

1. Policy Statement

St Nicholas is committed to providing children with an environment that promotes their health, safety, and wellbeing. St Nicholas aims to effectively respond to any infectious disease and implement safe hygiene practices, minimising the risks of transmitting infectious diseases, in line with the Education and Care Services National Regulations.

St Nicholas services are guided by *National Health and Medical Research Council's Staying Healthy: Preventing infectious diseases in early childhood education and care services*, which outlines best-practice principles and provides effective ways for education and care services to maintain a healthy environment, prevent the risk of spreading infection, and respond to infectious diseases and illness that can affect children, team members and families in early education and OOSH services.

2. Purpose

The purpose of this Policy and Procedure is to:

- Outline the practices St Nicholas services and employees will implement to promote practices regarding infectious diseases for children and staff
- Ensure families are informed of, and have access to, the service's procedures relating to dealing with infectious diseases
- Support compliance with the Education and Care Services National Law and National Regulations, which require services to have policies and procedures in place for dealing with infectious diseases

3. Procedure Direction

Step	Detail
Hygiene practices	Each service will maintain effective systems to support high hygiene standards. These include: • Promoting and consistently using correct handwashing, hand sanitising, and coughing/sneezing etiquette with staff, children, and families. • Ensuring adequate supplies of cleaning materials, hygiene products, and PPE. • Implementing effective cleaning procedures that minimise contamination and cross-infection. • Managing wounds and body fluids safely and in line with NHMRC guidance. • Following approved nappy change and toileting procedures. • Regular cleaning of high-touch surfaces, toys, and mouthed items. • Raking and covering sandpits daily.

	• Disposing of soiled items in sealed, child-inaccessible containers. • Regular cleaning of bins and nappy buckets. • Preventing shared use of food, drinks, or eating utensils.
Hand Hygiene	Effective hand hygiene reduces the spread of germs and infectious diseases. St Nicholas will ensure suitable handwashing facilities (running water, liquid soap, disposable paper towels) and display posters illustrating correct technique. Alcohol-based sanitiser may be used when water is unavailable and will remain inaccessible to children except under supervision. Educators will work with families to ensure cultural sensitivity regarding hygiene practices. <u>Hands must be cleaned:</u> • On arrival and departure • Before/after eating or handling food • Before/after toileting or nappy changing • After wiping noses • After contact with body fluids • Before/after medication or first aid • After touching animals • After outdoor play • After handling rubbish <u>Handwashing steps</u> • Use liquid soap and running water • Rub hands for at least 15 seconds, covering all surfaces • Rinse and turn off tap • Dry with paper towel <u>Additional requirements</u> • Handwashing sinks (bathrooms, kitchen) must not be used for food/craft preparation • Soap and paper towel dispensers must remain stocked • Cuts on hands must be covered with water-resistant dressings • Sanitiser available only in areas where water is not accessible
Use of gloves	Non-latex gloves must be available at all handwashing and nappy-change stations. Gloves must be worn when: • Wiping children's noses • Handling soiled items or body fluids • Cleaning spills, bathrooms, kitchens, toys, or surfaces • Emptying rubbish bins • Administering medication

	Hands must be washed after glove removal.
Bodily fluids	Bodily fluid spills must be managed by: • isolating the spill area and using PPE • cleaning with detergent and water, rinsing, drying, and disposing of waste in a sealed bag • disinfecting spills from known/suspected infectious illness after cleaning with neutral detergent • allowing areas to dry or ventilate • maintaining blood spill kits (gloves, paper towels, neutral cleaner, tissues, bags) in accessible adult-only locations • covering wounds on children and educators • bagging and sending home soiled clothing • washing service linen according to type of contamination • for sandpit contamination: remove affected sand, disinfect surrounding area, replace sand as required
Exclusion from Care and Notification Requirements	• Children and educators with infectious diseases must follow NHMRC and NSW Health exclusion requirements. • Staff handling food must be excluded from food duties if they have wounds, boils, GI illness, or uncovered lesions. • The Nominated Supervisor must notify the Public Health Unit of notifiable diseases. Notifiable diseases are: ○ diphtheria ○ measles ○ mumps ○ poliomyelitis ○ rubella (German measles) ○ whooping cough (pertussis) ○ tetanus ○ Hib (Haemophilus influenzae type b) ○ any single case of meningitis ○ food-borne illness in two or more people ○ gastroenteritis in two or more people ○ three or more cases of chickenpox, cold sores, conjunctivitis, influenza, strep throat, or any other illness of concern • In some circumstances the Nominated Supervisor may also need to submit a serious incident notification to the Regulatory Authority within 24 hours, and should contact their manager for guidance • A medical clearance certificate is required before a child or adult who has had diphtheria, hepatitis A, polio, tuberculosis, typhoid, or paratyphoid before they can return to the service • Returning after gastroenteritis requires 48 hours symptom-free unless written clearance is provided from a medical practitioner • Fees remain payable during exclusion.

	- Families will be informed promptly of exclusion requirements and outbreak notifications. - When serious infections occur, the advice of the local Public Health Unit should be sought requesting that a letter be provided to each child's parents. The letter should make the parents aware of the presence of the infection in the service and provide advice about prevention and any action to be taken in the event of illness in their own child. <u>Fevers and Exclusion</u> - Children will be excluded from the service if they have a temperature of 38 °C or higher - If a child's temperature is normal and they have not required paracetamol or Nurofen overnight, they can return to the service the following morning <u>Exclusion on commencement of new medication</u> - Children commencing treatment with a newly prescribed medication should not attend care for at least 24 hours to ensure the child is recovering and is not experiencing side effects from the medication.
Immunisation requirements for Early Learning Services (EE)	St Nicholas follows NSW Health guidelines for child immunisation. - Under the NSW Public Health Act 2010, children cannot be enrolled in Early Learning Services unless families provide an <i>Australian Immunisation Register (AIR) Immunisation History Statement</i> showing the child is: - fully immunised for their age, or - medically exempt, or - on an approved catch-up schedule. - It is an offence for the service to: - enrol a child who is unimmunised due to parental conscientious objection - accept forged or falsified immunisation records - Families must provide an updated <i>AIR Immunisation History Statement</i> after each immunisation milestone (6 weeks, 4 months, 6 months, 12 months, 18 months, and 4 years). <u>Overseas Immunisation Records</u> - The service cannot accept overseas records directly. - Records must be assessed by a GP/nurse and entered into the AIR - Records must be translated into English - Once updated, families must provide the updated <i>AIR Immunisation History Statement</i>. <u>Temporary Residents and Refugees</u> - Immunisation must be reviewed by a GP/nurse - A catch-up schedule must be active

	- The GP/nurse will complete an <i>AIR Immunisation History Form</i>. - Families must then supply an updated <i>AIR Immunisation History Statement</i> showing that a catch-up schedule is active. The NSW Government Immunisation Toolkit supports services and families with information and resources.
Immunisation requirements for OOSH	- Children who attend OOSH should have their immunisation AIR provided as part of enrolment. - It is recognised that a child does not have to be immunised to attend School - The families' access to Child Care Subsidy is dependent on the child's immunisation status - In the event of an outbreak within the School, unimmunised which will be requested to not attend OOSH for the duration of the outbreak.
Outbreaks and Exclusion	<u>Exclusion Due to Vaccine-Preventable Disease</u> - Children or educators who are not fully immunised may be excluded if there is a case of a vaccine-preventable disease at the service, or if they have been in contact with a confirmed case outside the service. - Families must inform the service if their child has been exposed to a vaccine-preventable or infectious disease. - Staff immunisation is not compulsory but highly recommended. Staff must maintain their own immunisation status and notify the Approved Provider/Nominated Supervisor of any updates. <u>Outbreak Procedures</u> - Families will be informed within 24 hours if an enrolled child has a vaccine-preventable disease. - Children not fully immunised will be excluded until it is safe for them to return after the NSW Health minimum exclusion period has passed. - Normal fees apply during exclusion. - Unvaccinated staff may also need to be excluded during an outbreak.
Nappy Changing	- The service provides disposable nappies, kept within reach of the nappy change bench. - Nappy change facilities are located in bathrooms and kept separate from food preparation areas. - Handwashing and drying facilities are located next to all change areas. - Educators must cover any cuts or wounds on their hands with a water-resistant dressing. - Each station has a washable change mat and a one-way disposal bin. - Steps are provided for walking children to access the change bench.

	<u>Nappy Change Area Supplies</u> The nappy change area must include (kept out of children's reach): • nappy change mat • plastic bags • rubbish bin lined with a plastic bag • pre-moistened wipes • spray bottle with Neutral Cleaner • paper towels • gloves The nappy changing procedure must be displayed at each station. <u>Nappy Change Practices</u> • Children must never be left unattended on the change mat. • Walking children must use the steps with educator assistance. • Educators must model consent, explaining actions and seeking cooperation. • Use nappy changes as a time for positive interaction (talking, singing, eye contact). • SBATs and trainees may change nappies with educator supervision. • Students on placement may change nappies only under strict educator supervision and must never be left alone with children. <u>Cloth Nappies</u> • Families may supply cloth nappies. • Families must also provide a sealed bucket for storing soiled nappies. • The bucket must be taken home daily and returned each day the child attends care.
Toileting (EE)	• Educators must wear appropriate PPE (e.g., gloves) when handling soiled clothing or linen. • Flush faeces down the toilet whenever possible. • Place soiled clothing/linen in a nappy bag, label it with the child's name and date, and store it in the sealed soiled-clothing container to prevent cross-contamination. • Use toilet paper or wet wipes as needed and communicate reassuringly with the child throughout the process. • Encourage children to flush the toilet after use and support them to wash their hands following the Handwashing Procedure. • Educators must wash their own hands thoroughly after assisting a child. • Supervise the full bathroom routine, including toileting, flushing, and handwashing. • Remind children to wash their hands before toileting if needed.

	<u>Toilet Learning</u> - Families are asked to supply pull-up nappy pants to support independence during toilet learning. - Children should wear clothing that is easy for them to manage, such as elastic-waisted pants or shorts. <u>Bathroom Facilities</u> - Staff must not use bathroom facilities while children are present. - Adults must never use designated children's bathroom facilities.
Cleaning and Maintenance	- Purchase only resources and equipment that can be easily cleaned. - Staff must wear gloves when cleaning bodily fluids. - Use Neutral Cleaner (non-toxic) for all general cleaning, including floors, toilets, and spills involving blood, urine, or vomit. Do not use bleach or other disinfectants. - Use Neutral Cleaner and Food-Grade Sanitiser for food contact surfaces. - Use heat or sanitiser for cleaning food utensils. - Colour-code mops and cleaning cloths - Store all cleaning items and products locked and inaccessible to children. - Air-dry food utensils — no tea towels. - Vacuum or sweep floors before mopping. - Allow mopped floors to dry before use. <u>Daily Cleaning</u> Bathrooms, nappy change areas (after each change, plus daily), mouthed toys, surfaces, floors, beds, linen, bibs and face cloths (after each use). <u>Weekly Cleaning</u> Shelves, doorknobs, play mats, microwaves, pillow and cushion covers, sofas (cleaned or vacuumed), dress-up clothes, children's toys and equipment <u>Special Cleaning Areas</u> <u>Sandpits (if applicable):</u> Cover when not in use (consider WHS risks when handling covers), rake daily, remove contaminated sand, replace sand as needed <u>Garbage Disposal:</u> Use separate bins for nappy changes, bathrooms, kitchen, and play areas, use waterproof, preferably foot-pedal bins, line bins with plastic bags, empty bins daily and insert new liners, wipe bin lids/pedals daily; clean entire bin weekly, ensure bins are inaccessible to children under two. <u>Educational Resources:</u> Disinfect toys weekly or immediately if mouthed, wash soft toys in hot water and dry in clothes dryer, keep premises vermin-free; arrange pest spraying if

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needed (never while children are present), if contractors complete cleaning, the Nominated Supervisor must ensure they meet all required standards.

4. Roles and Responsibilities

Role	Responsibility
Approved Provider	- Ensure that the obligations under the <i>Education and Care Services National Law</i> and <i>National Regulations</i> are met. - Take reasonable steps to ensure that the Nominated Supervisor, employees and visitors follow the policy and procedures.
Nominated Supervisor/Responsible Person	- Ensure that in the occurrence of an infectious disease, that all reasonable precautions are taken to prevent the spread. - Report any confirmed case of an infectious disease within 24hrs to the public health unit. - Notify the Regulatory Authority within 24 hours of a serious incident occurring at the service where a child may become ill at the service or medical attention is sought. - Adhere to NSW Government Immunisation Enrolment Toolkit for ECEC Services
Team members	- Be immunised against infectious diseases as recommended by recognised authorities. - Remain updated with MMR, Pertussis, Influenza, Varicella and Hepatitis A immunisations. - Stay at home if unwell or have an excludable infectious disease. - Employ and role model effective hygiene practices for cleaning hands, nappy changing, toileting and food handling. - Integrate infection control awareness, hygiene and protective practices into educational programming and planning.
Parents/Guardians	- All children enrolling in St Nicholas Early Learning Services are required to immunised against the immunisation schedule, with Australian records - Provide immunisation documentation upon enrolment and as immunisations are administered - Keep your child at home if they are unwell or have an excludable infectious disease - Keep your child at home if there is an infectious disease at the service and your child is not fully vaccinated against it - Inform the service if your child has an infectious disease or has been in contact with a person who has an infectious disease - Children enrolling in OOSH services are not required to be immunised in accordance with NSW Health guidelines

5. Related Documents

Policies and Procedures

- Enrolment and Orientation Policy and Procedure
- Child Safe Environment Policy and Procedure
- Interactions with Children Policy and Procedure
- Dealing Medical Conditions in Children Policy and Procedure
- Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Policy and Procedure
- Governance and Management Policy and Procedure
- Nutrition, Food and Beverages, Dietary Requirements Policy and Procedure

Legislation

- [Education and Care Services National Regulations \(2011 SI 653\) - NSW Legislation](#)
Regulations: 85, 86, 87, 88, 103, 109, 112, 162, 168, 170, 171, 172, 176
- [Children \(Education and Care Services\) National Law \(NSW\) No 104a of 2010 - NSW Legislation](#)
Sections: 172, 174

Other References

[School exclusion periods](#)

[Staying healthy: Preventing infectious diseases in early childhood education and care services - 6th Edition](#)

[Reporting a notifiable disease](#)

6. Definitions

Term	Definition
Immunisation	An effective process that helps the body build protection against serious, infectious diseases, typically by using vaccines to stimulate the immune system.
Exclusion period	Families keeping their children home in the event of an illness or disease within the service. The aim is to reduce the spread of infectious diseases in the service, as the less contact there is between people who have the disease and people who are at risk of catching the disease, the less chance the disease has of spreading.
Infectious disease	A disease that is designated under a law of a relevant jurisdiction or by a health authority as a disease that would require a person with the disease to be excluded from an education and care service.

Hand hygiene	Any action that cleans hands, including washing with soap and water and drying thoroughly, or using hand sanitiser
PPE	Personal protective equipment designed to protect the wearer's body from injury or infection including gloves, goggles and masks
Approved Provider	The legal entity with ultimate responsibility for the service under the National Law
Nominated Supervisor	A person with management or control of an education and care service, responsible for its day-to-day management.
Responsible Person	A Responsible Person is present at an education and care service to ensure compliance, safety, and wellbeing when the Approved Provider or Nominated Supervisor is not.
Service	Education and care service providing, or intended to provide, education and care on a regular basis to children under 13 years of age

7. Document Review

- 7.1. This Policy will be reviewed when there is a legislative change, organisational change, delegations change, technology change or at least every 1 - 2 years to ensure it continues to be current and effective.