



Victor Harbor Community Kindergarten

QUALITY AREA 2: CHILDREN'S HEALTH AND SAFETY

Dealing with Infectious Diseases

6/4/ 2019

Updated and amended 8/3/2021

Updated and amended 3/6/2021

Purpose

Victor Harbor Community Kindergarten aims to provide a healthy and safe environment for the staff and children in their care.

This policy follows the NQS requirements as outlined in Regulation 88 -

1. If there is an occurrence of an infectious disease at a centre, reasonable steps must be taken to prevent the spread of the infectious disease at the service.
2. If there is an occurrence of an infectious disease at a centre, a parent or authorised emergency contact of a child is notified of the occurrence as soon as practicable.

Risk Factors

Children are particularly at risk of infection due to the following reasons:

1. They have close physical contact with a wide range of children and adults in closed spaces for a long period of time.
2. They may not have had previous exposure to many common infectious diseases.
3. They have prolonged contact with materials and objects that may carry infectious microorganisms. Exposure to infectious disease may be from infected persons, [infected animals](#), insects, [contaminated food](#), waste or other contaminated objects.
4. Infectious diseases are presenting in children at an earlier age than in the past, with young children more susceptible to various complications.
5. They are continually being introduced to new children who have their own set of pathogens.
6. Due to their age, children in kindergarten often contribute to the spread of infection. Difficulty with toilet training, lack of control over bodily secretions and the inability to correctly wash hands all provide a breeding ground for infectious diseases.
7. Some infectious agents pose a higher risk in a group care environment.
8. The risk of infection is increased in a group situation and strict hygiene practices need to be implemented, more so than in the home environment.

Procedures – Preventing the spread of Infectious Diseases

- Precautions will be taken to prevent or minimise the spread of infectious disease. Basic precautions include:
 - following good hand and respiratory hygiene including regularly washing hands and covering nose and mouth when sneezing and coughing
 - cleaning and disinfecting contaminated items and increasing the cleaning schedule for contaminated areas
 - treating all blood and body substances as potential sources of infection and use personal protective equipment (eg gloves, glasses, face masks)

- using waterproof coverings over any break in the skin
- safe handling and disposal of sharps
- following appropriate procedures for the handling and disposal of contaminated waste.
- Ensure children and employees with symptoms and signs of an infectious disease such as fever, cold/flu, vomiting or diarrhoea:
 - have limited contact with others
 - are encouraged to seek medical attention
 - follow SA Health's exclusion period guidelines
 - stay at home until symptoms have passed.
- As from 1st July, 2019, children who are NOT immunized are NOT permitted to attend Kindergarten. Immunization records must be shown upon enrolment.
- Seek first aid or medical assistance if required.

Exclusions:

1. Victor Harbor Community Kindergarten has a 24 hour exclusion policy for general illnesses. This enables the symptoms to subside, ensuring normal activity and diet can be reintroduced.
2. 24 hour exclusion after vomiting, diarrhea or stomach upset means 24 hours clear from the symptoms, after the reintroduction and tolerance of a full diet.
3. 24 hour exclusion after a fever / temperature means the child's temperature has stayed at a normal level (36°C - 37°C) for 24 hours without the use of Panadol or any other agent.
4. 24 hour exclusion after medication means that the child is excluded for 24 hours after commencing a course of antibiotics or antifungal treatment. This will ensure the medication has begun taking effect.
5. Exclusion prevents transmission of disease and assists in the recovery of the sick child.
6. Each child and staff member must be well enough to attend and participate fully in normal activities.
7. Children requiring one on one care will need to remain at home until normal activities can be resumed.
8. Exclusion applies even if it has not been possible to provide a specific diagnosis for the illness.
9. Children who attend the centre with discharge from the nose or ears may be a source of infection. Staff will contact the parent / caregiver to discuss the issue and may request the child be excluded and medical advice sought.

Assessing Serious or Potentially Serious Infectious Disease:

1. The centre has the right to exclude any child or staff member who has an illness that may affect the health of others.
2. As a general principle, children should not be brought to the centre unless they are able to cope adequately with normal routines and activities.
3. The child should not be brought to the centre if they will expose others to unnecessary infection.
4. If a child does not have an infectious disease but exhibits any of the following signs they will be excluded:
 - a. Sleeps at unusual times during the day
 - b. Has a raised temperature that remains above 37.5°C or continues to rise further
 - c. Is crying constantly as a result of discomfort due to illness
 - d. Is reacting badly to medications
 - e. Is in need of constant one to one care
 - f. Green mucus from the nose
5. If a child is sick or exhibits any of the above signs, staff need to be notified of the child's absence by 10am.
6. It is essential that infectious diseases are reported to the Director as soon as possible so that other parents / caregivers can be notified.
7. Children are to be excluded in accordance with this health policy, the final decision rests with the Director as to whether the child is in a fit state to attend the centre or not.

8. Parents are required to collect their child within half an hour of being notified of the exclusion. If parents are unable to be contacted, the emergency contact will be called to collect the child.
9. Until the child is collected, staff will aim to exclude that child from the general play areas.

Notification Procedures in Infectious Disease Cases:

1. All parents will be notified of any common infectious diseases in the centre by signs placed on the noticeboards near the sign in sheet.
2. Infectious diseases that are notifiable to the Chief Health Officer of the Department of Health include:
 - a. Diphtheria
 - b. Haemophilias Influenza Type B (Hib)
 - c. Measles
 - d. Mumps
 - e. Poliomyelitis
 - f. Rubella
 - g. Pertussis (Whooping Cough)
 - h. Covid 19

Specific Guidelines for the Exclusion of Sick Children from Preschool

The spread of certain infectious diseases can be reduced by excluding a person, known to be infectious, from contact with others who are at risk of catching the infection.

Appendix A SA Health – Exclusion from childcare, preschool, school and work fact sheet shows the recommended minimum periods of exclusion from school, preschool and childcare centres for cases of, and contact with, infectious diseases, based on guidelines issued by the National Health and Medical Research Council) and the Australian Immunisation Handbook

These guidelines can also be applied to the general community and most workplaces. A staff member with gastroenteritis (also known as 'gastro': inflammation of the intestinal (bowels)), should not return to work for at least 24 hours after vomiting or diarrhea have stopped.

Exclusion periods:

The need for exclusion depends on:

- the ease with which the infection can be spread
- the ability of the infected person to follow hygiene precautions
- whether or not the person has some immunity to the infection (either from vaccination or past infection)
- to a lesser extent, the severity of the disease.

Exclusion periods-

SA Health – Exclusion from childcare, preschool, school and work fact sheet, See Appendix A Fact Sheet (sahealth.sa.gov.au)

These guidelines can also be applied to the general community and most workplaces. Please see the Director if you require further information regarding the Exclusion

Definitions:

Exclusion periods are based on the time that a person with a specific disease or condition might be infectious to others.

Non-exclusion means there is not a significant risk of transmitting infection to others. A person who is not excluded may still need to remain at home because he or she does not feel well.

A **contact** is any person who has been close enough to an infected person to be at risk of having acquired the infection from that person.

Roles and Responsibilities

1. The Director is to ensure the control measures listed in this policy are effectively implemented.
2. The Director must ensure that all staff are consulted and provided with the necessary instruction, training and supervision to ensure that the control measures are being effectively implemented.
3. The centre must review and evaluate the effectiveness of the control measures annually.
4. Staff are to implement proactive strategies and follow compulsory procedures.

Sources

- National Quality Standard and regulations - National Quality Standard 2.1 - Children's health, Regulation 168 (2)(c) - Policies and procedures, Regulation 88 - Infectious diseases
- First Aid and Infection Control Standard (DfE)
- Appendix A -SA Health – Exclusion from childcare, preschool, school and work fact sheet (updated 28/1/2021)
- SA Health Infectious diseases control
- National Health and Medical Research Council Guidelines
- Australian Immunisation Handbook

Approved and Checked By

Review 2022 or as required

Approved and Checked By:

Centre Director

.....Date

Governing Council Representative

.....Date