

# DEALING WITH INFECTIOUS DISEASES POLICY

## QUALITY AREA 2 – VERSION 1.6



### PURPOSE

This policy provides clear guidelines and procedures for Denzil Don Kindergarten to follow when:

- a child attending shows symptoms of an infectious disease
- a child attending has been diagnosed with an infectious disease
- managing and minimising the spread of infectious diseases, illnesses, and infestations (including head lice)
- managing and minimising infections relating to blood-borne viruses
- managing and minimising infections relating to epidemics (see *Definitions*) and pandemics (see *Definitions*), including coronavirus (COVID-19)

### POLICY STATEMENT

The safety, health, wellbeing, rights and best interests of every child guide all decisions, actions and practices of Denzil Don Kindergarten staff.

### VALUES

Denzil Don Kindergarten is committed to:

- Providing a safe and healthy environment for all children, staff, and any other persons attending the service
- Responding appropriately to the needs of a child or adult who presents with symptoms of an infectious disease or infestation while at the service
- Adhering to evidence-based infection prevention and control practices
- Preventing the spread of infectious and vaccine-preventable diseases
- Complying with current exclusion schedules and guidelines set by the Department of Health (DH)
- Following the advice of the Australian Health Protection Principal Committee (AHPPC), the Victorian Chief Health Officer, and the DH
- Providing up-to-date information and resources for parents/carers and staff regarding the protection of children from infectious diseases and blood-borne viruses, as well as the management of infestations and immunisation programs.

### SCOPE

This policy applies to the Approved Provider, all service staff (educational and non-educational), students, volunteers, parents/carers, children, and others attending the programs and activities of Denzil Don Kindergarten.

Denzil Don Kindergarten supports the Immunise Australia Program and National Immunisation Program (NIP), which are currently recommended by the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) and supported by the Commonwealth Government.

All service staff are committed to preventing the spread of infectious diseases by implementing effective hygiene practices, including regular hand washing, maintaining thorough and effective cleaning procedures, assessing and maintaining acceptable immunisation documentation and complying with recommended exclusion guidelines and timeframes.

<b>Parent/Carer Responsibilities Under This Policy:</b>
Provide accurate and up-to-date immunisation documentation as required under No Jab No Play legislation
Notify the service of any changes to your child's immunisation status, including providing a current immunisation statement when your child has received their 4-year-old immunisations
Keep your child at home if they are not fully immunised and a vaccine-preventable disease is identified at the service, until the exclusion period ends and no further cases occur
Keep your child at home if they are unwell or have an infectious disease or infestation, in accordance with required exclusion periods
Comply minimum exclusion periods and any additional directions provided by the service or health authorities
Inform the Centre Coordinator (or a staff member) as soon as practicable if your child has, or has been in contact with, a person with an infectious disease or infestation

Support the service's infection prevention and control measures, including hygiene practices and outbreak management procedures
Cooperate with the service during outbreaks or public health events, including following additional advice or temporary requirements
Maintain confidentiality and respect the privacy of other children and families when notified of infectious diseases within the service
Read, understand and follow the service Code of Conduct at all times
Adhere to this policy and all other service policies at all times

<b>Responsibilities:</b> R indicates legislation requirement	Approved provider & persons with management or control	Nominated Supervisor and Person in Day-to-Day Charge	All service staff (educational & non-educational)	Contractors, Volunteers & Students
Ensure standard precaution practices are carried out every day to minimise, and where possible eliminate, the risk of transmission of infection	R	√	√	√
Establish and comply with good hygiene and infection prevention and control procedures ( <i>see Hygiene Policy</i> ) ( <i>see Attachment 4</i> )	R	√	√	√
Comply with the service's <i>Hygiene Policy</i> and procedures for infection prevention and control relating to blood-borne viruses ( <i>see Attachment 4</i> )	R	√	√	√
Conduct regular inspections of the service and consult with staff to assess risks by identifying hazards and potential sources of infection	R	√	√	√
Observe children for signs and symptoms of infectious diseases and take appropriate measures to minimise cross-infection and inform management		√	√	√
Ensure that where an occurrence of an infectious disease arises at the service, reasonable steps are taken to prevent its spread ( <i>Regulation 88(1)</i> )	R	√	√	√
Notify a parent/carer or authorised emergency contact of each child as soon as practicable when an infectious disease occurs at the service ( <i>Regulation 88(2)</i> )	R	√	√	
Notify everyone at the service of any outbreak of an infectious disease, including information about the nature of the illness, incubation and infectious periods, and the service's exclusion requirements, and display this information in a prominent position	R	√	√	
Contact the Communicable Disease Section, DH (see Definitions), if an outbreak of two or more cases of gastrointestinal illness occurs within a 48-hour period	R	√		
Notify DE within 24 hours of a serious incident via the NQAITS	R	√		
Ensure that information from the DH about minimum exclusion periods ( <i>see Definitions</i> ) is displayed at the service and is available to all stakeholders	R	√	√	
Ensure that a child is excluded from the service in accordance with minimum exclusion periods when the service is informed that the child is infected with, or has been in contact with, a person infected with an infectious disease, as required under <i>Regulation 111(1)</i> of the <i>Public Health and Wellbeing Regulations 2019</i>	R	√	√	√
Ensure that, when directed by the Chief Health Officer, a child who is at material risk of contracting a vaccine-preventable disease is excluded from the service until the Chief Health Officer directs that attendance can	R	√	√	

resume ( <i>Regulation 111(2)(4)</i> ) of the <i>Public Health and Wellbeing Regulations 2019</i>				
Ensure at least one educator on duty holds a current (within 3 years) approved first aid qualification ( <i>Regulation 136</i> ) ( <i>see Administration of First Aid Policy</i> ) * <i>At Denzil Don Kindergarten, all educational staff are required to hold first aid qualifications*</i>	R	√	√	
Advise parents/carers at enrolment that minimum exclusion periods apply during outbreaks see: <a href="http://health.vic.gov.au/infectious-diseases/school-exclusion-table">health.vic.gov.au/infectious-diseases/school-exclusion-table</a>	R	√	√	
Ensure obligations under No Jab No Play legislation ( <i>Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008</i> ) are met, including requesting, assessing, and managing immunisation documentation, and assisting parents/carers who may face difficulties in meeting the requirements ( <i>see Enrolment and Orientation Policy</i> )	R	√		
Provide information to staff and parents/carers about child and adult immunisation recommendations ( <i>see Attachment 6</i> )	√	√		
Advise parents/carers of children who are not fully immunised, or undertaking the 16-week support period, that their child must remain at home if a vaccine-preventable disease occurs at the service until the exclusion period has ended and there are no further cases	R	√	√	
Communicate any changes to the exclusion table or immunisation laws to all stakeholders in a timely manner	R	√	√	√
Provide appropriate and current information and resources to all stakeholders regarding the identification and management of infectious diseases, blood-borne viruses, and infestations	√	√	√	√
Provide information and resources to parents/carers to assist with the identification and management of infectious diseases and infestations	√	√	√	
Ensure parents/carers understand their responsibility to inform the Centre Coordinator or staff as soon as practicable if their child has, or has been exposed to, an infectious disease or infestation ( <i>Regulation 110, Public Health and Wellbeing Regulations 2019</i> )	R	R	R	
Ensure at least one educator on duty holds a current (within 3 years) approved first aid qualification ( <i>Regulation 136</i> ) ( <i>see Administration of First Aid Policy</i> ) * <i>Denzil Don Kindergarten requires all educational staff to hold current first aid qualification*</i>	R	√	√	
Comply with the advice of the Australian Health Protection Principal Committee (AHPPC), the Victorian Chief Health Officer, and the DH during an epidemic or pandemic event ( <i>see Attachment 5</i> )	R	√	√	√
Always maintain confidentiality ( <i>see Privacy and Confidentiality Policy</i> )	R	R	R	√

## BACKGROUND & LEGISLATION

### BACKGROUND

Infectious diseases such as chickenpox, the common cold, measles, and mumps are common in children.

Children are at greater risk of exposure to infections at kindergarten than at home due to the amount of time spent in close contact with a large number of children.

The Department of Health (DH) publishes the *Minimum Period of Exclusion from Primary Schools and Children's Services Centres for Infectious Diseases Cases and Contacts* to assist in protecting the public by preventing or containing outbreaks of infectious diseases common in schools and children's services. These requirements are regulated under the *Public Health and Wellbeing Regulations 2019*.

During an epidemic or pandemic, additional instructions and guidance may be issued by the DH and the Australian Health Protection Principal Committee (AHPPC).

Denzil Don Kindergarten will take reasonable steps to prevent the spread of infectious diseases at the service and ensure that the parent/carer, authorised nominee, or emergency contact of each child enrolled at the service is notified of the occurrence of an infectious disease as soon as practicable. The service is required to have policies

and procedures in place to manage infectious diseases ([Regulation 88 of the Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011](#)).

Denzil Don Kindergarten has a duty of care to ensure that everyone attending the service always receives a high level of protection during operating hours. Protection may include:

- notifying children, parents/carers, and educators/staff as soon as practicable when an excludable illness or disease is identified at the service
- complying with relevant health department exclusion guidelines, advice, and information
- increasing educator and staff awareness of cross-infection through physical and close contact

The Victorian Government provides an immunisation program for children to assist in preventing the spread of infectious diseases. In addition, the Immunise Australia Program and the National Immunisation Program (NIP) are recommended by the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) and supported by the Commonwealth Government.

Early childhood education and care services regulated under the *Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010* have obligations under *No Jab No Play legislation (Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008)*. These obligations include requesting and managing immunisation documentation and assisting parents/carers who may experience difficulties in meeting these requirements (*see Enrolment and Orientation Policy*).

## LEGISLATION & STANDARDS

Relevant legislation and standards include but are not limited to:

- Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010
- Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011
- Family Assistance Legislation Amendment (Jobs for Parents/guardians Child Care Package) Act 2017 (Cth)
- Health Records Act 2001 (Vic)
- National Quality Standard, Quality Area 2 & 6
- Public Health & Wellbeing Amendment (No Jab No Play) Act 2015 (Vic)
- Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004 (Vic)
- Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014 (Vic)
- Privacy Act 1988 (Cth)
- Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008 (Vic)

The most current amendments to listed legislation can be found at:

- Victorian Legislation – Victorian Law Today: [www.legislation.vic.gov.au](http://www.legislation.vic.gov.au)
- Commonwealth Legislation – Federal Register of Legislation: [www.legislation.gov.au](http://www.legislation.gov.au)

## DEFINITIONS

The terms defined in this section relate specifically to this policy. For regularly used terms, see the Definitions File located online: <https://denzildonkinder.org.au/policies/> OR in the Policies Folder in the kindergarten office.

**Blood-borne virus (BBV):** a virus spread when blood from an infected person enters another person's bloodstream and include human immunodeficiency virus (HIV), hepatitis B, and hepatitis C.

**Epidemic:** is an outbreak of a contagious disease that spreads rapidly and extensively and affects many individuals simultaneously in an area or population.

**Minimum exclusion period:** minimum period for excluding any person from attending a children's service to prevent the spread of infectious diseases as specified in Schedule 7: Minimum Period of Exclusion from Primary Schools and Children's Services for Infectious Diseases Cases and Contacts of the *Public Health and Wellbeing Regulations 2019*.

**Pandemic:** is an epidemic occurring worldwide, or over a wide geographic area and affecting a large proportion of the population.

**Pediculosis:** infestation of head lice that is transmitted by having head-to-head contact with another person who has head lice.

## SOURCES & RELATED POLICIES

### SOURCES

- [Communicable Disease Section, Victorian Department of Health, Victoria \(2019\), A guide to the management and control of gastroenteritis outbreaks in children's centres](#)
- [Department of Health, Victoria \(2012\) Head lice management guidelines](#)
- [Guide to the National Quality Standard \(2023\), ACECOA](#)
- [Immunisation Enrolment Toolkit for early childhood services](#)
- [Information about immunisations, including immunisation schedule, DH](#)
- [Increase in gastroenteritis outbreaks in childcare](#)
- [National Health and Medical Research Council \(2024\) Staying Healthy: Preventing infectious diseases in early childhood education and care services](#)
- [National Health and Medical Research Council, Fact Sheets](#)
- [National Immunisation Program, Department of Health, Australian Government](#)
- [Statements Section for statements on health emergencies, AHPPC](#)
- [Victorian Department of Health, Disease information and advice](#)
- [WorkSafe, Victoria \(2021\) Compliance code: First aid in the workplace](#)

### RELATED POLICIES

- Administration of First Aid
- Administration of Medication
- Child Safe Environment and Wellbeing
- Dealing with Medical Conditions
- Enrolment and Orientation
- Hygiene
- Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness
- Inclusion and Equity
- Occupational Health and Safety
- Privacy and Confidentiality

### EVALUATION

To assess whether the values and purposes of the policy have been achieved, we will:

- seek feedback from all parties affected by the policy regarding its effectiveness
- monitor the implementation, compliance, complaints and incidents in relation to this policy
- keep the policy up to date with current legislation, research, policy and best practice
- revise the policy and procedures as part of the service's policy review cycle, or as required
- notify all stakeholders affected by this policy at least 14 days before any significant change is made to the policy or its procedures, unless a lesser period is necessary due to risk ([Regulation 172 \(2\)](#)).

### PROCEDURES

**Procedure 1:** Management of needlestick injuries and splash exposure

**Procedure 2:** Management of blood and body fluids spills

**Procedure 3:** Safe disposal of sharps (discarded needles)

### ATTACHMENTS

NIL

### AUTHORISATIONS

This policy was adopted by the approved provider of Denzil Don Kindergarten on 10/06/2026.

REVIEW DATE: **10 June 2028**

## PROCEDURE 1: MANAGEMENT OF NEEDLE STICK INJURIES & SPLASH EXPOSURE

**Management of Splash Exposure:** when blood or body fluid comes into contact with skin or mucous membranes

1. Remove any contaminated clothing immediately.
2. Wash the affected skin thoroughly with soap and water.
3. Do not squeeze any wounds.
4. Flush affected mucous membranes (eyes, nose, mouth) with large amounts of water:
  - For eyes: rinse gently with water only (no soap).
5. Report the exposure immediately to the Centre Coordinator and/or Educational Leader.
6. Seek prompt medical attention for risk assessment of blood-borne virus transmission and appropriate treatment and care.

**Management of Needle Stick Injury:** if injured by a needle or sharp object

1. Immediately flush the injury under running water.
2. Wash the wound thoroughly with soap and warm water.
3. Dry the wound and apply a waterproof dressing.
4. Seek urgent medical attention for infection risk assessment and appropriate treatment.
5. If the needle/syringe cannot be safely retrieved:
  - Mark and secure the area to prevent risk to others
  - Contact the Disposal Helpline
6. Report the incident to the Centre Coordinator and/or Educational Leader.

### Reporting Requirements

Documentation and follow-up actions must be completed as per service requirements.

## PROCEDURE 2: MANAGEMENT OF BLOOD AND BODY FLUID SPILLS

**Equipment required (Blood Spill Kit – must be clearly labelled and easily accessible):**

- Disposable gloves
- Utility (heavy-duty) gloves
- Paper towels
- Disposable cloths/sponges
- Plastic or biohazard bags
- Detergent (and access to warm water)

### Spill Cleaning Procedure

1. Attend to the spill immediately.
2. Place a safety sign around the area to restrict access until cleaning is complete.
3. Put on disposable gloves.
4. Wipe up the spill using paper towels, tissue, or a damp cloth.
5. For large spills:
  - Cover with absorbent material (ie: disposable pads/towel).
  - Use a scraper and pan to collect material and fluid.
6. Place all contaminated items (paper towels, absorbent material, scraper contents) into a plastic bag.
7. Seal the bag and dispose of it in a general waste bin.
8. Remove and dispose of disposable gloves.
9. Wash hands thoroughly with soap and water.
10. Put on clean utility (heavy-duty) gloves.
11. Clean the affected area using warm water and detergent.
12. Dry the surface with paper towels.
13. Disinfect the area according to the product instructions.
14. Remove gloves and dispose of appropriately.
15. Wash hands thoroughly with warm soapy water.

### Safety considerations:

- Avoid direct contact with blood or body fluids at all times.
- Cover any cuts or abrasions with waterproof dressings before cleaning.
- Use protective eyewear if there is a risk of splashing.

## PROCEDURE 3: SAFE DISPOSAL OF SHARPS (DISCARDED NEEDLES)

### Equipment required:

- Disposable gloves
- Utility (heavy-duty) gloves
- Detergent (and access to warm water)
- Paper towels
- Disposable cloths/sponges
- Plastic or biohazard bags

### Collection of Sharps Procedure

1. Put on disposable gloves.
2. Do not attempt to recap, bend, or break the needle from the syringe.
3. Place the sharps container on the ground next to the needle/syringe and open the lid.
4. Using long-handled tongs, pick up the syringe from the middle.
5. Keep the sharp end pointed away from your body at all times.
6. Carefully place the syringe into the container with the needle pointing downward.
7. Close the container lid securely.
8. Repeat steps for all needles and syringes in the area.
9. If required, clean the area using warm water and detergent or bleach.
10. Rinse and dry the area thoroughly.
11. Remove gloves and place them in a disposable plastic bag.
12. Seal the bag and dispose of it in a bin that is inaccessible to children.
13. Wash hands thoroughly with warm soapy water and dry.

### Important Safety Rules

- Under no circumstances are children, students, or volunteers permitted to handle or dispose of sharps.
- Always prioritise personal safety and avoid direct contact with sharps
- If sharps cannot be collected safely:
  - Mark and secure the area to prevent access.
  - Contact the Syringe Disposal Helpline (1800 552 355) for assistance.

### Disposal of Sharps Containers

1. Do not place sharps or sharps containers in general waste bins.
2. Dispose of containers at:
  1. Local council facilities
  2. Needle and Syringe Programs
3. Contact the Disposal Helpline for guidance if required.

### Additional Support

For advice or assistance, contact:

- Syringe Disposal Helpline: 1800 552 355 (24/7)
- Local council environmental health officer
- Local general practitioners or hospital

## ATTACHMENT 1: SERVICE ACTIONS DURING AN EPIDEMIC OR PANDEMIC

The following operational processes will be reinforced and/or implemented during an epidemic or pandemic. The service will always follow the advice of the Victorian Government and Department of Education.

### ATTENDANCE:

- Unwell staff and children must stay home (most critical step)
- High-risk individuals should consult medical professionals before attending
- Notify provider the service Coordinator (or a member of staff) of any outbreak-related absences
- Limit visitors to essential staff only

### HYGIENE:

- Frequent handwashing will be reinforced (arrival, before/after eating, after coughing, etc.)
- Provide soap and water or sanitiser everywhere
- No sharing food or drink bottles (this is a normal requirement)

### ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE:

- Move to drop off at the gate (as per Covid-19 lockdown)
- Maintain distancing between adults (1.5 m)

### ADJUSTMENTS TO THE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT:

- Physical distancing where possible (not as possible for adults with children)
- Use dots on the mat for spacing of children, small group activities, as much outdoor time as possible. Limit numbers of children at play spaces.
- Increase ventilation (open windows)
- Clean and rotate toys frequently (especially mouthed toys)
- Limit large group activities

### CLEANING AND FACILITIES:

- Clean high-touch surfaces at least twice daily
- Disinfect toys and equipment after each use during outbreaks
- Avoid shared plush toys
- Follow NHMRC cleaning guidelines strictly

### CARE AND FIRST AID:

- Use standard precautions:
  - Hand hygiene before/after care
  - PPE not required unless exposure to bodily fluids
  - Physical distancing not possible during care. Hygiene is key/the priority

### MANAGING ON-SITE ILLNESS:

If someone becomes unwell while attending the service:

- Isolate immediately with supervision
- Collect as soon as possible
- Use face masks where appropriate (not for very young children or those unable)
- Seek medical advice if needed
- Clean any contaminated surfaces immediately

### RETURN TO ATTENDANCE REQUIREMENTS:

- No medical certificate required
- Must be symptom-free before returning