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HYGIENE AND INFECTION CONTROL POLICY

QUALITY AREA 2: CHILDREN'S HEALTH AND SAFETY

National Quality Standard (NQS)

Quality Area 2: Children's Health and Safety

2.1.1	Wellbeing and comfort	Each child's wellbeing and comfort is provided for, including appropriate opportunities to meet each child's needs for sleep, rest and relaxation
2.1.2	Health practices and procedures	Effective illness and injury management and hygiene practices are promoted and implemented.
2.2	Safety	Each child is protected

Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011

Children (Education and Care Services) National Law Act 2010

77	Health, Hygiene and safe food practices
85	Incident, injury, trauma and illness policies and procedures
86	Notification to parents of incident, injury, trauma and illness
87	Incident, injury, trauma and illness record
88	Infectious diseases
90	Medical conditions policy
93	Administration of medication
106	Laundry and hygiene facilities
109	Toilet and hygiene facilities
162	Health information to be kept in enrolment record
168	Education and care service must have policies and procedures
170	Policies and procedures to be followed
172	Offence to fail to display prescribed information
172(2)(g)	A notice stating that there has been an occurrence of an infectious disease at the premises
173	Prescribed information to be displayed
175(2)(c)	Prescribed information to be notified to the Regulatory Authority-(2) any circumstances arising at the service that poses a risk to the health, safety or wellbeing of a child or children attending the service

Having and encouraging good hygiene practices in early childhood is essential for reducing the risk of cross infection. Helping children to develop appropriate personal hygiene habits will become embedded as they grow and develop. It is important to work with families to ensure children follow simple hygiene rules by incorporating good hygiene methods in both the early childhood setting and home environment.

Introduction

It is important that all educators of Woden Early Childhood Centre (WECC) role-model positive health practices, and that children are appropriately supervised, assisted and encouraged in their daily health and hygiene routines. Education and care environments must be hygienically maintained to reduce the possible spread of infection and illness.

Infection can be spread through direct physical contact between people, airborne droplets from coughing and sneezing or from contact with surfaces and objects. Children are in contact with a number of other children, adults, toys, eating utensils and equipment. This high degree of physical contact with people and the environment creates a higher risk of children being exposed to and spread infectious illnesses. Whilst it is not possible for WECC to prevent the spread of all infections, we aim to create a hygienic environment to minimise the spread of diseases and infections.

Hand washing is a vital strategy in the prevention of spreading many infectious diseases. Research emphasises good handwashing as the single most important task you can do to reduce the spread of bacteria, germs, viruses and parasites that infect yourself, other staff and children being cared for.

Micro-organisms such as bacteria, germs, viruses and parasites are present on the hands at all times and live in the oil that is naturally produced on your hands. The use of soap or detergent and water remove most of these organisms and decreases the risk of cross infection.

WECC will adhere to National Regulation requirements and standards to support the effectiveness of our hand washing policy. We aim to educate and encourage children to wash their hands effectively which will help to reduce the incidence of infectious diseases.

Scope

This policy applies to children, families, educators, staff, management, volunteers and visitors of the Centre.

Goals

WECC aims to maintain a healthy and hygienic environment for children, educators and families by providing professional cleaning services on a daily basis.

WECC will ensure that additional procedures are implemented to minimise the potential risk of disease and illness. These procedures will include:

- spot and routine cleaning by educators
- effective handwashing practices
- identifying and excluding sick children and educators as per the *Infectious Disease Policy*
- maintaining current immunisation records as per the *Infectious Disease Policy*
- effective handling, storage and disposal or washing of soiled items
- the use of personal protection equipment (PPE)

Strategies

The Nominated Supervisor or Director will:

- design procedures that prevent the spread of infectious diseases to be implemented by educators and volunteers
- ensure that the educators and volunteers are aware of the need to implement health and hygiene practices and safe food handling and storage practices in order to minimise risks for the children in WECC
- ensure that educators and volunteers implement health and hygiene practices and safe food handling and storage practices in order to minimise risks for the children in WECC
- ensure that in the event of an infectious disease being identified within the children, families or educators in WECC, steps are taken to prevent the spread of the infectious disease and that parents and emergency contacts are notified about the occurrence of an infectious disease as soon as possible
- maintain up-to-date immunisation records for all children. Families will be given reminder notifications when scheduled immunisations are due. If any outbreak occurs within WECC children who are not immunised will be excluded as per the *Infectious Disease* policy
- introduce cleaning systems that prevent contamination and cross infection. Cleaning buckets, cloths, mops, etc. will be clearly labelled, coded to indicate their specific use and stored in a location inaccessible to children
- ensure that new educators, casual educators and volunteers are informed about the strategies and procedures implemented by WECC to keep themselves and the children protected
- prioritise training and professional development for educators regarding current hygiene and infection control practices
- place a copy of hand washing procedure near all hand washing areas for educators to follow
- monitor sand cleanliness and arrange for annual change as well as topping up as needed
- provide personal protection equipment such as gloves

Educators will:

- engage in training, research and professional development about current hygiene and infection control practice
- be responsible for routine cleaning of WECC. This may include sweeping and mopping floors after meal and activity times, wiping tables with soapy water before and after meals and sanitising toys and equipment after use; particularly after children have mouthed toys. The sandpits will be raked daily, the sandpit house will be closed up, and the smaller sandpits will be covered each night
- ensure that children's handwashing areas have a visual procedure available for children to refer to. Educators will role model correct handwashing techniques and give verbal reminders to children when washing hands
- monitor children's health and wellbeing while they are at WECC. Educators will observe children's activity carefully. If a child shows symptoms such as lethargy, high temperature, vomiting, skin rash, difficulty in breathing, diarrhea, or when educators have concerns about a child's health, they will immediately inform the Nominated Supervisor or Director and the family. This will be done in accordance with the *Accident, illness and injury* and *Infectious Disease* policies
- wear gloves at all times when assisting a child with soiled or wet clothing, and during nappy change and toileting routines in accordance with the *Nappy Change and Toileting* policies
- cover any cuts, abrasions, dermatitis or open skin on hands with a water-resistant dressing
- clean nappy change and bathroom areas as required during the day and clean the areas thoroughly once daily
- effectively manage bodily fluid spills and accidents. Blood or bodily fluid spills will be isolated with barricades until the educator can remove the spill hygienically. The educator will:
 - avoid direct contact with the spill or use PPE
 - contain the spill as far as possible using paper towel, disposing of it in a sealed plastic clinical waste

- bag
- clean the spill using natural detergent
- dry and/or ventilate the area
- notify the work cover authority if there has been exposure to bodily fluids that may present the risk of the transmission of blood borne diseases
- administer first aid to any educator who has blood or bodily fluids into their eyes or mouth by irrigating the eyes for 5-10 minutes and/or blowing the nose and/or spitting out and rinsing out the mouth
- store and dispose of soiled items appropriately as per nappy change and toileting policies. Soiled items not belonging to an individual child or family that have been exposed to bodily fluids will be rinsed in cold water and washed separately in a machine using hot water
- encourage children to cover their noses and mouths with their elbows while sneezing or coughing and to wash and dry their hands afterwards. Educators will model this behaviour
- wear gloves when serving and preparing food. Children's cups, plates and bowls along with all kitchen utensils used in the preparation of food will be sanitised in the dishwasher
- use every precaution to minimise the risk of infection within the WECC environment for themselves the children and the families

Families will:

- wash their child's hands upon arrival and departure of the Centre
- keep their child home if they are unwell in accordance with the *Infectious Disease* policy

Handwashing

To ensure the greatest level of personal hygiene, it is a requirement of WECC to wash your hands:

- on arrival at the Centre
- before and after toileting or changing nappies
- after going to the toilet
- after wiping a runny nose or blowing your own nose
- before and after administering first aid
- before and after administering medication
- after using chemicals
- before eating, preparing and serving food
- making bottles
- after cleaning up bodily fluids
- after removing protective gloves
- before going home

Children will be encouraged to follow educators modelling and wash their hands at appropriate times throughout the day. Educators will ensure all required equipment is easily accessible and appropriate for use.

Strategies Educators will use to encourage effective hand hygiene practice include:

- talking about the importance of hygiene
- singing a song or reciting a poem
- using a clear visual poster with step-by-step instructions
- using positive language
- encouraging and using positive reinforcement
- ensuring equipment is accessible
- provide clear simple routines
- give children sufficient times to practice and develop their skills
- ensure adequate supervision and assistance is available when required

We believe hygiene practices of children being cared for should be as rigorous as staff and educators. Our hygiene environment supports appropriate practice.

Hand Drying

Effective hand drying is just as important as comprehensive hand washing. Research states that wet hands can pick up and transfer up to 1000 times more bacteria than dry hands. Drying hands thoroughly also helps remove any germs that may not have been rinsed off. We provide children, staff and educators disposable paper towel to ensure effective hand hygiene.

Evaluation

The safety and well-being of the educators, families and children will be the priority of WECC. Effective hygiene practices will be implemented by WECC to minimise the risk of infection spreading.

Related policies

- *Cleaning and maintaining the environment*
- *Enrolment and orientation*
- *Incident, injury, trauma and illness*
- *Infectious disease*
- *Nappy change*
- *Toileting*
- *Workplace health and safety*

Statutory legislation and considerations

- Work Health and Safety Act 2011 and Work Health and Safety Regulation 2011

Sources and references

- Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority 2014
- ECA Code of Ethics
- Staying Healthy in Child Care 5th Edition

Policy Review	January 2023	Ratified Date	Next Review Date
Modifications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additional information added to the Regulations and Laws • Minor wording edits • Statutory legislation and considerations edited • Addition of modifications table 	Jan 2023	Jan 2025
Policy Review	May 2018	Ratified Date	Next Review Date
Modifications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Existing Policy 	May 2018	May 2021
Policy Review	July 2013	Ratified Date	Next Review Date
Modifications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Existing Policy 	July 2013	July 2015

Authorisation

Lyndon Collyer
President
2022-23 WECC Management Committee