

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 – Goal 1:

Children experience an environment where their health is promoted.

PROCEDURES

When a Child Becomes Unwell at the Centre

- Staff will monitor children for signs of illness throughout the day and respond promptly where a child becomes unwell.
- The unwell child will be kept separate from other children as much as practicable, made comfortable (e.g., on a bed or chair in a secluded area or centre office), and supervised by a staff member until collected.
- Parents/caregivers or emergency contacts will be notified and required to collect their child as soon as practicable.
- All illness-related departures are documented in the Accident/Illness Register.
- Upon collection, parents/caregivers must sign the Accident/Illness Register, completed by a staff member trained in First Aid.
- Children who become unwell during the day must remain away from the centre until they are no longer infectious and are well enough to return.

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

Exclusion of children with infectious illnesses is managed in accordance with licensing criteria HS120 and Ministry of Health guidance.

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 symptoms that impact the child's ability to participate comfortably (e.g., persistent coughing, distress, or significant runny nose). Child may return when well enough to participate.
- **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 it is not infectious.
- **Hand, Foot and Mouth Disease:** Excluded until blisters are dry. If blisters are covered and the child is well, they do not need to be excluded.
- **Conjunctivitis:** Excluded until eyes are not sticky or weeping.
- **Head Lice/Nits:** No exclusion required. Treatment is recommended to kill eggs and lice and parents/caregivers encouraged to seek treatment advice.
- **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. Skin contact should be avoided until treatment has begun.
- **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.
- Immunisation information is not required to be collected or recorded by the centre. The Aotearoa Immunisation Register (AIR) is the national system used by health professionals to access this information.
- Children will not be excluded from attending the centre based on their immunisation status.
- The centre will continue to follow Ministry of Health and Public Health guidance in the event of an infectious disease or outbreak.
- In the event of a vaccine-preventable illness (e.g., measles, diphtheria, pertussis), families will be notified. Families of children who are not vaccinated may choose to keep their child at home, and Public Health advice will be followed where further action is required.
- Children showing signs of contagious illness during the day will be isolated, sent home and must remain at 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.
- Management may request medical clearance before a child returns where needed.

- 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

In Case of an Outbreak

Where two or more children and/or staff members experience two or more episodes of vomiting and/or diarrhoea within a 24-hour period, and an outbreak 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.)

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 – Licensing Criteria for Early Childhood Education and Care Services (HS120)
- Ministry of Education – Schedule 1 Infectious Diseases (HS120)
- 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