

POLICY: IMMUNISATION



QUALITY AREA 2: CHILDREN'S HEALTH AND SAFETY

AIM

To have a centre in which all children and staff are fully immunised against all harmful early childhood diseases. To provide protection to the children, staff and families attending the centre against diseases within the community.

EXPLANATION

The NSW Parliament recently amended the *Public Health Act 2010* and the changes take effect on 1 January 2018. **From 1 January 2018, only children who are fully immunised for their age OR have a medical reason not to be immunised OR are on a catch-up schedule can be enrolled in childcare. Children who have not been immunised due to their parent's vaccine conscientious objection cannot be enrolled in childcare.** The Pre-School must ensure our enrolment procedures comply with this legislation.

Immunisation is the safest and most effective way of providing protection against early child diseases. After immunisation, children are far less likely to catch the diseases if there are cases within the community. If enough people in the community are immunised, the infections can no longer be spread from person to person and the disease dies out altogether.

The Pre-School's first priority is to keep our staff and children safe, but we must also consider the safety and wellbeing of the families of our students, pregnant mothers and newborn babies in particular, who have a higher risk of infection if a child contracts an infectious disease at the Pre-School.

The Pre-School owes a duty of care to all staff and students. There is increasing evidence to suggest staff working in pre-schools and childcare centres are at a greater risk of catching and/or transmitting infectious diseases. Early childhood professionals are encouraged to be up-to-date with all the vaccinations that are recommended for adults, including vaccinations recommended due to increased risk of exposure in the workplace, for example; Hepatitis A & B, HIB, Annual flu vaccines, etc.

- ⇒ **Linked to ACECQA National Quality Framework, meets ACECQA Quality Area Standard: 2.1, Element 2.1.4, Standard: 2.3, Element 2.3.3**
- ⇒ **Education and Care Services National Regulation Part 4.2 Children's Health and Safety, Section 89—First aid Kits**

IMPLEMENTATION

Before enrolment of a student will be offered or confirmed, all families must provide a copy of each child's Immunisation History Statement to the Director or Administrator.

Parents have the responsibility to provide an updated copy of each child's Immunisation History Statement (ie. an updated version after the child receives their 3 1/2—4 year old shots, as per the Australian [Immunisation Schedule](#)).

The Pre-School will frequently remind families to provide current copies of the child's Immunisation History Statement after vaccines are given. The Pre-School will not enrol children without proof of immunisation in accordance with the Immunisation Schedule. .

The Pre-School is obliged by law to exclude non-immunised children from the Pre-School if an incidence of any communicable disease occurs for the period of time.

IMMUNISATION FOR STAFF

Immunisation of staff in the children's services is important to minimise the risk of contracting a disease that can be prevented by vaccines. Staff should be encouraged to talk to the GP about vaccinations before commencing work in a children's service.

The Pre-School will:

- Maintain a current record of vaccination status of all students and employees. All information will be kept confidential.
- Provide current information on vaccine-preventable diseases to employees and parents.
- Plan and provide, periodic educational sessions on infectious diseases and immunisation for all employees.

The *Australian Immunisation Handbook, (9th Edition, 2008, p.105)* recommends that people working with children obtain the following vaccinations;

- MMR (measles) – if not immune;
- Varicella (chicken pox) – if zero negative;
- Pertussis – whooping cough
- DTPa vaccine (diphtheria, tetanus, whooping) as a booster provided they have previously received a full course of vaccination for diphtheria and tetanus.
- Hepatitis A (recommended for child care staff, particularly those who care for children who are not toilet trained)
- Annual Flu (influenza) Vaccination

(See Infection Control Guidelines, NSW Department of Education and Communities (DEC), Occupational Health and Safety Directorate, retrieved from DEC intranet site on June 2013: Staying Healthy Preventing infectious diseases in childhood education and care services 5th Edition 2012, Australian Government's National Health and Medical Research Council, retrieved June 2013 and the Australian Immunisation Handbook, 10th Edition, 2013, para 2.3.7. Vaccination of persons at occupational risk, The Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing, retrieved June 2013)

Immunisation & Infectious Disease Issues for Pregnant Child Care Staff

The centre will minimise the risk of and manage exposure of pregnant child care staff to infectious diseases transmitted from children in their care and preventing illness and other risks from vaccine preventable diseases by appropriate immunisation.

Child care staff are exposed to a number of infectious diseases transmitted from children in their care and other people they come into contact with. Child care staff can be immunised against many infectious diseases and there are immunisation and other infection control recommendation strategies specific to child care staff. Pregnant child care staff are also at risk of specific infectious diseases that can have adverse impacts on pregnancy and there are active steps that they can take to reduce this risk.

Relevant Legislation: *Centre Based and Mobile Child Care Services Regulation (No.2) 1996 (NSW); Occupational Health and Safety Act 2000 and Regulations 2001 (NSW).*

Key Resources: *Staying Healthy in Child Care*, NHMRC, 2001: <http://www.health.gov.au/nhmrc/>; *Australian First Aid*, St John Ambulance Australia, 2001: www.stjohn.org.au; *The Australian Immunisation Handbook*, 8th edition, NHMRC, 2003, at <http://www.immunise.health.gov.au/handbook.htm>; Australian Standard Vaccination Schedule:

The Authorised Supervisor will:

- **Provide information to all staff in the centre on current recommended immunisations for child care staff** in accordance with current Australian Standard Vaccination Schedule and the current edition of the Australian Immunisation Handbook.
- **Recommend to female centre staff that they seek advice from their local doctor** about immunisation needs before planning pregnancy.
- **Advise all staff before commencing work that the above recommendations for immunisation will minimise transmission and risks** of those infectious diseases in children and staff and if a staff member has concerns about these diseases or immunisations they should seek advice from their doctor before commencing work.

- **Advise all staff that if an outbreak of a vaccine preventable disease occurs in the centre, staff should inform the centre director if they are not immunised** against that disease. Unimmunised staff should consult their doctor to determine if it is appropriate for them not to attend work during the outbreak and discuss any issues relating to their immunisation or other medical management.
- **If a pregnant centre staff member is unsure whether they have had any of the recommended immunisations**, advise them to discuss their immunisation needs with their doctor.

OBTAINING YOUR CHILD'S IMMUNISATION HISTORY STATEMENT

Please note that 'Blue books' are **NOT** accepted as evidence of immunisation. A copy of the Immunisation History Statement, issued by the Australian Immunisation Register, will need to be given to the Pre-School prior to enrolment. If your child was immunised overseas you will have to talk to your Doctor and request that your child's immunisation history is reviewed with the Australian Immunisation Register.

Parents will receive an Immunisation History Statement in the mail after their child has completed their 18 month and 3½ - 4 year old vaccinations. Please bring this to the Pre-School as soon as you receive it.

A copy of an Immunisation History Statement can also be obtained at any time:

- by calling the Australian Immunisation Register on **1800 653 809**
- Using your Medicare online account through myGov at <https://my.gov.au/>
- Using the Medicare Express Plus App at www.humanservices.gov.au/individuals/subjects/express-plus-mobile-apps

Sources

- www.health.nsw.gov.au/immunisation

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