



God said, "I have loved you with an everlasting love," Jeremiah 31: 3

Illness & Infectious Diseases Policy

Aim

The management and staff at Sutherland Presbyterian Church Preschool work hard to ensure the safety and wellbeing of the children in our care, as well as those who come into contact with our service. Our hygiene practices minimise the likelihood of an illness or infectious disease occurring within the service. In the unlikely event that a child should become unwell in our care we will minimise the risk of infection to others while caring for the unwell child.

The preschool has an expectation that families will work with us to minimise illness and infection by keeping unwell children at home and updating the service on any diagnosis or symptoms that a child may have.

Explanation

At all times the Approved Provider and Nominated Supervisor will ensure that steps are taken to implement hygiene practices as per our policies and minimise the risk of infection. We acknowledge that some children may carry an infectious disease into the service unknowingly from an external source and as such we have clear procedures to prevent illness from coming into the service.

We follow Staying Healthy in Child Care's guidelines regarding exclusion periods and ensure that all families are notified of an infectious disease as soon as possible so that they can monitor their children for symptoms. This notification will be done via email from Smart Central/ Kindyhub or a sign displayed in a location accessible to parents.

A register of illnesses is maintained at the preschool which allows us to monitor and identify patterns in children with illnesses. This information is gathered from families or by the staff and recorded on the Illness Register, allowing us to have detailed information should we be required to share information with the Public Health Unit (PHU). If sharing information with the PHU all instructions will be followed and information shared freely to support their own investigations.

Our Procedures

Overall Children's health:

- The Preschool aims to balance the wellbeing of all children and the smooth running of the setting. When a child arrives at the service in the morning they should be feeling well enough to participate in the normal activities of the centre and not need excessive staff attention (i.e. feeling lethargic, being generally unwell and therefore upset, or not their usual self).
- **Children should NOT have been given any medication in the past 24 hours to help mask symptoms so they can attend. Nor should they have had vomiting or diarrhoea in the past 24 hours.** Parents must disclose any information about their child's health when dropping them off at the service for the safety of their child and the other children in the service.



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- Failure to meet these criteria may result in your child being refused care for the day, as caring for an unwell child places the supervision of the other children in jeopardy. It also increases the likelihood of illnesses spreading between children at the service, as well as impacting the overall health and wellbeing of the child in question and potentially increasing recovery times.
- At least one parent/guardian should be contactable at all times. If this is not possible on a particular day, the staff must be made aware and details provided of an alternative contact person who will be available for the day.
- The Nominated Supervisor must ensure that all members of staff observe strict health and hygiene practices that have regard to current community standards and are in accordance with relevant government guidelines to minimise risks to children.
- The Preschool will share information regularly with the families through notices, emails, newsletters, policy reviews etc. to reinforce the expectations around maintaining a healthy and safe environment for all children.

Illness whilst in care (not needing urgent medical attention):

If a child becomes ill whilst at the service, yet does not need urgent medical attention, the following procedures and practices will be adhered to. (If the child needs urgent medical attention see 'Serious illness and injury').

High temperature

According to general practice research a temperature of 37.5 is normal and 38 is considered a fever.

<https://www.healthdirect.gov.au/fever-in-children-infographic>

- If over 37.5°C, the child will be monitored for further signs of illness or other possible causes for higher temperature (eg too many layers of clothing, running around too much, has not had enough to drink recently) and will be treated and cared for in accordance. Temperature will be checked and recorded several times over a period of time. If the temperature is not dropping, is rising, or the child displays other signs of illness the educators will contact parents/ guardian (or if unavailable, an emergency contact) to pick the child up.
- If temperature reaches 40°C and parents/ guardians are uncontactable, an ambulance will be called to attend to the child.
- Once sent home a child should wait 24 hours before returning to care, assuming their temperature has settled to be 37.5°C or less, as sometimes other symptoms may arise in this period.
- If a child goes to a doctor the family is encouraged to contact the preschool to share any additional information or diagnosis obtained from the doctor and this information can then be documented on the illness register.
- While waiting to be collected an unwell child will be provided with a quiet space away from other children (to prevent cross infection) and will be kept comfortable and well monitored by an educator.



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Rashes

- If a child shows signs of a rash whilst at preschool their parent/guardian (or if unavailable, an emergency contact) will be contacted and asked to take the child to be assessed by a medical professional immediately.
- If a doctor gives the child a clearance they may return to care immediately, otherwise they should be excluded until such time as a clearance has been obtained.
- The preschool must be informed as soon as a diagnosis has been obtained from a doctor and then the service will follow the appropriate Staying Healthy in Child Care recommendations for the specific illness.

Vomiting or Diarrhoea

- If a child has a single case of vomiting or diarrhoea whilst at the service their parent/guardian (or if unavailable, an emergency contact) will be notified and asked to collect their child immediately.
- If possible, while still maintaining supervision and without causing distress to the ill child, they may be removed from the group to an area where they can play quietly or rest, while minimising the risk of cross-infection.
- Once sent home from the service a child is to be excluded for a full 24 hours from the last episode of vomiting and/or diarrhoea.

Other illnesses

- If a child is showing signs of being unwell, yet without rash, temperature, or vomiting/diarrhoea, during the course of their time at the service a parent/guardian will be notified and it will be left to the mutual decision of the preschool and family as to whether the child will be collected or remain at the service.
- The preschool reserves the right to refuse care to any child based on their health and wellbeing and how this may impact the service's duty of care for all other children.

Infectious diseases

- All illnesses will be classed as an infectious disease as a precautionary measure until such time as a doctor can verify the cause of the symptoms. If the illness is infectious then information from the doctor will be required on when the child can return to care, such a clearance.
- Once a child has been diagnosed with an infectious disease, or has a suspected infectious disease, all families will be notified of this information via email and the information of symptoms and exclusion periods from Staying Healthy in Child Care will be shared.
- During confirmed outbreaks of infectious diseases the preschool staff will increase hygiene measures including daily cleaning, washing of toys, laundry and so forth, to contain and minimise the spread of the illness through cross-contamination.
- During confirmed outbreaks information will be regularly shared with families, while maintaining privacy around specific children's information, to provide families with the information to make an informed choice on whether or not they believe their children should attend the service.
- All information provided by external government bodies regarding the outbreak of an infectious disease at or near the preschool will be communicated to families as soon as possible and this information will supersede all organisational policies and procedures. For example the PHU, Department of Health etc.



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- Unless otherwise stated by the preschool any families choosing to keep their children home during an infectious disease outbreak will still need to pay fees during this time.
- During an infectious disease outbreak children and families with compromised immune systems and ongoing health issues will be encouraged to stay away from the service for their own safety and wellbeing.
- During an infectious disease outbreak cleaning practices will be increased to reduce the spread of the disease.

Keeping Records

When a child becomes ill at preschool, information about the illness (circumstances around the child become ill, observations by staff, temperature, action taken and attempts to contact family members) will be recorded on an "Illness Record". The original will be kept on record at the preschool and a copy will be supplied to parents on pick up.

Illness prior to arrival at the service

To ensure that all children have access to a safe and hygienic environment, and are able to receive the best level of supervision and care whilst at the service, exclusion periods must exist if your child has been unwell at home, prior to their arrival at care. These exclusion periods are in place to prevent the spread of disease and illness through cross infection, whilst also allowing the unwell child time to recover and rest, so that they feel well enough to engage in a day of play and learning with their peers.

Specific Time Exclusions

Temperatures:

If your child has had a temperature over **37.5°C** they will not be allowed to attend the setting. They will be allowed to return once a full 24 hours has passed with no temperature over 37.5.

Panadol:

If Panadol, or Neurofen, has been administered to a child in the 12 hours before arriving at care, the child will be excluded for the day. These medications can mask more serious symptoms, and once they wear off the child may be more seriously unwell than they were when originally given the medicine. To ensure the child is safe, comfortable, and being monitored more closely, they will be asked to stay home for 24 hours with the parent/guardian, and may return the next day if no further symptoms arise.

Vomiting and/or Diarrhoea:

A child who has an episode of vomiting or diarrhoea at home will be excluded from the setting for a full 24 hours from the last episode. This will minimise the risk of cross infection to other children. It also gives the child time to ensure that they are feeling well again, and are able to eat and keep food down, whilst allowing them to rest and recover.



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Colds & Flu:

Parents are requested to keep their child home from preschool if they show signs of a runny nose, cough, sore throat or headache. In relation to children who routinely display these symptoms due another diagnosed cause (eg allergies, hayfever etc), families are asked to provide a letter from their doctor explaining the diagnosis, treatment and how this relates to the child attending the setting. This letter will be kept in the child's file for future reference and a medical conditions plan may be utilised. Families are requested to provide updates on the child's diagnosis as necessary.

Rash:

If a child has a rash, they will need to have a clearance before they are allowed to return to the setting. Not only does this ensure that the child is well enough to return, it also allows a medical professional to assess the rash and diagnose what caused it. Many rashes can be highly contagious, and meet requirements to notify the families of the centre of an outbreak. Once a rash has been diagnosed, families are encouraged to notify the service of the type of rash, if contagious.

Antibiotics:

If a child has been prescribed antibiotics then they must be on them for a full 24 hours before returning to care. This allows the antibiotics to start taking effect, and the child to feel well again. It also allows any side effects, and allergic reactions that may occur from being on the medication to become known to the family.

General illness and feeling unwell:

If a child is showing signs of being unwell without any of the above symptoms (i.e. lethargic, loss of appetite, unhappy), it is left to the family's discretion to make a decision on whether to bring a child to care. If the child feeling unwell is going to impact on the care and supervision of the other children at the service, the family will be asked to keep them home.

Immunisation:

A register of children's immunisations is kept at the service. It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to ensure that these records are kept up to date. If a child's records are not up to date, or a child is not immunised, they will be considered as un-immunised until such proof can be provided. If there is an outbreak of a disease which children can be immunised against, these children will be excluded from the service for the duration of the outbreak (under the advice of the public health unit). Full fees will be charged during the exclusion period.

Vaccine Mandates

Any vaccine mandates by the Australian Government will be followed as prescribed. .



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Sources

Education and Care Services National Regulations

Staying Healthy in Childcare 5th Edition

<https://www.healthdirect.gov.au/fever-and-high-temperature-in-children>

Australian Government - Department of Health

Compliance evidence

Education and Care Services National Regulations (2023) – 88, 168, 173

National Quality Standards – 2.1, 2.2, 4.1, 6.1, 7.1

Supports Child Safe Standards: 8. New in the 2024 version.

Review Dates

Date of last review: Aug 2020

Date of current review: Apr 2024

Date of next review: Apr 2026

Approved by: Lisa Collins (Director)/ Barbara Black (Treasurer)