

# Managing short-term illness and communicable diseases procedure

## Rationale

Elsie Ey Children's Centre is committed to providing and maintaining a safe and healthy work environment for its staff, children and visitors. Whilst providing services for children and adults, there will be times when illness occurs. This procedure aims to ensure that all children and staff attending the centre are protected as much as practicable from disease and infection by providing guidelines and recommendations for families and staff. It covers events such as sudden and temporary illness (see definition), temporary contagious diseases as well as incidental soiling or "wetting" of clothing. It considers the physical resources of the preschool (no "sick room" or bed, and limited access to warm water for cleaning children/clothing). It also considers Child Protection issues around changing and cleaning of soiled children.

This procedure will be used in conjunction with Health, Department for Education and the National Quality Framework policies, procedures, regulations and guidelines. **This procedure does not apply to ongoing or permanent illnesses such as asthma, incontinence, allergies or other conditions of a permanent nature that can managed through medical plans. Any long term or permanent illness or condition should be discussed with the Director to organise an appropriate Health Management Plan to support the child's attendance at preschool. Refer to our managing medical conditions in children procedure.**

## Definition

**Illness:** (for the purpose of this procedure) refers to any **temporary** condition that affects a child's ability to participate in the preschool curriculum and/ or requires additional care or attention and/or poses a possible transmission risk to other children and staff.

Extra ordinary precautions - At times the Children's Centre will be required to follow additional health and safety precautions that will over-ride this procedure, for example during the COVID-19 pandemic. Recommendations in these situations will be issued by SA Health and the Department for Education.

## Procedure

**Confirmed (diagnosed) short-term illnesses:** Information on the full range of illnesses, and their exclusion periods from preschool, are located on the SA Health website by searching "[You've got what?](#)"

- Once notified of a confirmed (diagnosed) medical illness, the preschool administration officer/director will check the "You've got what" factsheet and notify the family of the affected child/ren about the exclusion period and return to preschool process (if any).
- Preschool administration officer/director will then notify all families in the child's enrolment group via email of the presence of the illness in the preschool, including a link to the respective illness. Child confidentiality will be protected at all times.
- Staff will complete a disinfectant clean of key resources or areas identified as possible transmission points, if not already covered by regular daily cleaning practices.
- **If medication is required for short-term illnesses, refer to our managing medication procedure**

**Unconfirmed illness/ symptoms:** At times, educators may suspect a child is unwell based on their knowledge of the child, changes in behaviours, the child's history, information provided by families, the child disclosing that they feel unwell and/or the presence of physical symptoms indicating illness.

When a child appears unwell, with no physical symptoms and is **still able** to engage in the preschool program, staff will:

- Contact families to inform and gather any additional information
- Encourage child to participate in a quieter area of the preschool
- Encourage child to try and have a drink or something to eat, or to go to the toilet
- Monitor – regularly check on the child's well-being, at least once every ½ hour
- Encourage child to lay in a quiet area and rest
- Document concerns
- Inform the responsible person

When a child appears unwell and/or displays physical symptoms of illness, and is **unable** to continue participating in the preschool program, staff will:

- Administer 1<sup>st</sup> aid
- Seek support from responsible person
- Use the Infrared thermometer if deemed appropriate following the Department guidelines for use of Infrared thermometer in the preschool setting.
- Contact ambulance if required
- Contact family using emergency contact information to inform and request the child be collected from preschool

- Document incident/illness/precautions taken on an incident, injury, trauma and illness record form for family to sign
- Monitor throughout checking on child at least once every 15 minutes, or remaining with the child depending upon the severity of the illness or injury, until emergency services arrive and/or the collecting emergency contact arrives.

Symptoms warranting being sent home may include, but are not limited to, one or more of the following:

- ✓ Running noses that are not able to be managed independently by the child.
- ✓ Earache, headache, stomach ache
- ✓ Temperature
- ✓ Frequent urination/ wetting that is not characteristic for the child or managed with a toileting plan/ continence care plan
- ✓ Loose bowel motions (children will be sent home after one loose bowel motion and 24 hours must pass before returning to kindy).
- ✓ Vomiting (children will be sent home after one vomit and 24 hours must pass before the child may return to kindy)
- ✓ Discharge from eyes
- ✓ Any presenting unexplained skin rash without a Doctor's clearance
- ✓ Excessive and/or continuous nose bleed ie a nose bleed that does not stop within a 10 minute of rest time frame.
- ✓ Or any illness or temporary condition where the child would require additional supervision or care, without this first being negotiated with the Director
- ✓ Any extended period of time where a child is lethargic or otherwise unable to participate in the program
- ✓ Times where a child repeatedly verbalises they are feeling unwell, even in the absence of physical symptoms.

#### Managing toileting accidents:

In the event of a child soiling/wetting themselves at preschool, the child will be encouraged to change themselves (in a private area) and place soiled clothing in a plastic bag for collection by the parent/carer. If the child is particularly messy, distressed or upset, the parent will be contacted. For Child Protection reasons if a child should require adult support with cleaning, staff will inform other staff members of the situation and ensure clear visibility, or two staff will be present to support the child. In most cases children will be supported, guided and encouraged to develop their own self-help skills in toileting and managing instances of soiling/wetting. **Unfortunately due to lack of facilities clothing cannot be washed or cleaned prior to bagging**, as this could pose a health risk (using sinks unsuitable for this purpose). Every effort will be made to inform parents of the incident. There are times when children at kindy have Continence and/or Toileting Plans developed between staff, parents and other professionals.

## **Roles and Responsibilities**

Educators, staff and management have a shared duty of care to ensure children are provided with a high level of safety when managing short-term illness and communicable diseases at kindy.

<b>Site Leader</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Advise families of the service's managing short-term illness and communicable diseases procedure upon enrolment.</li> <li>• Guide families in obtaining any necessary documentation related to children's medical needs.</li> <li>• Seek information related to children's medical and health care needs upon enrolment, and when necessary during the enrolment period.</li> <li>• Ensure relevant plans/ agreements/ safety and risk documents relating to children's medical needs are complete and maintained.</li> <li>• Ensure staff receive information about the service's managing short-term illnesses and communicable diseases procedure during their orientation and when updates occur.</li> <li>• Ensure staff know the storage location of local site policies and procedures, and where to find supporting policies/ procedures/ regulations and national law information related to this procedure.</li> <li>• Maintain a safe and healthy work environment.</li> <li>• Review implementation of the current procedure.</li> </ul>
<b>Educators</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Will follow the steps above for both confirmed and unconfirmed short-term illnesses and medical conditions</li> <li>• Ensure Child Protection Principles are considered when managing an incident that may require changing of a child.</li> <li>• Support children in developing appropriate hygiene practices to help manage control of disease and illness, including washing hands before eating and after toileting, nose blowing, putting tissues in the bin etc.</li> <li>• Include "being healthy, staying safe" as part of the curriculum.</li> <li>• Staff are not able to administer any medication without a health care / medication plan in place.</li> </ul>

<b>Families</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inform staff of any illness or condition upon enrolment, or as soon as apparent, and provide any documentation as may be required.</li> <li>• Consider the health of all and keep home any child with a contagious disease <u>or symptoms</u> that may be indicative of an underlying illness.</li> <li>• Support children with appropriate toileting strategies as required and share these with staff.</li> <li>• Sign incident, injury, trauma and illness record when presented.</li> <li>• Let us know if you are concerned about your child's health at any time and discuss any medical concerns or preferences with the Director.</li> <li>• Consider appropriate insurance to cover medical and ambulance where possible.</li> <li>• Ensure emergency contact information is provided at enrolment and remains current AT ALL TIMES throughout the child's enrolment period.</li> <li>• Make sure any combination of parents/ carers/ emergency contacts are accessible at all times during a child's attendance, to answer emergency calls</li> <li>• Keep children home if they have required pain relief or medication for coughs or colds on the day they would normally attend kindy.</li> <li>• Keep children home if they have been administered laxatives where this is a one-off, or is an additional dose to, any regular laxative administration as described by a treating medical professional for the maintenance of healthy bowels.</li> <li>• Keep children home if they have been, or are to be, administered a medication that they are taking for the first time.</li> </ul>
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**Procedures created or reviewed:** Reviewed 30/08/2022.

**Monitoring, Evaluation and Review:** Policies and procedures are reviewed every 3 years or earlier if there is a change in relevant legislation.