

## Immunisation and Disease Prevention Policy

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To be read with -  
Infectious Diseases Policy

### NQS

QA2	2.1.2	Health practices and procedures - Effective illness and injury management and hygiene practices are promoted and implemented.
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### National Regulations

Reg	77	Health, hygiene and safe food practices
	88	Infectious diseases
	90	Medical conditions policy
	162	Health information to be kept in enrolment record

### Aim

Immunisation is a simple, safe and effective way of protecting individuals against harmful diseases before they come into contact with them in the community. Immunisation not only protects individuals, but also others in the community, by reducing the spread of disease.

### Related Policies

Enrolment Policy  
Food Nutrition and Beverage Policy  
Health, Hygiene and Safe Food Policy  
Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Policy  
Infectious Diseases Policy  
Medical Conditions Policy  
Privacy and Confidentiality Policy

## Who is affected by this policy?

Child  
Parents  
Family  
Educator  
Management  
Visitors  
Volunteers

## Implementation

The National Immunisation Program (NIP) Schedule can be accessed and downloaded from

<http://www.immunise.health.gov.au/>

**Department of Health, Victoria**

**Immunisation Program**

<http://www.health.vic.gov.au/immunisation/>

Telephone - 1300 882 008

### Immunisation Records

- Parents who wish to enrol their child are required to provide evidence of their child's immunisation record at the time of enrolment.
- This information allows children at risk of catching a vaccine preventable disease to be identified if there is a case of that disease at the service.
- Acceptable immunisation records are –
  - a written record of the immunisations that your child has received and the date that they received them, signed by a medical practitioner, a registered nurse, a registered midwife, an enrolled nurse, or an individual authorised by the state/territory Health department.
  - An Immunisation History Statement provided by the AIR (Australian Immunisation Register)) is a valid immunisation record.
  - A photo of the child's immunisation record.
- The AIR maintains immunisation records for children up until their seventh birthday. You can obtain an AIR Immunisation History Statement for your child by calling 1800 653 809.

- The original immunisation record is usually kept in the personal health record book. These books are usually given to parents at the time of their child's birth.
- Each child's Immunisation Record should stay intact until your child reaches primary school. Do not remove any of the duplicate pages until this time.
- The Nominated Supervisor will ensure records are kept of the immunisation status of each child.
- Parents/guardians must provide the Service with an updated copy of their child's immunisation record when the child receives a vaccine which is on the National or State immunisation schedule. We will regularly remind parents to do this via newsletters, emails or letters.
- Copies of an immunisation record may be accepted.
- The service must be able to quickly access immunisation records and determine who has not been immunised. If there is a case of a vaccine preventable disease, and your child has not been fully immunised for that disease, they may be excluded from school or childcare for a period of time.

Note parents of primary school children are required to provide the school with an immunisation status certificate for each vaccine preventable disease. The certificate may say the child has been immunised, not immunised, has natural immunity or the parent believes the child has been immunised.

#### **Catering for Children with Overseas Immunisation Records**

- Overseas immunisation schedules often differ from the schedule recommended in Australia and a child may require extra vaccinations to be up to date with the Australian schedule.
- Parents are responsible for having their child's overseas immunisation record transcribed onto the Australian Childhood Immunisation Register (ACIR), if your child is less than seven years of age.
- A medical practitioner, registered nurse, registered midwife, enrolled nurse, or an individual authorised by the state/territory Health Officer may transcribe overseas immunisation records.

#### **Exclusion Periods**

- Whilst the service actively encourages each child, educator and family member using the service to be immunised, we recognise that immunisation is not compulsory.
- If a child's immunisation record is not provided upon enrolment and if it is not updated by the parents, or if the child has not been immunised against certain diseases, then the child will be recorded as being not fully immunised by the service.
- If there is a case of a vaccine preventable disease at the service, your child may be excluded from school or childcare for a period of time or until the evidence of immunisation in an approved record is provided.

- If you cannot provide an immunisation record for your child you may provide a statutory declaration stating either that your child has been immunised or that you don't know if your child has been immunised for each disease on the schedule.
- To be fully immunised your child needs to have received all vaccines recommended for their age as part of the National Immunisation Program (NIP).
- Homeopathic immunisation is not recognised.
- If a child is not fully immunised and has been in contact with someone with a vaccine preventable disease outside of the service, they may need to be excluded from the service for a period of time.
- It is the responsibility of families to inform the service that their child has come into contact with someone with a vaccine preventable or infectious disease.

## Immunisations for Educators and Staff

It is important that educators remain up to date with their vaccinations in order to protect themselves as well as children in their care. The National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) recommend that educators should be immunised against -

- Hepatitis A
- Measles-Mumps-Rubella (MMR)

Educators born during or since 1966 who do not have vaccination records of two doses of MMR, or do not have antibodies for rubella, require vaccination

- Varicella if they have not previously been infected with chickenpox
- Pertussis (whooping cough). An adult booster dose is especially important for those educators caring for the youngest children who are not fully vaccinated
- Influenza (annually)
- Hepatitis B if caring for unimmunised children with intellectual disabilities (although the risk is low).

The Nominated Supervisor will:

- regularly provide educators and staff with information about diseases that can be prevented by immunisation through fact sheets and the Staying Healthy in Childcare publication

- regularly advise educators and staff that some infectious diseases may injure an unborn child if the mother is infected while pregnant through fact sheets and the Staying Healthy in Childcare publication. These infections include chickenpox, cytomegalovirus and rubella (German measles)
- ask new employees to confirm in writing that we have provided this information during their induction.
- strongly encourage all non-immune staff to be vaccinated
- advise female educators / staff who are not fully immunised to consider doing so before getting pregnant
- advise pregnant educators and staff to review the Staying Healthy in Childcare publication and consult their medical practitioner to consider the risks of continuing to work at the service
- ensure pregnant educators and staff follow good infection control and hygiene procedures
- allow educators who are not immunised to use their best judgement to decide whether they exclude themselves from the service during an outbreak of an infectious disease.

## **Immunisation Related Payments for Parents - Child Care Subsidy**

Families are eligible for Child care Subsidy if their child is fully immunised, on an approved catch-up schedule or has an approved exemption from immunisation. Approved exemptions include a general practitioner has certified the child can't receive one or more vaccine(s) for medical reasons or the child has a natural immunity, but do not include conscientious objection.

This initiative reminds parents about the importance of immunising their children at each of the milestones. Further information is available at <http://www.humanservices.gov.au/>

## **Sources**

**Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011**

**National Quality Standard**

**Department of Health and Ageing, National Immunisation Program Schedule**

**NHMRC. Staying Healthy Preventing infectious diseases in early childhood education and care services 5th edition**

**Medicare Australia**

**Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008**

## Review

The policy will be reviewed annually. The review will be conducted by:

- Management
- Employees
- Families
- Interested Parties
- **Last reviewed: 1<sup>st</sup> May 2023    Date for next review: 1<sup>st</sup> May 2024**