



## **Armidale & District Family Day Care Ltd**

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### **Health Policy**

#### **Dealing with Infectious Diseases and Illnesses**

##### **Aim:**

To ensure the health and well-being of Educators, their family members and all children in care through adherence to recommended practices for the maintenance of healthy child care environments.

##### **Preamble:**

This policy is based on guidelines and procedures, established by The Department of Human Services and Health and The Public Health Act 1991, aimed at controlling the spread of communicable diseases. Regulations under the Act include the requirement for mandatory reporting of some diseases. *(Please refer to attached recommendations).*

Parents should be advised to organise emergency back- up care arrangements in the event of their child's illness. The Scheme may be able to assist with alternative relief care arrangements in the event of an Educator's illness.

##### **Procedure:**

Educators are advised to use this policy to determine a) if a child should be excluded from care or b) they should close their service due to their own illness or that of a family member.

Armidale Family Day Care Co-ordination Unit and registered Educators retain the right to exclude children if they appear to be unwell and if they appear to pose a health risk to others.

The Co-ordination Unit and Educators are obliged to adhere to the Department of Human Services and Health guidelines regardless of conflicting advice that may be obtained from a Medical Practitioner.

The Co-ordination Unit is obliged to comply with the Education and Care Services National Regulation 88.

*Parents or authorised emergency contacts of each child who attends a Family Day Care service or venue need to be informed of the occurrence of an infectious disease as soon as practicable.*

Educators must therefore advise the Co-ordination Unit of any infectious disease that occurs within their service.

*Non- compliance with this Regulation could result in a penalty of \$2,000*

Full immunisation of all enrolled children is encouraged but a family's choice not to immunise their child against communicable diseases is respected. Unimmunised children will only be excluded from care if there is an outbreak of a vaccine preventable disease or illness. In such a case unimmunised children will be excluded from the service until the outbreak no longer poses a risk to their health.

**Parents should keep their child at home if they have any of the following:**

- a high temperature or fever the night before care or on the morning of care.
- a rash or unexplained skin condition not diagnosed by a Medical Practitioner.
- vomiting or diarrhoea
- a common cold that makes them generally not well enough to join in the day's regular activities.

**Or**

- They seem unwell without any obvious symptoms i.e. they are unusually pale or flushed, tired, irritable or lethargic
- **They have been prescribed antibiotics (they must not attend care for 24 hours)**
- They have an identified infectious disease (*refer to recommendations attached*)

**Educators should NOT provide care if they or a member of their family have any of the health issues described above.**

**A Doctor's Certificate may be required for the following reasons:**

- To verify that the child is well enough to return to care or that the Educator is well enough to provide care or their family member is well enough to have contact with the Educator's clients.
- To enable the child's family to apply for additional absences once they have used their allocated 42 days for Child Care Benefit.

**Medical Emergencies:**

In the event of a medical emergency, Educators will attempt to contact either the child's parent or person listed as emergency contact on the child's enrolment form.

If contact cannot be achieved immediately the Educator will act in the child's best interests and arrange transport to hospital by ambulance. They will then advise the parent as soon as practicable. Parents will be responsible for any emergency services costs incurred.

## **Recommendations for Common Infectious Diseases and Illnesses in**

### **Childcare:**

#### **Unexplained Temperatures**

While it is accepted that a child can have a raised temperature for no apparent reason, a child with a temperature must be excluded from care for at least a day. It is recommended that a child sees a Medical Practitioner if the high temperature persists.

#### **Bronchiolitis and Bronchitis.**

Incubation: Usually 48 hours.  
Infectious: Shortly before the onset of symptoms.  
Exclusion: Exclude until appropriate medical treatment has been given and the child is feeling well.

#### **Common Colds.**

Incubation: About 1 – 3 days.  
Infectious: 2 - 4 days after the cold starts.  
Exclusion: There is no need to exclude, however it is at the discretion of the Educator if the child appears unwell. Strict hygiene must be maintained (gloves or a barrier used to assist child to blow their nose, handwashing, teaching children to cough into their upper arm).

#### **Chicken Pox (Varicella)**

Incubation: 14 -15 days on average.  
Infectious: From 2 days before the rash appears and until all blisters have formed scales or crusts.  
Exclusion: Until all blisters have dried. Usually up to 5 days after the rash first appears in unimmunised children, less in immunised children.

#### **Conjunctivitis.**

Incubation: 24 -72 hours.  
Infectious: While there is discharge from the eye. Conjunctivitis caused by chemicals or allergies is not infectious.  
Exclusion: Until discharge from eye has stopped unless medical practitioner has diagnosed non-infectious conjunctivitis.

#### **Croup.**

Incubation: Difficult to define.  
Infectious: Shortly before the onset of symptoms and during active stage of the disease.  
Exclusion: Exclude until feeling well.

#### **Diarrhoea & Vomiting** (and all other related illnesses including Gastroenteritis, Rotavirus, Giardiasis etc).

Incubation: Viral and bacterial 1 – 3 days.  
Parasitic infections 5 – 15 days.  
Infectious: For as long as organisms are present in faeces, whether or not they still cause symptoms.  
Exclusion: Until there has been no diarrhoea or vomiting for 24 hours. Where it is considered a mini-epidemic by the Health Department, exclusion from care should be at least 48 hours.

#### **Ear infections (Otitis).**

Incubation: A few days.  
Infectious: Ear infections are NOT contagious, but the cold or other infection causing them is.  
Exclusion: While there is an infectious discharge from the ear and until the child is feeling well.

#### **Hand, Foot and Mouth:**

Incubation: Usually 3 – 5 days.  
Infectious: As long as there is fluid in the blisters. Faeces can remain infectious for several days.  
Exclusion: Exclude until all blisters have dried.

#### **Head Lice.**

Incubation: At the presence of eggs (nits) which hatch in 7 – 10 days. Hatched nits mature quickly and are capable of laying eggs after 6- 10 days.  
Exclusion: Until the day after appropriate treatment has commenced.

#### **Herpes Simplex (Cold Sores).**

Incubation: 2 – 12 Days.  
Infectious: When fluid is present in blister, however people with a history of cold sores may shed virus through saliva.  
Exclusion: Exclude until sore has completely dried.

#### **Impetigo (School Sores).**

Incubation: 1 – 3 days.  
Infectious: While there is fluid weeping from the sore.  
Exclusion: Until antibiotic treatment has been received for at least 24 hours. Sores on exposed skin must be kept covered with water tight dressing.

#### **Influenza.**

Incubation: 3 – 5 days from onset of symptoms in adults, up to 7 days in children.  
Exclusion: Exclude until feeling well.

#### **Measles.**

Incubation: 8 – 14 days.  
Infectious: 4 – 5 days before the rash appears.  
Exclusion: For at least 4 days after the appearance of the rash.

#### **Meningococcal.**

Incubation: Usually 3 – 4 days.  
Infectious: As long as organisms are present in nose and throat. Less than 24 hours if treated with effective antibiotics.  
Exclusion: Exclude until a course of an appropriate antibiotic has been completed.

#### **Meningitis (Viral) and Meningitis (Bacterial).**

Incubation: Varies according to the specific infectious virus.  
Infectious: Varies according to the specific infectious virus.  
Exclusion: Exclude until a Medical Practitioner certifies child is well and non- infectious.

#### **Mumps.**

Incubation: 12 – 25 days, but usually 16 – 18 days.  
Infectious: Up to 6 days before swelling of the glands begins and up to 9 days after the onset of the swelling.  
Exclusion: Exclude from care for 9 days after onset of swelling.

#### **Parvovirus (Slapped Cheek, Fifth Disease).**

Incubation: 4 – 20 days.  
Infectious: Not infectious once rash appears.

Exclusion: Not necessary.

**Ringworm.**

Incubation: 4 – 10 days.  
Infectious: As long as the condition persists.  
Exclusion: Until the day after treatment has commenced.

**Roseola.**

Incubation: Around 10 days.  
Infectious: A few days before and several days after the rash appears through saliva, nasal discharge and other respiratory secretions.  
Exclusion: Exclusion is not necessary if the child is feeling well.

**Rubella (German Measles).**

Incubation: 14 – 21 days.  
Infectious: Up to 7 days before and at least 4 days after the rash appears.  
Exclusion: At least 4 days after the rash appears and until the child feels well.

**Scabies (and other mites).**

Incubation: Initial infestation, 2 – 6 weeks; further infestations within 1 - 4 days.  
Infectious: Until day after treatment has commenced.  
Exclusion: Until the day after treatment has commenced.

**Streptococcal Sore Throat.**

Incubation: 1 – 3 weeks if untreated, or 24 hours after antibiotic treatment commenced.  
Viral: While the organisms are being spread by coughing, sneezing, incubation may last several days.  
Exclusion: Until 24 hours after antibiotic treatment (bacterial), and until feeling well.

**Thrush (Candida)**

Incubation: 2 – 5 days in infants.  
Infectious: As long as white spots or flakes are present.  
Exclusion: Exclusion not necessary. Wash all mouthed toys in hot soapy water.

**Whooping Cough (Pertussis).**

Incubation: Commonly 7 – 10 days and not more than 21 days.  
Infectious: For up to 3 weeks, although may be shortened when treated with an appropriate antibiotic.

**Worms (Pin, Round, Hook, Tape and Hydatid).**

Incubation: Several weeks to years. Please refer to *Staying Healthy in Childcare* fact sheets.  
Infectious: Infection will continue until the person is treated.  
Exclusion: Exclusion not necessary if treatment has occurred.

*Staying Healthy in Childcare* fact sheets provide a description of the disease or condition, information about controlling the spread of the infection, the responsibilities of Educators, Staff and Families, appropriate treatments, and further information on incubation, infection and exclusion periods.([www.nhmrc.gov.au](http://www.nhmrc.gov.au)).

Sources: *Staying Healthy in Childcare* 4<sup>th</sup> Edition  
Education and Care Services National Regulation 2011  
National Quality Standard 2011 2.1, 2.1.4 .

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