their child is not fully immunised.
- Advise the ELC or SACS of any changes to their child's immunisation status, by providing a current Immunisation History Statement recorded on the Australian Immunisation Register (AIR) to be stored with their child's enrolment documents
- Advise the ELC or SACS of any changes to their child/ren's medical action plan, medical condition or treatment.
- Collaborate with the ELC or SACS nominated supervisor or responsible person to develop or revise details on their child's risk minimisation plans and adhere to these
- Obtain relevant documentation from a general practitioner upon request to determine if a child is healthy and well enough to attend the education and care service and does not pose a risk to other children attending the ELC or SACS service

6. Record Keeping

- 6.1 Records of children's vaccination and health status must be retained for seven years after the child stops attending the ELC or SAC.

7. Related Documents and Legislation

- 7.1 Legislation and Standards:

[Public Health Regulations 2000 \(ACT\)](#)

[Education and Care Services National Law 2011](#)

[Education and Care Services National Regulations](#)

- Sec. 172 Offence to fail to display prescribed information
- Sec.174(2)(a) Serious incident- any emergency for which emergency services attended
- 12 Meaning of serious incident
- 77 Health, hygiene and safe food practices
- 83 Staff members and family day care educators not to be affected by alcohol or drugs
- 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
- 89 First aid kits

- 90 Medical conditions policy
- 92 Medication record
- 93 Administration of Medication
- 162 Health information to be kept in enrolment record
- 168 Education and care service must have policies and procedures
- 170 Policies and procedures to be followed
- 172(2)(g) a notice stating that there has been an occurrence of an infectious disease at the premises
- 173 Prescribed information to be displayed
- 175(2)(c) Prescribed information to be notified to the Regulatory Authority- (2) any circumstance arising at the service that poses a risk to the health, safety or wellbeing of a child or children attending the service

National Quality Standard

- 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 needs for sleep, rest and relaxation.
 - 2.1.2 Health practices and procedures Effective illness and injury management and hygiene practices are promoted and implemented.
- 2.2 Safety Each child is protected.

8. Contact

- 8.1 For support or further questions relating to this policy, contact the Early Learning Centre team.
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