

Illness Policy

Purpose:	The purpose of this policy is help provide a safe and healthy environment at River School Early Childhood Centre by appropriately responding to any illness of a child or employee at the service		
Scope:	Children attending the service, parents and employees, including full-time, part-time, permanent, fixed-term and casual employees, as well as contractors, volunteers and people undertaking work experience or vocational placements		
Status:	Approved	Supersedes: All previous Illness Policies	
Authorised by:	Dee Farquharson	Date of Authorisation: 17 Nov 2021	
References:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010 • Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011: Regulations 85, 86, 87, 88, 168(2)(b), 170, 171, 172, 177, 181, 183, 184 • National Quality Standard: Quality Area 2.1.4 • Staying Healthy (5th ed.) • Australian Privacy Principles • River School Early Childhood Centre Illness Procedures • River School Early Childhood Centre Infectious Disease Policy • River School Early Childhood Centre First Aid Policy • River School Early Childhood Centre Incident, Injury and Trauma Policy • River School Early Childhood Centre Administration of Medications Policy • River School Early Childhood Centre Managing Medical Conditions Policy • River School Early Childhood Centre Work Health and Safety Policy • River School Early Childhood Centre Privacy Policy • River School Early Childhood Centre Record Retention • River School Early Childhood Centre Emergency Management Plan 		
Review Date:	Every 2 years	Next Review Date: 17 Nov 2023	
Policy Owner:	AME Board		

LAST REVIEWED	17/11/2021	NEXT REVIEW	16/10/2023
VERSION	1	PAGE	1 of 6
DOCUMENT NUMBER	QA 2.5	This document may be subject to change without notice and is available online. Note: Document is uncontrolled when printed.	

Policy Statement

River School Early Childhood Centre is committed to the health and safety of children attending and employees working at the service. The service will appropriately respond to the needs of an ill child or employee at the service.

In accordance with the *Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011*, the service will:

- Require parents not to bring ill children to the service, and to inform the service of the child’s non-attendance due to illness as soon as practicable after the onset of the illness.
- Notify parents as soon as practicable, but at least within 24 hours, if their child becomes ill whilst at the service.
- Require parents to collect their child if an illness becomes apparent in the child whilst at the service.
- Require employees not to report for work, and to inform the service of their inability to report to work due to illness as soon as practicable after the onset of the illness.
- Develop step-by-step procedures on how to manage an illness that becomes apparent at the service. If the illness is an infectious disease, the River School Early Childhood Centre Infectious Disease Policy will also apply.
- In accordance with section 87 of the Regulation and River School Early Childhood Centre Privacy and Records Retention Policies, keep details of any illness which becomes apparent while the child is at the service including—
 - i. The name and age of the child; and
 - ii. The relevant circumstances surrounding the child becoming ill and any apparent symptoms; and
 - iii. The time and date of the apparent onset of the illness;
 - a) Details of the action taken by the service in relation to any illness which a child has suffered whilst at the service including—
 - i. Any medication administered or first aid provided; and
 - ii. Any medical personnel contacted;
 - b) The name of any person—
 - i. Whom the service notified or attempted to notify, of any illness which a child has suffered whilst at the service; and
 - ii. The time and date of the notifications or attempted notifications;
 - c) The name and signature of the person making an entry in the record, and the time and date that the entry was made; and
 - d) The information above must be included in the illness record as soon as practicable, but not later than 24 hours after the onset of the illness.

Definitions

Definitions relevant to this policy include:

Illness: can include many conditions, diseases or infections. According to *Staying Healthy*, symptoms of illness may include:

LAST REVIEWED	17/11/2021	NEXT REVIEW	16/10/2023
VERSION	1	PAGE	2 of 6
DOCUMENT NUMBER	QA 2.5	This document may be subject to change without notice and is available online. Note: Document is uncontrolled when printed.	

- High fever—a high fever in a young child can be a sign of infection, and needs to be investigated to find the cause. However, fever by itself is not necessarily an indicator of serious illness
- Drowsiness—the child is less alert than normal, making less eye contact, or less interested in their surroundings
- Lethargy and decreased activity—the child wants to lie down or be held rather than participate in any activity, even those activities that would normally be of interest
- Breathing difficulty—this is an important sign. The child may be breathing very quickly or noisily, or be pale or blue around the mouth. The child may be working hard at breathing, with the muscles between the ribs being drawn in with each breath
- Poor circulation—the child looks very pale, and their hands and feet feel cold or look blue
- Poor feeding—the child has reduced appetite and drinks much less than usual
- Poor urine output—the child urinates less than normal
- Red or purple rash—non-specific rashes are common in viral infections; however, red or purple spots that do not turn white if pressed with a finger require urgent medical referral because the child could have meningococcal disease
- A stiff neck or sensitivity to light—this may indicate meningitis
- Pain—a child may or may not tell you they are in pain. Facial expression is a good indicator of pain in children who do not talk. General irritability or reduced physical activity may also indicate pain in young children

Responsibilities

River School Early Childhood Centre

River School Early Childhood Centre has the following role and responsibilities:

- Require ill children and employees not to attend the service.
- Notify parents as soon as practicable, but at least within 24 hours, if their child becomes ill whilst at the service.
- Require parents to collect their child if an illness becomes apparent in the child whilst at the service.
- Develop appropriate procedures on how to manage an illness that becomes apparent at the service.
- Keep an illness record for any child if an illness becomes apparent whilst the child is at the service.

Employees

Employees of the River School Early Childhood Centre have the following role and responsibilities:

- Be aware of and act in accordance with River School Early Childhood Centre Illness Policy and Procedures.
- Not report for work if they have an illness, and inform the service of this as soon as practicable.

LAST REVIEWED	17/11/2021	NEXT REVIEW	16/10/2023
VERSION	1	PAGE	3 of 6
DOCUMENT NUMBER	QA 2.5	This document may be subject to change without notice and is available online. Note: Document is uncontrolled when printed.	

- Accept and act upon decisions by River School Early Childhood Centre to respond appropriately if an illness becomes apparent at the service.

Families

Families of the River School Early Childhood Centre have the following role and responsibilities:

- Be aware of and act in accordance with River School Early Childhood Centre Illness Policy and Procedures.
- Keep children away from the service if they have an illness, and inform the service of this as soon as practicable.
- Accept and act upon decisions by River School Early Childhood Centre to respond appropriately if an illness becomes apparent at the service, including by collecting their child promptly if requested to do so by the service due to an illness.

Implementation

In practice, River School Early Childhood Centre’s commitment to appropriately respond to an illness at the service means that it will implement the following measures:

- Awareness - regularly raise awareness of the importance of appropriately responding to illness, including by the development and implementation of this Policy and the related procedures.
- Training – providing employees with appropriate training in first aid, hygiene and infection control.
- Record keeping, monitoring, reporting – keeping appropriate records, monitoring and reporting on illness within the service in line with the service’s Privacy and Record Retention Policies.

Dealing with a cold (Runny Nose)

Colds are the most common cause of illness in children and adults and are caused by many different viruses that affect the nose and throat. Young children may have up to 8-10 colds each year with the highest number being in their first two years of combined care. Symptoms include a runny or blocked nose, sneezing and coughing, watery eyes, headache, a mild sore throat and possibly a slight fever. Nasal discharge may start clear but can become thicker and turn yellow or green over a day or so. Children with clear mucous at the beginning of a cold are most contagious. Towards the end of a cold the body has begun to mount its defences against the virus and white blood cells enter the mucous and give it the green/yellow colour. Green runny noses that last for longer than 10-14 days or are accompanied by fever, headache, coughing or lethargy should seek medical attention.

There is no specific treatment for the common cold. Because colds are caused by viruses, antibiotics will not help. Rest, extra drinks, and comforting are important. Refer to Staying Healthy.

River School Early Childhood Centre Nominated Supervisor or Responsible Person in day-to-day charge has the right to send children home if they appear unwell due to a cold or general illness. Children can become distressed and lethargic when unwell. With discharge coming from the

LAST REVIEWED	17/11/2021	NEXT REVIEW	16/10/2023
VERSION	1	PAGE	4 of 6
DOCUMENT NUMBER	QA 2.5	This document may be subject to change without notice and is available online. Note: Document is uncontrolled when printed.	

children’s nose and coughing, can lead to germs spreading to other children, Employees, toys, and equipment. River School Early Childhood Centre Nominated Supervisor or Responsible Person in day-to-day charge will assess each individual case prior to sending the child home.

Caring for a Child who is Unwell

Excluding sick children and staff is one of the three most important ways of limiting the spread of infection in a childcare service. Often children are unwell with the common cold (coughing, runny nose, and a slight temperature) but do not display symptoms of an infectious illness that requires exclusion. Although the exclusion of a child may place added pressure on parents and families with work commitments, staff must ensure the Health and Safety of all others utilising the service and therefore the need for exclusion from the service is at the discretion of the Nominated Supervisor or the Responsible Person in charge.

In the event of a child being unwell, employees are to ensure the child has a quiet place to rest that is away from the group while waiting to be collected and is being monitored for signs and symptoms of deteriorating.

Fever / High temperature

Fever is not an illness in itself, but indicates the body is fighting an infection which may be a contagious illness. As guided by Staying Healthy, if a child has a fever or registers a high temperature, staff will ensure they are encouraged to drink water, remove excess clothing, and sponge the exposed skin with tepid water to assist them to feel more comfortable. The parent/guardian will be notified of the high temperature and informed that the child will need to be collected from the service.

A **ONCE ONLY** dose of emergency paracetamol may be required and administered after checking confirmation in the child’s enrolment and seeking verbal approval from a parent/guardian. This does not address the cause of the fever but can help the child feel better and may bring the temperature down temporarily. An Emergency Medication Authorisation will be completed, along with an Incident, Injury, Trauma, and Illness Record.

Monitoring the Symptoms of an Illness

It is important to remember that Employees can interpret the severity of the same symptom differently. Multiple people observing symptoms independently of each other may not accurately reflect when changes become more severe and therefore, an illness may become more serious without notice. For this reason, Employees are to nominate one person to care for an ill child, who can record any changes in breathing, colour of skin, levels of consciousness or change in temperature.

Documenting Symptoms of an Illness

Documenting symptoms is crucial to the success of monitoring an illness, especially when the conditions change, and the child becomes increasingly unwell. Records are an important way of communicating to a family how their child’s illness has developed or been managed by Employees.

LAST REVIEWED	17/11/2021	NEXT REVIEW	16/10/2023
VERSION	1	PAGE	5 of 6
DOCUMENT NUMBER	QA 2.5	This document may be subject to change without notice and is available online. Note: Document is uncontrolled when printed.	

Paramedics, medical practitioners, and hospitals may use the information collected from Employees to diagnose an illness. For example, by documenting a child’s temperature every 15 minutes’ assists Employees to determine how quickly the temperature is rising and the possible severity of the illness.

Employees are to record the symptoms of an illness on an Incident, Injury, Trauma, and Illness Record.

The National Regulations require that these records are kept until the child is 25yrs old.

Notifying Parent/Guardian or Emergency Contacts when an Illness is Present

In the event of a child displaying symptoms of an illness requiring exclusion employees are to:

- Notify the Nominated Supervisor or the Responsible Person in day-to-day charge.
- Children and employees are to be excluded from the service
- Informing other families and stakeholders of an infectious disease is only to be done after a formal diagnosis from a doctor is received.
- In the event of not being able to contact a parent or emergency contact, employees are to follow steps as guided by a medical practitioner and/or the Nominated Supervisor or Responsible Person in day-to-day charge with up to date first aid qualifications.

Compliance and Monitoring

In line with the *Education and Care Service National Regulations 2011*, River School Early Childhood Centre will ensure that:

- Copies of this policy and any related procedures are readily accessible and available for inspection by the Nominated Supervisor, employees and families; and
- Parents of children enrolled at the service are notified at least 14 days before the service makes any change to a policy or procedure that may have a significant impact on the service’s provision of education and care to any child enrolled at the service or the family’s ability to utilise the service.

LAST REVIEWED	17/11/2021	NEXT REVIEW	16/10/2023
VERSION	1	PAGE	6 of 6
DOCUMENT NUMBER	QA 2.5	This document may be subject to change without notice and is available online. Note: Document is uncontrolled when printed.	