

### DEALING WITH INFECTIOUS DISEASES

Gowrie NSW is committed to minimising the spread of infectious diseases by implementing hygienic practices and clear procedures for assessing and managing the occurrence of an illness and an infectious disease in the education and care setting.

Gowrie NSW recognises that on occasions children may be brought to the education and care setting with signs or symptoms of illness, or may develop an illness while in attendance at the education and care setting.

#### Responsibilities of Gowrie NSW Education and Care Centres

Under the Education and Care Services National Regulation 2011, Centres must comply with:

- Regulation 85;
- Regulation 86;
- Regulation 87;
- Regulation 88;
- Regulation 168;

Under the National Quality Standards, Centres must meet:

- Standard 2.1
  - *Element 2.1.2*
- Standard 2.2
  - *Element 2.2.2*

Under the NSW Public Health Act 2010

- Education and care centres cannot enrol a child unless the parent/guardian has provided documentation that shows the child:
  - Is fully vaccinated for their age, or has a medical reason not to be vaccinated or
  - Is on a recognised catch up schedule if their child has fallen behind with their vaccinations.

*This policy and procedures have been developed to:*

- Clearly describe the procedures that Gowrie NSW and its employees will follow to ensure they are appropriately dealing with infectious diseases.
- Provide information for families and other stakeholders about the procedures that are used in Gowrie NSW centres to ensure infectious diseases are dealt with appropriately.

### Procedures

<p><i>In relation to minimising infectious diseases</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Upon enrolment, families must provide their child's up to date immunisation statement.</li> <li>▪ Record the children's immunisation status in an immunisation register, and any medical conditions upon enrolment at the centre.</li> <li>▪ Families are aware that the Gowrie NSW policy and procedures for 'Dealing with Infectious Diseases' is available.</li> <li>▪ Monitor and regularly update children's immunisation status at each immunisation milestone and any medical conditions every six months during the child's enrolment at the centre.</li> <li>▪ Provide relevant sourced materials to families about infectious diseases, health and hygiene, the current NSW Immunisation Schedule and exclusion guidelines for children.</li> <li>▪ Support staff to maintain hygienic environments and practices at all times.</li> <li>▪ Ensure staff have a general understanding of infectious diseases, are aware of individual children's circumstances and follow relevant immunisation guidelines for children and themselves.</li> <li>▪ Guide children's understanding of health and hygiene throughout the daily program</li> <li>▪ Display and notify relevant information and current infections in the education and care centre maintaining confidentiality at all times.</li> <li>▪ Inform and implement the advice of the health department, or local health unit regarding infectious diseases.</li> <li>▪ In the event of an outbreak of a vaccine preventable disease, unimmunised children may be required to stay at home for the duration of the outbreak.</li> <li>▪ Follow procedures to maintain hygienic environments and practices at all times.</li> <li>▪ Ensure that any children displaying behaviours, symptoms or signs of an infection are responded to and their health and emotional needs are supported at all times.</li> <li>▪ Contact the child's parent/s or the authorised emergency contact as soon as practicable, advising them of the child's symptoms or signs of illness and requesting that the child be collected from the centre.</li> <li>▪ Where possible provide a quiet, safe and separate space for an unwell child away from other children to minimise the risk of the spread of an infectious disease.</li> <li>▪ Contact emergency medical services if the child becomes acutely ill. The child's parent/guardian or the Authorised Nominee must be advised as soon as possible if these actions are taken. Contact the General Manager or Executive Director in the event of emergency services.</li> <li>▪ For Covid-19 Illness, refer to Gowrie NSW <i>Covid-19 Policy</i> and current guidelines.</li> </ul>
<p><i>In relation to recording of illness</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Record all required information about the child's symptoms or signs of illness, and any actions taken to alleviate the child's symptoms or signs of illness on all "Illness Record"</li> <li>▪ The "Illness Record" must be completed accurately and within 24 hours of the onset of the illness.</li> <li>▪ The record is to be signed by the parent and kept in the child's file.</li> <li>▪ In the event of emergency services notified complete a notification to regulatory authority within 24hrs</li> </ul>
<p><i>In relation to communicating with families about incidences of illness in the centre</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Ensure that a parent/guardian of a child showing signs or symptoms of illness is notified as soon as practicable.</li> <li>▪ Provide a child's parent/guardian or Authorised Nominee with a completed copy of the Illness Record.</li> <li>▪ Display and notify all families of the occurrence/ suspected occurrence, signs and symptoms or general information about an infectious disease.</li> <li>▪ Provide information about the centres exclusion procedures for an infectious disease that has occurred, or is suspected to have occurred.</li> <li>▪ Maintain confidentiality when communicating with families about an illness at the centre.</li> <li>▪ Advise the parent/s or authorised emergency contact to seek medical advice, and request that they advise the</li> </ul>

centre as soon as practicable of any diagnoses of an infectious illness.

- Make available to families and staff a copy of the current Staying Healthy in Child Care, Preventing Infectious Diseases in Early Childhood Education and Care Services (Ed. 5).
- Request that families advise the Centre if the child displays symptoms of illness after they attended the centre.
- Regularly remind families to provide children's immunisation statements as they are updated.
- Parent/guardian will provide a Dr certificate before returning to the centre.

In relation to a family disputing the centres exclusion policy and procedures

- Regularly remind families about the centres policies and procedures in relation to managing infectious diseases and excluding ill children from the centre, through the centre newsletter, parent noticeboard and/or email updates.
- Remind families that the centres policies and procedures in relation to managing infectious diseases and excluding ill children are in place to protect their child, as well as other children and adults in the centre.
- Ask families to advise educators at the centre if their child has been unwell in the 24 hours prior to attending the centre, and to describe the nature of the illness.
- Seek advice and support from the Public Health Unit if a family strongly disputes a decision to exclude their child due to illness or the dealing with infectious disease policy.

### Related legislation/standards

- Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011
- Education and Care Services National Law Act, 2010,
- National Quality Standard
- NSW Public Health Act, 2010

### Related Gowrie NSW policies and procedures

- Dealing with Infectious Diseases
- Cleaning and Hygiene
- Administration of First Aid
- Administration of Medication
- Dealing with Medical Conditions
- Managing Incidents, Injury Trauma and Illness
- Immunisation Record
- Illness Record

### References

- Australian Children’s Education and Care Quality Authority  
<https://www.acecqa.gov.au/sites/default/files/2021-08/DealingInfectiousDiseasesGuidelines.pdf>
- National Health and Medical Research Council. (2006). Staying Healthy in Child Care – Preventing Infectious Diseases in Child Care (5th ed.) <https://www.nhmrc.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/attachments/ch55-staying-healthy.pdf>