



# ECH005 – DEALING WITH INFECTIOUS DISEASES POLICY

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## POLICY CONTEXT

Willunga Waldorf School is a co-educational and inclusive school. The school's mission is to provide Steiner education from early childhood to year 12, based on the work of Rudolf Steiner. This education is driven by a deep understanding and respect for the developing and unfolding human being.

## BACKGROUND

The *Education and Care Services National Regulations* require approved providers to ensure their services have policies and procedures in place in relation to dealing with infectious diseases (regulation 168) and taking reasonable steps to ensure those policies and procedures are followed (regulation 170).

Infectious diseases can spread rapidly in education and care services, as children are in close contact with others, and are still learning good hygiene practices such as covering their coughs or sneezes. Some bacteria and viruses can survive on surfaces, and children may touch a contaminated surface, then put their hands in their mouth and become infected. Additionally, if a child has an ill family member at home, they could be incubating the illness, and risk bringing germs from home into the service.

It is for this reason that it is especially important for our Early Childhood (i.e., Kindergarten and Reception) classes to have effective policies and procedures in place that:

- Promote awareness of infectious diseases and safe hygiene practices;
- Help to prevent any infectious disease from occurring; and
- Outline the processes to manage any outbreak.

## PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The purpose of this document is to outline Willunga Waldorf School's policy, principles of practice and different roles and responsibilities in relation to preventing, responding to and effectively managing infectious diseases in our Kindergarten and Reception year classes.

This policy applies to all Kindergarten and Reception staff (including volunteers and contractors), children and families at all times.

## POLICY STATEMENT

Willunga Waldorf School is committed to maintaining a healthy and safe environment for all its students, staff and visitors.

As part of our approach to prioritising health and safety, we implement effective hygiene practices and work to prevent and effectively deal with any infectious disease. We do so in line with the *Education and Care Services National Regulations* and the advice of health experts while respecting the child's right to holistic care and Rudolf Steiner's insights into healthy child development.

We work with families when their child falls ill and support parents by providing them with timely and current information.



## DEFINITIONS

### Communicable Diseases

Also called infectious diseases, these are illnesses that can spread easily from one person to another. The following conditions are highly communicable (i.e., infectious):

- Conjunctivitis
- Thread worms
- Herpes (cold sores)
- Impetigo ("school sores")
- Ring worm
- Scabies
- Scarlet fever
- Influenza
- Covid19

*NB: Head lice are not included in the above list as they are not considered a disease. Please refer to the School's Head Lice Policy for further details.*

### Notifiable Diseases

A notifiable disease is a communicable disease that is required by law to be reported to government agencies. The reporting allows the authorities to monitor the disease and prevent its spread. In South Australia, it is doctors and laboratory staff who are responsible for the reporting.

Notifiable diseases include:

- Diphtheria
- Gastroenteritis
- Measles
- Mumps
- Whooping cough (pertussis)
- Chickenpox (varicella-zoster)
- German Measles (rubella)
- Meningococcal disease
- Poliomyelitis
- Hepatitis
- Tuberculosis (TB)
- Typhoid and paratyphoid

## PRINCIPLES OF PRACTICE

### PREVENTION AND RISK MITIGATION

To prevent the spread of infectious diseases and mitigate associated risks, staff:

- Promote and role-model daily hygiene practices (e.g. effective handwashing, sneeze and cough etiquette).
- Maintain a regular cleaning schedule of toys, furniture, bedding and learning spaces. Spot clean as required.
- Follow safe food handling practices in the preparation, serving and clean-up of all meals (e.g. lunch, morning and afternoon fruit).
- Encourage the wearing of clothes appropriate to the season.
- Ensure children do not share bedding.
- Ensure safe and effective handling, storage and disposal or washing of soiled items.
- Use personal protective equipment (PPE) (e.g. rubber gloves) where required.
- Communicate clearly with families.

For Kindergarten children: The School will maintain updated immunisation records as per National Regulations.

## MANAGEMENT

In the interest of the health and wellbeing not only of their own child but also other children and our staff, parents are asked to keep unwell children at home. A small dose of the common cold is acceptable; infectious coughs and flu symptoms are not. If a child needs paracetamol or ibuprofen, they are not well enough to attend school!

### Children arriving at school who are unwell

We are unable to accept a child into our care if they:

- Are unwell and unable to participate in normal activities or require additional attention due to being unwell
- Have had a temperature (above 37.5 °C) in the last 24 hours
- Have had vomiting and/or diarrhoea in the last 48 hours

### Children who become unwell while at school

If a child develops symptoms of a non-life-threatening illness while in our care, staff will:

- Place the child in a comfortable position in a supervised area.
- Advise Front Office staff to notify parents to collect their child at the earliest opportunity.
- Clean and sanitise affected areas and materials immediately; PPE is to be worn where required.

### Exclusion

If a child is found to be ill with a communicable disease, they are to stay home from school until the condition has cleared up.

If a child has been diagnosed with a notifiable disease, they must not attend our service until they have been cleared by a medical doctor to return to school.<sup>1</sup>

Staff with symptoms of a communicable or notifiable disease will be excluded in line with SA Health guidelines. A medical clearance may be required before returning to work.

## NOTIFICATION

The School will notify other parents in the class if a child is confirmed to have contracted a communicable or notifiable disease<sup>2</sup>, while complying with its obligations under the Australian Privacy Principles.

As per regulation 173, a notice will be displayed in the Kindergarten and Golden Wattle class informing parents that an infectious disease has occurred. This notice will also be displayed in our Golden Wattle reception area.

## ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Role	Responsibilities
Head of School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure that obligations under the <i>Education and Care Services National Law</i> and <i>National Regulations</i> are met</li> <li>• Take reasonable steps to ensure that the ECH Faculty Leader and staff follow the policy and procedures</li> <li>• Ensure that reasonable steps are taken to prevent the spread of any infectious disease in the Kindergarten/Reception classes</li> </ul>

<sup>1</sup> In the case of gastroenteritis, students may return without a medical certificate once they have been free of symptoms for 48 hours.

<sup>2</sup> In the case of gastroenteritis, influenza and Covid19, families will be notified if there are two or more simultaneous cases, and an outbreak is suspected.



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure jurisdictional requirements relating to the enrolment or attendance of children in the Kindergarten program who are not up to date with their scheduled vaccinations are being met at all times.</li> <li>• Ensure exclusion periods are implemented that are consistent with current information from SA Health</li> <li>• Ensure the provision of appropriate resources and procedures to ensure the premises, furniture and equipment are kept safe, clean and well maintained, including high risk areas (e.g. bathroom, toilet, sandpit), furniture, linen and equipment (e.g. toys, carpets, mats)</li> <li>• Ensure that copies of the policy and procedures are readily accessible to ECH staff, visitors and families, and available for inspection by regulatory authorities</li> <li>• Ensure families are notified at least 14 days before changing the policy or procedures if the changes will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ affect the fees charged or the way they are collected or</li> <li>○ significantly impact the service's education and care of children or</li> <li>○ significantly impact the family's ability to utilise the service</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>ECH Faculty Leader</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implement the <i>Dealing with Infectious Diseases</i> policy and procedures</li> <li>• Ensure that families or an authorised emergency contact of the children attending are notified of the occurrence of a notifiable disease as soon as practicable and in a manner that is not prejudicial to the rights of any child, educator or staff member</li> <li>• Ensure a notice is displayed in the Kindergarten stating that there has been an occurrence of an infectious disease at the service premises</li> <li>• Ensure jurisdictional requirements relating to the enrolment or attendance of children in the Kindergarten program who are not up to date with their scheduled vaccinations are being met at all times.</li> <li>• Ensure that infection control awareness, hygiene and protective practices are integrated into educational programming and planning</li> <li>• Provide ready access to the policy and procedures to ECH staff, visitors and families, and make them available for inspection by regulatory authorities</li> <li>• Notify families at least 14 days before changing the policy or procedures if the changes will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ affect the fees charged or the way they are collected or</li> <li>○ significantly impact the service's education and care of children or</li> <li>○ significantly impact the family's ability to utilise the service</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>Lead Teachers</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implement the <i>Dealing with Infectious Diseases</i> policy and procedures</li> <li>• Monitor children's health, safety and wellbeing on a daily basis and manage accordingly</li> <li>• Ensure that reasonable steps are taken to prevent the spread of any infectious disease in the Kindergarten and Reception classes</li> <li>• Stay at home if unwell or have an excludable infectious disease</li> <li>• Employ and role model good hygiene practices for cleaning hands, handling food handling, cleaning etc.</li> </ul>



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Integrate infection control awareness, hygiene and protective practices into educational programming and planning</li> <li>• Communicate with families about infectious diseases in general and specific expectations within the Kindergarten/Reception class (e.g. exclusion periods)</li> <li>• Ensure that families or an authorised emergency contact of children attending are notified of the occurrence as soon as practicable and in a manner that is not prejudicial to the rights of any child, educator or staff member</li> <li>• Display a notice in the Kindergarten stating that there has been an occurrence of an infectious disease at the premises</li> <li>• Implement exclusion periods consistent with current information from SA Health</li> <li>• Ensure premises, furniture and equipment are kept safe, clean and well maintained</li> <li>• Promote hygiene practices with all children, families, co-teachers, assistants and visitors</li> </ul>
<b>ECH Assistants (Educators) and Other Teaching Staff</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implement the <i>Dealing with Infectious Diseases</i> policy and procedures</li> <li>• Monitor children's health, safety and wellbeing on a daily basis and manage accordingly</li> <li>• Stay at home if unwell or have an excludable infectious disease</li> <li>• Employ and role model good hygiene practices for cleaning hands, handling food handling, cleaning etc.</li> </ul>
<b>Families</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Be familiar with and follow this <i>Dealing with Infectious Diseases</i> policy and procedures</li> <li>• Provide immunisation documentation upon enrolment of their child in the Kindergarten program and as immunisations are administered</li> <li>• Keep their child at home if they are unwell or have an excludable infectious disease</li> <li>• Keep their child at home if there is an infectious disease at the service and their child is not fully immunised against it (recommended)</li> <li>• Immediately inform the School if their child has been diagnosed with a communicable or notifiable disease or has been in close contact with a person who has notifiable disease.</li> </ul>

### STAFF INDUCTION AND ONGOING TRAINING

All new ECH staff are provided with an induction to the policy and procedures of dealing with infectious diseases.

Procedures are reviewed regularly, for example during Faculty meetings, to ensure they remain relevant, compliant with current legislation, and they are front of mind for all staff.

### POLICY ACCESS

Hard copies of policies are available to staff in the kindy office. Electronic copies of policies are available on the SchoolStream parent and staff apps. Hard copies of policies can be made available to parents upon request.

Families will be notified by email at least 14 days beforehand of any changes.



## RELATED POLICIES, PROCEDURES, DOCUMENTS AND LEGISLATION

Related School Policies, Procedures and Guidelines	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• STU001 – Child Safe Environment Policy</li> <li>• GOV005 – Privacy Policy</li> <li>• WHS001 – Work Health and Safety Policy</li> <li>• WHS009 – Administration of First Aid Policy and Procedures</li> <li>• ECH011 – Governance and Management of Services, Confidentiality of Records</li> <li>• ECH013 – Managing Medical Conditions in Children</li> </ul>
Related Legislation and Regulatory Requirements	<p>National Quality Standards (NQS):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• QA 2: Children's Health and Safety <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ 2.1 – Health: Each child's health and physical activity is supported and promoted</li> <li>◦ 2.1.2 Health Practices and Procedures: Effective illness and injury management and hygiene practices are promoted and implemented.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• QA 3: Physical Environment: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ 3.1.2 Upkeep: Premises, furniture and equipment are safe, clean and well maintained.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• QA 7: Governance and Leadership <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ 7.1.2 Management systems: Systems are in place to manage risk and enable the effective management and operation of a quality service.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>Education and Early Childhood Services (Registrations and Standards) Act 2011 (as amended):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Section 172 Offence to fail to display prescribed information</li> </ul> <p>Education and Care Services National Regulations (2011) (as amended):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regulation 85 Incident, injury, trauma and illness policies and procedures</li> <li>• Regulation 86 Notification to parents of incident, injury, trauma and illness</li> <li>• Regulation 87 Incident, injury, trauma and illness record</li> <li>• Regulation 88 Infectious diseases</li> <li>• Regulation 103 Premises, furniture and equipment to be safe, clean and in good repair</li> <li>• Regulation 168 Education and care service must have policies and procedures</li> <li>• Regulation 170 Policies and procedures to be followed</li> <li>• Regulation 171 Policies and procedures to be kept available</li> <li>• Regulation 172 Notification of change to policies or procedures</li> <li>• Regulation 173 Prescribed information to be displayed</li> </ul>

## VARIATION AND REVIEW

The School reserves the right to vary, replace or terminate this policy from time to time. Unless altered earlier, this policy will be reviewed every three (3) years.

<b>Responsible Person</b>	Early Childhood Faculty Leader
<b>Policy Approver</b>	Head of School
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<b>Next Review Date</b>	April 2029
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