Dealing with Infectious Diseases Policy:

POLICY STATEMENT:

Grays Point Activity Centre (GPAC) will provide a safe and hygienic environment that will promote the health and wellbeing of children ("My Time, Our Place" Outcome 3). We will take all reasonable steps to prevent and manage the spread of infectious diseases through the implementation of procedures that are consistent with Guidelines of State Health Authorities.

The Education and Care Services National Regulations requires education and care services implement specific strategies to minimise the spread of infectious illness and maintain a healthy environment for all children, staff, Educators and families.

The spread of infections in the education and care environment is facilitated by microbial contamination of the environment, as well as the greater exposure to young children who are still developing hygienic behaviours and habits. GPAC will minimise children's and staff's exposure to infectious diseases by adhering to recommended guidelines from relevant authorities regarding the prevention of infectious diseases, promoting practices that reduce the transmission of infection, ensuring the exclusion of sick children and Educators, supporting child immunisation, and implementing effective hygiene practices.

Children encounter many other children and adults within the Service's environment which can result in the contraction of infectious illnesses. Our Service has a duty of care to ensure that children families, Educators, and visitors of the Service are provided with a high level of protection during the hours of the Service's operation. We aim to minimise cross contamination and the spread of infections illnesses by implementing best practice and high standards of personal hygiene infection control and supervision while supporting children's emotional wellbeing during illness and exclusion periods within our Service.

This Policy communicates clear directions and guidance about protocols and actions to be followed to avoid adversely affecting the safety and health of children, other staff members and visitors to the Service. A simple, safe and effective way of protecting individuals and others within the community against harmful diseases is immunisation. All decisions relating to illness management, exclusion, outbreak response and attendance during infectious disease risks are guided by the paramount consideration of children's safety, health, rights and best interests.

Immunisation is a simple, safe, and effective way of protecting people against harmful diseases before they come into contact with them in the community. Immunisation not only protects individuals, but also others within the community, by reducing the spread of disease and illnesses.

PROCEDURES:

a) Implementation

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).
Our Service is committed to minimise the spread of infectious diseases and viruses by implementing recommendations as stated in the Staying healthy: Preventing infectious diseases in early childhood education and care services (6th Edition) developed by the Australian Government National Health and

Medical Research Council and advice provided from the Australian Health Protection Principal Committee (AHPPC).

We are guided by decisions regarding exclusion periods and notification of infectious diseases by the *Australian Government- Department of Health* and local Public Health Units in our jurisdiction as per the Public Health Act. Recommendations for managing positive cases of COVID-19 in early education and care is provided by NSW Health.

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

This Policy must be read in conjunction with our other Quality Area 2 Policies:

- Dealing with Medical Conditions and Medication Administration Policy
- Medical Conditions and Medication Administration Policy
- Incident, Illness, Accident and Trauma Policy and
- Handwashing Policy

Infectious disease management practices will be implemented in a manner that upholds child safe principles, including adequate supervision, respectful interactions, protection of children's dignity and privacy, and emotional wellbeing, particularly when children are isolated or unwell.

b) Prevention

Children often enter School and education and care services when their immune systems are still developing. They have not been exposed to many common germs and therefore are susceptible to bacteria that may cause infections. Given the close physical contact children have with other children in GPAC and School it is very easy for infectious diseases and illnesses to spread through normal daily activities as 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.

GPAC implements rigorous hygienic practices to limit the spread of illness and infectious diseases including:

- effective hand washing hygiene.
- cough and sneeze etiquette.
- use of gloves.
- exclusion of children, Educators or staff when they are unwell or displaying symptoms of an infectious disease or virus.
- effective environmental cleaning including toys and resources.
- requesting parents and visitors to wash their hands with soap and water or hand sanitizer upon arrival and departure at the OSHC Service.
- encouraging use of the outdoors environment.
- physical distancing (if recommended).
- use of face masks (as mandated by Public Health Orders - or Service decision).

- restricting parents and visitors from entering our Service to reduce threat of spread of a community disease (e.g.: COVID-19).
- ensuring adequate ventilation.
- encouraging children, Educators or staff to seek medical attention and get tested if they show symptoms of an infectious disease or virus, including COVID-19.
- universal precautions will be consistently applied across Service practices to ensure prevention of the spread of infections is effective.
- a regularly updated copy of the Department of Health Guidelines on infectious diseases will be kept at the Service for reference by Educators, Management and families.
- if a child is showing symptoms of an infectious disease whilst at home, families are not permitted to bring the child to the Centre. Children who appear unwell when being signed in by their family will not be permitted to be left at the Service.
- hand washing procedures will be practised 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. In addition, Educators will wash their hands before leaving the Service.
- 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 and 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 cover 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 are advised to maintain their immunity to common childhood diseases, Tetanus and Hepatitis B through immunisation with their local Health Professional.

c) Immunisation Requirements

Immunisation is a reliable way to prevent many childhood infectious diseases. When enrolling a child in an Out of School Hours Care Service (OSHC), parents will be asked to provide an Immunisation History Statement. Should a child not be fully immunised according to the National Immunisation Program Schedule, they will not be prevented from enrolling.

- Currently only parents of children (less than 20 years of age) who are fully immunised or are on a recognised catch-up schedule can receive Child Care Subsidy (CCS)

- Educators and other staff at our Service are highly recommended to keep up to date with all immunisations including yearly influenza vaccinations. These include recommended vaccinations outlined in the *Australian Immunisation Handbook* and the *Staying healthy: Preventing infectious diseases in early childhood education and care services.*

- Staff vaccination is important as not only can staff members catch a potentially serious infection such as measles or whooping cough, but they could also then inadvertently pass in onto children in their care who are too young to have had their vaccinations or to women who may be pregnant.

- Exclusion periods and notification of infectious diseases are guided by the *Australian Government-Department of Health* and local public health units in our jurisdiction as per the Public Health Act. These apply to children and staff at the Service. In the event of an outbreak of a vaccine preventable disease at our Service, staff who are not vaccinated will be notified and should be excluded from the workplace.

EXCLUDING CHILDREN FROM THE OSHC SERVICE

When a child or young person has been diagnosed with an illness or infectious disease, the Service will refer to information about recommended exclusion periods from the Public Health Unit (PHU) and *Staying healthy: Preventing infectious diseases in early childhood education and care services.*

Minimum periods for exclusion from childcare services

- When an infectious disease has been diagnosed, the Service will display appropriate documentation and alerts for families including information on the illness/disease, symptoms, infectious period and the exclusion period. (This information can be obtained from *Staying healthy: Preventing infectious diseases in early childhood education and care and Public Health Unit, or Department of Health).*
- If a vaccine preventable disease occurs in the Service, children who have not been fully immunised will be excluded from care; staff who are not vaccinated will be notified and should be excluded from the workplace.
- Management will alert parents as required.
- 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 who have had diarrhoea will be requested to stay away from the 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 COVID-19 symptoms (fever, cough, sore throat, shortness of breath) may be requested to self-test using a rapid antigen test (RAT).

d) Management

- that obligations under the *Education and Care Services National Law and National Regulations* are met.
- Educators, staff, students, visitors and volunteers have knowledge of and adhere to this Policy and associated procedure.
- families are aware of this *Dealing with Infectious Diseases Policy* upon enrolment.
- children and Educators with infectious diseases will be excluded from the Service for the period recommended by the Department of Health.
- 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 Centre will maintain confidentiality when issuing the notification and ensure it is not prejudicial or identify any children.
- in the event of an outbreak of vaccine-preventable disease at the Service or School attended by children at Service, parents of 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.
- all Educators dealing with open sores, cuts and bodily fluids shall wear disposable gloves and practice universal precautions.
- Educators 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 Educators 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.
- any exposure should be reported to the Centre Manager or Responsible Person to ensure proper follow up procedures occur.
- when assisting children with toileting, soiled clothes and nappy changing, Educators will ensure that they wear gloves and wash their hands afterwards. They will also encourage the child to wash their hands.
- Educators 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 Educator.

- any soiled clothing shall be handled using disposable gloves and placed in a sealed plastic bag contained in the soiled items bin 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.
- The Public Health Unit will be notified if any child contracts a vaccine-preventable disease.
- payment of fees will be required for children during an outbreak of a vaccine-preventable disease, unless other arrangements discussed and agreed to by the Management Committee, have been made. This fee will also be applied to those excluded due to non immunisation.
- the decision to exclude or re-admit a child or Educator member will be the responsibility of the Centre Manager 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 Team Leader or Educators have the right to refuse access if concerned about the child's health.
- children and Educators with diarrhoea will be excluded for 24 hours after the symptoms have disappeared or after a normal stool.
- a Doctor's Clearance Certificate will be required for all infectious diseases such as Measles, Mumps Diphtheria, Hepatitis A, Polio, Tuberculosis, Typhoid and Paratyphoid before returning to the Service.
- the Responsible Person will at all times follow the recommendations as outlined in the Health Department Document. All information regarding the prevention of infectious diseases is sourced from a recognised health authority Australian Government Department of Health
- children and adults with COVID-19 are excluded from attending the Service while they are exhibiting symptoms. This is a Service decision. It is no longer mandatory to self-isolate for COVID-19.
- advice and recommendations from the Australian Health Protection Principal Committee (AHPPC) and Safe Work Australia will be implemented where reasonably possible
- a staff immunisation record may be maintained.
- the Public Health Unit is notified in the event of an outbreak of viral gastroenteritis. Management must document the number of cases, dates of onset, duration of symptoms. An outbreak is when two or more children or staff have a sudden onset of diarrhoea or vomiting in a 2-day period. (NSW Government- Health 2019).
- after confirmation that a child is suffering from an infectious disease, and as soon as practical, the family of each child enrolled in the Service must be notified whilst maintaining the privacy of the ill/infectious child. Communication may be:
    - verbal
    - through a letter from the Educator or Approved Provider
    - via electronic message - text message or email
    - notice clearly displayed at the OSHC Service
- a notice is clearly displayed stating that there has been an occurrence of an infectious disease at the Service.
- required enrolment information, including health and immunisation records of enrolled children is collected, maintained and appropriately and securely stored.
- daily attendance records for staff, children and visitors are up to date at all times.

- Educators and staff routinely role model hand washing, hand drying, cough and sneeze etiquette
- effective cleaning Policies and procedures are adhered to all times .
- families are advised to keep children at home if they are unwell. If a child has been sick, they must be well for 24 hours before returning to the OSHC Service. If the illness is related to gastroenteritis the child is not to return to the Service for up to 48 hours.

e) Management of HIV/AIDS/ Hep B and C

- under the Federal Disability Act and the Equal Opportunity Act, there will be no discrimination based on a child's/family/Educators 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.

e) Reporting Outbreaks to Public Health Unit and Regulatory Authority - regulation 175(2)(c)

Outbreaks of communicable diseases and contagious viruses represent a threat to public health. To help prevent outbreaks, each state/territory Public Health Unit (PHU) monitors the number of people who contract certain infectious diseases and their characteristics, the recent travel or attendance of infected people in a public place or on public transport, and works with health specialists and doctors to help prevent the transmission of diseases to other people.

Public health legislation across all states/territories lawfully requires and authorises Doctors, Hospitals, laboratories, School Principals and childcare centre management to confidentially notify the Public Health Unit of patients with certain conditions, and to provide the required information on the notification forms. Specialist trained public health staff review this information and if necessary, contact the patient's Doctor, and sometimes the patient, to provide advice about disease control and to complete the collection of information.

All information is held confidentially in order to protect the patient's privacy. Under the Commonwealth Privacy Acts, patient information is only released/disclosed where it is lawfully required or authorised.

Management is required to notify the local Public Health Unit (PHU) by phone (call 1300 066 055) as soon as possible after they are made aware that a child enrolled at the Service is suffering from one of the following vaccine preventable diseases :

- Diphtheria
- Hib (Haemophilus influenzae type b)
- Mumps
- Poliomyelitis
- Haemophilus influenzae Type b (Hib)
- Meningococcal disease
- Rubella ('German measles')
- Measles
- Pertussis ('whooping cough')
- Tetanus

Notification is also required for:

- an outbreak of 2 or more people with gastrointestinal or respiratory illness in a two-day period.

Following assessment of the situation, the Public Health Officer may instruct the Management of GPAC to exclude certain children for a period or provide advice regarding preventive measures.

Management will closely monitor health alerts and guidelines from Public Health Units and the Australian Government - Department of Health for any advice and emergency health management in the event of a contagious illness outbreak. The Approved Provider must also notify the regulatory authority of any incidence of a notifiable infectious disease or illness that poses a risk to health, safety and wellbeing of children within 24 hours.

f) Managing a Positive Case of COVID-19 in OSHC Setting

Changes may occur to how our Service manages positive cases of COVID-19. We will be directed by our Regulatory Authority as to what procedures need to be followed to ensure the health and safety of all staff, children and families.

As COVID-19 is easily transmissible in education and care services, our Service has implemented a range of risk mitigation strategies to assist in protecting children, adults and visitors at the Service.

Although it is no longer a legal requirement for a child or adult to self-isolate if diagnosed with COVID-19 our Service strongly recommends that any person who tests positive to COVID-19 informs their workplace/employer and education and care Service as soon as possible. Children, Educators and staff who test positive for COVID-19 will be/may be required to be excluded whilst unwell.

PREVENTION STRATEGIES FOR MINIMISING THE SPREAD OF DISEASE WITHIN OUR SERVICE INCLUDE ALL STAFF ENSURING:

- adherence to guidelines of the NHMRC childcare cleaning guidelines.
- surfaces are cleaned with detergent and water before using disinfectants (disinfectants cannot kill germs unless areas are clean).
- a separate mop is used for toilet accidents, cleaned and then air-dried.
- that a daily clean is carried out on other surfaces that may transmit germs such as high touch objects including doorknobs, tables, remotes, light switches, low shelving, etc. This will be increased, if an outbreak has been recorded in the Service or to minimise the risk of transmission of a virus such as COVID-19.
- that if a child has a toileting accident, the items are placed in a plastic bag with the child's name on it. The plastic bag will be stored in a sealed container labelled 'soiled/wet clothing' for parents to take home.
- toys and equipment will be washed within our cleaning checklist and records maintained.
- cleaning procedures will be recorded on the Service's Cleaning Checklist.
- floor surfaces will be cleaned on a daily basis after each meal and at the end of each day.
- toilets/bathrooms will be cleaned at least twice daily, the end of the day and whenever needed.
- pregnant staff members should not assist in toileting or cleaning up toileting accidents to prevent unexpected cross contamination and risk of contracting Cytomegalovirus (CMV).

FAMILIES WILL:

- adhere to the Service's Policies regarding Dealing with Infectious Diseases and Medical Polices and adhere to exclusion requirements
- adhere to the Service's restrictions of entry into the Service in the event of an outbreak of an infectious disease or virus
- adhere to the Service's Policy regarding *Hand Washing*
- 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 OSHC Service and their child is not immunised fully
- alert the Service if their child is diagnosed with an infectious illness, including COVID-19
- advise the OSHC Service of their child's immunisation status, by providing approved written documentation for the Service to copy and place in the child's file
- advise the OSHC Service when their child's immunisation/medical condition is updated to ensure that immunisation and medical records are up to date
- adhere to the Service's risk minimisation strategies if their child has complex medical needs in the event of an outbreak of an infectious disease or virus.

RESOURCES

Gastro Pack NSW Health

Common cold fact sheet

Exclusion for common or concerning conditions

Pregnancy Birth and Baby. Cytomegalovirus (CMV) during pregnancy.

RSV Fact Sheet

Time Out Keeping your child and other kids healthy! (Queensland Government)

CONSIDERATIONS:

Education and Care Services National Law and Regulations	National Quality Standard (NQS)	Other Service Policies/documentation	Other
Regulation: S. 2A, S. 3A, 172, 174(2)(a), 12, 77, 83, 85, 86, 87, 88, 89, 90, 92, 93, 162,168, 170, 172(2)(g), 173, 175(2)(c)	2.1 2.1.1 2.1.2 2.2	• Family Handbook • Staff Handbook • Enrolment and Orientation Policy • Code of Conduct Policy • Providing a Child Safe Environment Policy • Incident, Injury, Illness and Trauma Policy • Confidentiality Policy • Dealing with Medical Conditions and Medication Administration Policy • Governance and Management Policy • Hand Washing Policy • Workplace Health and Safety Policy • Asthma Management Policy • Anaphylaxis Management Policy • Sleep and Rest Policy • Nappy Change Policy • Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy	• Disability Discrimination Act 1992 • NSW Anti-Discrimination Act 1977 • Work Health and Safety Act 2011

SOURCES

Australian Children's Education & Care Quality Authority. (2026). *Guide to the National Quality Framework*

Australian Children's Education & Care Quality Authority. (2021). *Dealing with infectious diseases Policy and procedures guidelines.*

Children (Education and Care Services) National Law (NSW)

Department of Human Resources: National Immunisation Program Schedule

Early Childhood Australia. (2016). *Code of Ethics.*

Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010

Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011

Education and Care Services National Regulations (NSW) (2025) (For NSW services only)

National Health and Medical Research Council. (2024). *Staying healthy: Preventing infectious diseases in early childhood education and care services. 6th Edition.*

NSW Government. Department of Education. Managing COVID cases

NSW Government Department of Health. Vaccination requirements for child care.

Public Health Act 2010 (NSW)

Safe Work Australia

ENDORSEMENT BY THE SERVICE:

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