

PREVENTION OF ILLNESS

RATIONALE

All parents and teaching staff share the responsibility for creating a healthy centre environment, that protects and nurtures all children. Exclusion of children with infectious illnesses is necessary to prevent the spread of disease. Decisions regarding exclusion will be made by the Centre Manager in alignment with Ministry of Health and Ministry of Education guidelines.

ALIGNMENT WITH TE WHĀRIKI

Well Being: The health and well-being of the child are protected and nurtured.

PROCEDURES

When a Child Becomes Unwell at the Centre

- Parents/caregivers or emergency contacts will be notified and expected to collect their child promptly.
- The unwell child will be isolated to minimise the spread of illness, made comfortable (e.g., on a bed or chair in a secluded area or centre office), and supervised by a staff member until collected.
- Upon collection, parents/caregivers must sign the Accident/Illness Register, completed by a staff member trained in First Aid.

If Medical Attention is Urgently Required

- If a child's condition escalates before the parent/caregiver arrives, the Centre Manager (or a Team Leader in their absence) will call an ambulance or take the child to the nominated medical clinic.
- Parents/caregivers will be notified immediately.

EXCLUSION GUIDELINES

Children will be excluded from the centre when they exhibit any of the following symptoms or illnesses:

- **General Illness:** If the child is unable to participate comfortably, is lethargic, or requires prolonged rest.
- **Fever:** 38°C or higher. Child may return 24 hours after the last fever (without fever-reducing medication which would mask symptoms).
- **Persistent Symptoms:** Ongoing coughing, crying, or runny nose. Child may return when symptom-free.
- **Vomiting and/or Diarrhoea:** Must be symptom-free for 48 hours, have had at least one normal bowel motion, and be able to retain food.
- **Unexplained Rash:** Excluded until a doctor confirms, in writing, that it is not infectious.
- **Hand, Foot and Mouth Disease:** Excluded until blisters are dry. If blisters are covered and the child is well, attendance is permitted.
- **Conjunctivitis:** Excluded until discharge ceases.

- **Head Lice/Nits:** Excluded until treatment has begun and no live lice are present. Daily combing for 3 weeks is recommended. Any nits/lice found while present at childcare will result in parents/caregivers being asked to collect their child.
- **Threadworm:** Excluded until treatment is completed.
- **Chickenpox:** Excluded for 1 week after rash appears or until all blisters are dry.
- **Tuberculosis:** Excluded until written clearance from a doctor or Public Health Service is provided.
- **Measles:** Excluded for 5 days from rash onset.
- **Ringworm:** No exclusion required, but skin contact should be avoided by covering the area.
- **Rubella (German Measles):** Excluded for 7 days from rash onset or until well.
- **Scabies:** Excluded until treatment begins. All lesions must be covered with bandages or under clothes until healed.
- **Impetigo (School Sores):** Excluded until sores have dried or after 24 hours of antibiotic treatment. Sores must be covered.
- **Streptococcal Sore Throat:** Excluded until 24 hours after antibiotics commence or child is well.
- **Whooping Cough (Pertussis):** Excluded for 5 days from starting antibiotics, or 21 days from symptom onset if untreated or until no more coughing, whichever comes first.
- **Mumps:** Excluded for 5 days after swelling appears or until fully recovered.

Additional Health and Safety Notes

- Enrolment forms collect information on chronic conditions and special care needs.
- If immunized, parents must provide a copy of their child's immunisation record upon enrolment.
- Immunisation is not mandatory for enrolment; however, awareness of immunisation status is essential for risk management.
- In the event of a vaccine-preventable illness (e.g., measles, diphtheria, pertussis), unimmunised children who have been in contact with a case may be required to stay home, per Ministry of Health advice.
- Children showing signs of contagious illness during the day will be isolated and must remain home until no longer infectious and fully recovered.
- Parents must notify the centre if their child becomes unwell at home and is diagnosed with a contagious or infectious illness listed in the policy. This allows the centre to make informed decisions and, if necessary, communicate appropriately with other families.
- Infectious disease exclusion details (as per Ministry of Education guidelines) are available in the Policy Folder.
- Individual Medical or Health and Safety Action Plans are created for children with ongoing medical conditions (e.g., asthma, epilepsy, severe allergies) in consultation with parents. These are reviewed every three months or as required by Health Professionals.
- A medical certificate may be requested by management before a child returns after illness.
- Adults must also remain away from the centre if unwell, following the same exclusion criteria.
- All illness-related departures are documented in the Accident/Illness Register.

Accident/Illness Register includes:

- Child's name
- Date and time
- Description of illness/injury
- Actions taken and by whom
- Confirmation of parent/caregiver notification



Childcare

In Case of an Outbreak

If an outbreak (e.g., vomiting or diarrhoea in two or more individuals within 24 hours) is suspected:

- Notify parents via email, Storypark and display a notice on the centre board, outlining the illness and symptoms.
- Contact Public Health for advice and complete a Case Log as advised.
- Increase cleaning frequency and hygiene monitoring. (See Cleaning Schedules.)
- Ensure immunisation records are current.

Where two or more attendees and/or staff members have experienced two or more episodes of vomiting and/or diarrhoea within a 24 hour period, and an outbreak is suspected it is recommended to contact Healthline for advice.

Hand Washing and Hygiene

Good hygiene, especially hand washing, is essential to prevent infection spread. All staff and children should:

- Wash hands for 20 seconds using warm, soapy water.
- Dry hands thoroughly for 20 seconds using a disposable paper towel.
- Wash hands before eating and after toileting.

Staff and children with infectious illnesses must stay home for the duration of the infectious period or until cleared by a medical professional.

Referenced Guidelines

- Ministry of Education - Health and Safety Licensing Criteria
- Ministry of Education - Appendix 2 Infectious Diseases (HS26)
- Ministry of Health - Infectious Diseases Information and Exclusion List
- Nga Kupu Oranga, Healthy Messages
- Te Whatu Ora Health NZ: Public health advisory for early childhood centres: [Public Health](#)
- Te Whatu Ora Health NZ: Public health policies and guidelines for early childhood settings: [Fact Sheets](#)
- Ministry of Health - Healthline Ph 0800 611 116