Early Learning Centre
Infectious Diseases Policy

National Quality Standard Related Standards/Regulations

Standard 2.1  Each child’s health is promoted
Element 2.1.2  Health practices and procedures: Effective illness and injury management and hygiene practices are promoted and implemented.

Standard 2.2  Safety
Element 2.2.1  Supervision: At all times, reasonable precautions and adequate supervision ensure children are protected from harm and hazard.
Element 2.2.2  Incident and emergency management: Plans to effectively manage incidents and emergencies are developed in consultation with relevant authorities, practised and implemented.

Regulation 88  Infectious Diseases
Regulation 168  Education and care services must have policies and procedures
Regulation 162  Health information to be kept in enrolment record

Aim

To ensure parents and staff are aware of policies and procedures relating to children who are unwell or become unwell whilst at the Early Learning Centre.

Explanation

The health and wellbeing of the staff and students at the ELC is of paramount importance. To promote wellbeing, policies and procedures are in place to manage illnesses and provide guidelines about what to do if a child becomes unwell. In particular, this policy explains how the ELC will manage infectious diseases, including any applicable exclusion periods for students who become unwell.

Practice

– Parents are advised not to send their child to the Early Learning Centre if he/she is unable to participate to the full extent in the daily learning and activities. If a child displays symptoms of being unwell, they should not attend the ELC until such symptoms have passed. Such symptoms include, but are not confined to, fever, lethargy, chest or nasal congestion. Should a child require over-the-counter medication (eg. Panadol) to manage illness symptoms, parents are encouraged to keep their child at home.

– Parents are asked to call the ELC Office by 9.30am to advise the ELC Clerical Assistant if their child is unwell and will not be attending the ELC that day. A brief explanation regarding the reason for the child’s absence is appreciated, so that the Clerical Assistant can monitor the spread of any illnesses.

– If a child appears unwell during the school day, staff will take the child’s temperature, speak with the child about how they are feeling, note how the child has been engaging in the classroom activities and note how much the child has had to eat/drink during the day. Based on information from these sources, staff will make a determination about whether the child is well enough to remain at school.

– A fever of 38 degrees celsius or higher (taken using the ELC underarm or head thermometer) will result in a child’s parents being contacted and requested to collect the child.

– If a child vomits, and displays other signs of being unwell, eg. stomach pain, unwillingness to eat, lethargy etc, the child’s parents will be contacted and requested to collect the child.
- If a child vomits, and there is contextual evidence to suggest it is unrelated to illness (e.g. child is upset, coughing) the child will be monitored. Should a second episode of vomiting occur, parents will be contacted and requested to collect the child.

- If a child is deemed to be unwell:
  - Staff will isolate the child as much as is practically possible from other students, in order to minimise the possibility of spreading the illness.
  - The ELC Clerical Assistant will contact the child’s parents and request that they be collected from the ELC. It is expected that the child is collected promptly by a parent after receiving this call. If parents are not able to be contacted, the child’s emergency contacts will be contacted to come and collect the child.
  - The Teacher/Coeducator who first noticed the symptoms of illness in the child is responsible for completing the ‘Record of Child Illness’ form, located in the classroom.
  - Parents will be asked to sign the ‘Record of Child Illness’ form, before departing with the child.
  - The ELC Clerical Assistant will maintain a summary record of children going home due to illness.

- It is important that the ELC Clerical Assistant is advised as soon as possible when any diagnosis is made by a medical practitioner that a child has contracted an infectious disease (e.g. chicken pox, measles, whooping cough etc.), so that members of our community can be promptly notified. This will assist, in particular, in advising those in the community with compromised immune systems of the risk of contracting an infectious disease.

- If the ELC Clerical Assistant is advised of a confirmed case of an infectious disease, she will immediately advise the Director of Junior School (ELC). Staff should directly inform the Director of Junior School (ELC) if they contract an infectious disease. The Director of Junior School (ELC) will contact Communicable Diseases Control for further advice (PH: (02) 6205 2155, (02) 9962 4155). The Children’s Education and Care Assurance office will also be contacted for further advice and take further action as required.

- In circumstances where a student or staff member is diagnosed with an infectious disease by a medical practitioner, or diagnosis is clear (e.g. gastro/vomiting), the name of the illness will be listed on the ‘Infectious Diseases’ notification poster in the ELC Piazza to advise all ELC families.

- If a notifiable infectious disease is confirmed relating to a student or staff member in the ELC, the ELC Clerical Assistant will email all ELC families to notify them of the incidence of the disease. In addition, notification will be sent via Agora. These notifications will include information about the class that the student/s or staff member involved is in, and whether the student/s or staff member attends Before or After School Care. Student immunization records will be checked and students who are not immunized against the disease will be excluded, under advice from Communicable Diseases Control.

- Certain infectious diseases carry strict exclusion periods. This information is gathered from the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC, Staying Healthy: Preventing infectious diseases in early childhood education and care services, 2013) and is displayed in the ELC Piazza and as an appendix to this policy. As required, parents will be reminded of the exclusion periods when advising the ELC Clerical Assistant when their child is absent due to illness.

- While not outlined on the NHMRC exclusion periods poster, episodes of vomiting where there are accompanying signs of illness, carry an exclusion period of 24 hours after the last episode of vomiting (as per episodes of diarrhoea).

- A child should be fever free for at least 24 hours and be free from other symptoms before returning to the ELC.

- In circumstances where a student or staff member is diagnosed with an infectious disease by a medical practitioner, the Director of Junior School (ELC) will consult the NHMRC guidelines to ensure current exclusion periods are observed.

- In circumstances where 3 or more students/staff members are diagnosed with the same infectious disease by a medical practitioner, and these cases are thought to be related, special procedures for cleaning and disease control will be put in place (see Infectious Disease Control Special Procedures).