POLICY Statement
Families that utilise education and care services place a high level of trust and responsibility on educators in the belief that, in their absence, their children will be kept safe and their wellbeing protected. All children have the right to develop to their full potential in an environment which provides for their health and wellbeing. Effective infection control procedures assist services to protect all persons from, and minimise the potential risk of, disease and illness. Children who are unwell pose a risk of infection to other children and educators/staff. The Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010 requires that the approved provider/nominated supervisor/coordinator take reasonable care to protect children from foreseeable risk of infection. The Education and Care Services National Regulations require the service to take appropriate action to prevent the spread of an infectious disease at the service and to notify parents/guardians as soon as possible if there is an occurrence of an infectious disease at the education and care service.

Philosophy
Documented approach to provision of a healthy environment; approach to educator/staff professionalism and responsible conduct.

Children’s needs
Protection from infection; To feel physically and emotionally well, and to feel safe in the knowledge that their wellbeing and individual health care needs will be met when they are not well.

Families’ needs
Families expect that staff will care for their children appropriately should they become unwell while in the care of the service, and keep them informed about their child’s wellbeing whilst at the service; their children will be protected from unnecessary exposure to infection.

Educator/Staff needs
Protection from infection; to receive management support through clear written policies and understanding the issues regarding the care of children who are feeling unwell; (i.e. 1 to 1 with sick child); maintain good communication with families; have specific written policies to give to families; families to take responsibility for their child
when sick; current information on childhood illness, contagious diseases and vaccinations offered to educators at risk.

**Management needs and infectious diseases**
Educators/staff to take action when they suspect a child is not well enough to be at the education and care service. Families will be asked to co-operate in keeping sick and infectious children away from the service.

- If there is an occurrence of an infectious disease at the service, the approved provider of the service will ensure that reasonable steps are taken to prevent the spread of the infectious disease at the service.

- The service will ensure that a parent or an authorised emergency contact of each child being educated and cared for by the service is notified of the occurrence as soon as practicable.

**POLICY STATEMENT:**
The education and care service operates to provide care for well children, and aims to ensure a safe and healthy environment for all children in its care. The service is not able to provide the 1:1 support that the sick child requires to ensure their wellbeing, and has a responsibility not to compromise the health of other children and staff members.

**HOW POLICY WILL BE IMPLEMENTED (Specific Policies & Procedures):**

**Management of unwell children**
Sick children, as defined below, cannot be admitted to the centre to safeguard the health of other children and staff members.

**Exclusion criteria**
- A child who has any of the following symptoms cannot be admitted to the service:
  - ear, eye or discoloured nasal discharge
  - an undiagnosed rash
  - high temperature (see High Temperature Indicator below)
  - infectious sores or diseases (children need a Doctor’s clearance before re-admittance)
  - vomiting and/or abnormally loose bowel actions for that child (exclude for 24 hours after last bout)

**Policy: Illness**
- Any obvious signs of ill health (children with asthma —obvious difficulty breathing, barking cough, rib retraction etc.).
- Onset of illness at the service
If a child becomes unwell whilst at the service, the parents/guardians will be notified and asked to pick the child up and remove him or her from care as soon as possible. All illness at the service is recorded on an Accident/Illness/Trauma Report Form.

If parents/guardians and/or emergency contacts cannot be contacted or cannot collect the child, relief educators will be employed to care for the child at the parent/guardian’s expense. This is to ensure the child can be properly cared for away from the other children (thus reducing the risk of spread of any infection), and the required educator: child ratios are maintained for the remainder of the children in care. This information will be provided to families at the time of enrolment.

This strategy may not be possible in some areas due to lack of available relief educators. Where this is not possible the service will need to determine how the sick child can be cared for away from the other children, whilst still maintaining the required educator: child ratios. It may be possible for a non-contact staff member (e.g. Coordinator; Administration Assistant; Cook) to care for the child until the parent/guardian arrives to collect the child.

If a child has a temperature over 37.2 degrees and is also displaying signs of ill health such as drowsiness, paleness, breathing difficulty, less urine than usual or any of the symptoms listed in the exclusion criteria above, the child’s parent/guardian will be notified and asked to take the child home.

If the parent/guardian cannot attend to collect the child, an ambulance will be called. While waiting for the ambulance educators will take physical steps to try to reduce the child’s temperature i.e. removing excess clothing, laying child in a cool place, encouraging the child to drink cool water etc.

**High Temperature Indicator**

The temperature 37.2 degrees centigrade is the lower end of the range of temperatures classed as high by medical practitioners. Individual services may decide to monitor the child who has a temperature of 37.2 degrees and when the temperature reaches 37.5 – 38 degrees, call the ambulance if the parent/guardian has not arrived to collect the child. However, if other symptoms are present it may be imperative to call the ambulance earlier. Over the counter (OTC) medication should NOT be administered to the child with a temperature (except where the child is known to be teething). Medical authorities warn that identifying the cause of a high temperature is vital and that administration of OTC medications may mask signs of serious illness.

It is recommended that digital thermometers are most appropriate for the child care setting. Mercury thermometers are no longer used with small children due to risk of breakage and leakage of mercury. Aural (in the ear) temperatures are quick and easy to take but accurate readings depend on the use of a good technique.

Where a parent/guardian is asked to seek medical advice regarding their child’s health, the service will provide (for the Doctor’s information), details about the child’s symptoms and any illnesses that have recently affected children or educators/staff.
attending the service. All names other than the said child will be kept confidential. The Doctor will be asked to complete a **Doctor's Clearance Certificate Form** to pronounce the child fit for child care and that other children are not at risk of infection through exposure to this child, before the child can return to the centre.

- In the event of an outbreak of a communicable disease at the service, educators, staff, families, visitors and the appropriate Health Authority will be notified in accordance with the NHMRC recommended notifiable diseases.

**Information for Families**

- Children in the education and care service are at greater risk of catching coughs and colds because of increased exposure to infections in the group care setting. The service will therefore provide information to families about treatments for children with minor ailments such as fever, coughs and colds.

- The centre acknowledges that medications contain potent chemical active agents which affect the body’s metabolism and should be treated with due respect and care at all times, and will encourage families to only use over the counter medications when directed to do so by their child’s doctor.

**PROCEDURES**

Services may find the following list of example procedures, useful tools in the implementation of this policy. List your services precise steps for achieving each action. Ask yourself when, how, where and who is responsible for what actions.

- Accident/Illness/Trauma Report Form
- Accident/Illness Patterns Evaluation Form
- Authority to Administer or Self Administer Medication Form
- Doctor’s Clearance Certificate Form

**FURTHER SOURCES:**


**NATIONAL QUALITY FRAMEWORK**
Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010(Vic) – Section 3(2)(a); 167(1)(2) and (3)

Education and Care Services National Regulations – Reg 75(h) and (m); 86(1)(b); (2)(b) & 3(b); 88; 95; 98(1); (2); (3)(b)(c)(d)(e)(f); (4); 99(1); (2); 103; 104; 106; 151; 165(2)(f); 169(1)(d)(e); 170(1)(d)(e); 174; 175; 180

National Quality Standard for Early Childhood Education and Care and School Age Care (Nov 2010) – Element 2.1.1; Element 2.1.4; Element 2.3.2; Element 4.1.1; Element 7.3.3

Early Years Learning Framework for Australia
Framework for School Age Care in Australia