HYGIENE POLICY

Best Practice – Quality Area 2

PURPOSE

This policy will provide guidelines for procedures to be implemented at a Geelong Kindergarten Association (GKA) service to ensure:

- effective and up-to-date control of the spread of infection
- the provision of an environment that is safe, clean and hygienic.

POLICY STATEMENT

1. VALUES

The Geelong Kindergarten Association (GKA) is committed to protecting all persons from disease and illness by minimising the potential for infection through:

- implementing and following effective hygiene practices
- implementing infection control procedures to minimise the likelihood of cross-infection and the spread of infectious diseases and illnesses to children, educators and any other persons in attendance at the service
- fulfilling the service's duty of care requirement under the *Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004*, the *Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010* and the *Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011* to ensure that those involved with the service are protected from harm
- informing educators, staff, volunteers, children and families on the importance of adhering to the *Hygiene Policy* to maintain a safe environment for all users, and communicating the shared responsibility between all involved in the operation of the service.

2. SCOPE

This policy applies to the GKA as the Approved Provider, Nominated Supervisor, Certified Supervisor, educators, staff, students on placement, volunteers, parents/guardians, children and others attending the programs and activities of a GKA service, including during offsite excursions and activities.

3. BACKGROUND AND LEGISLATION

Background

Infections are common in children and often lead to illness. A person with an infection may or may not show signs of illness and, in many instances, the infectious phase of the illness may be in the period before symptoms become apparent, or during the recovery phase. While it is not possible to prevent all infections in education and care environments, services can prevent or control the spread of many infectious diseases by adopting simple hygiene practices.

An infection can be spread when an infected person attends the service premises and contamination occurs. A service can contribute to the spread of an infection through poor hygiene practices that allow infectious organisms to survive or thrive in the service environment.

The implementation of appropriate hygiene and infection control procedures aims to break the cycle and prevent the spread of infections at every stage. The National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) suggest that to reduce illness in education and care services, the three most effective methods of infection control are:

- effective hand washing
- exclusion of sick children, educators and visitors
- immunisation.

Other strategies to prevent infection include:

- cough etiquette
- appropriate use of gloves
- effective cleaning of the service environment.

The NHMRC suggests that if these strategies are not implemented, all other procedures described in the service's *Hygiene Policy* will have reduced effectiveness in preventing the spread of infection and illness.

Legislation and 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*: Regulations 77, 106, 109, 112, 168
- *Food Act 1990*
- *National Quality Standard*, Quality Area 2: Children's Health and Safety
  - Standard 2.1: Each child's health is promoted
    - Element 2.1.3: Effective hygiene practices are promoted and implemented
    - Element 2.1.4: Steps are taken to control the spread of infectious diseases and to manage injuries and illness, in accordance with recognised guidelines
- *Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004*
- *Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008*

4. DEFINITIONS

The terms defined in this section relate specifically to this policy. For commonly used terms e.g. Approved Provider, Nominated Supervisor, Regulatory Authority etc. refer to the *General Definitions* section of this manual.

Cleaning: A process that removes visible contamination such as food waste, dirt and grease from a surface. This process is usually achieved by the use of water and detergent. During this process, micro-organisms will be removed but not destroyed.

Communicable disease: A disease capable of being transmitted from an infected person or species to a susceptible host, either directly or indirectly.

Cough etiquette: The correct way to prevent the spread of infectious organisms that are carried in droplets of saliva is to cough or sneeze into the inner elbow or to use a tissue to cover the mouth and nose. Place all tissues in the rubbish bin immediately and clean hands with either soap and water or a disinfectant hand rub.

Hygiene: The principle of maintaining health and the practices put in place to achieve this.

Infectious disease: A disease that can be spread, for example, by air, water or interpersonal contact. An infectious disease is designated under Victorian Law or by a health authority (however described) as a disease that would require the infected person to be excluded from an education and care service.

Neutral detergent: A cleaning agent available commercially and labelled as 'neutral' or 'neutral pH'.

Sanitising: A process that destroys micro-organisms. Sanitising a surface can reduce the number of micro-organisms present. The process of sanitisation usually involves ensuring a surface is thoroughly cleaned with both heat and water, followed by the use of chemicals.

5. SOURCES AND RELATED POLICIES

Sources

- Department of Human Services, Victoria, Food Safety Unit
- Department of Human Services, Victoria (June 2000), *Sure protection against infection*
- National Health and Medical Research Council (2005), *Staying Healthy in Child Care: Preventing infectious diseases in child care*, www.nhmrc.gov.au/guidelines.

(Note: this publication is currently being revised and will have significant changes. It is important that services refer to the most up-to-date version of this resource.)

Service policies

- *Administration of Medication Policy*
- *Administration of First Aid Policy*
- *Dealing with Medical Conditions Policy*
- *Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Policy*
- *Dealing with Infectious Diseases Policy*
- *Occupational Health and Safety Policy*
- *Privacy and Confidentiality Policy*

PROCEDURES

The GKA as the Approved Provider is responsible for:

- ensuring that all educators and volunteers are provided with a copy of this policy and have a clear understanding of the procedures and practices outlined within
- ensuring the Nominated Supervisor, educators, staff and volunteers at the service implement adequate health and hygiene practices, and safe practices for handling, preparing and storing food (Regulation 77(1))
- establishing robust induction procedures that include the provision of information regarding the implementation of the practices outlined in this policy
- ensuring an appropriate cleaning and sanitising schedule is developed that outlines daily, weekly, monthly, quarterly and annual cleaning and sanitising requirements and responsibilities
- arranging for the service to be cleaned and sanitised regularly, including floors and other surfaces, as per the cleaning contract and schedule
- reviewing the cleaner's contract and schedule on an annual basis
- contacting the local council's Environmental Health Officer for information about obtaining a needle/syringe/sharps disposal unit and instructions for its use
- ensuring that each service has arrangements for dealing with soiled clothing, nappies and linen, including hygienic facilities for storage prior to their disposal or laundering (Regulation 106(1))
- ensuring that the hygiene facilities for storage of soiled clothing, nappies and linen prior to disposal are located and maintained in a way that does not pose a risk to children (Regulation 106(2))
- ensuring that there are adequate and appropriate hygiene facilities provided for nappy changing which are designed, located and maintained in such a way that prevents unsupervised access by children (Regulations 112(2)&(4))
- ensuring that adequate, developmental and age-appropriate toilet, washing and drying facilities are provided for use by children, and that these are safe and accessible (Regulation 109)

- reviewing educator training needs in relation to understanding and implementing effective hygiene practices in early childhood settings
- providing a copy of the NHMRC guidelines for the prevention of infectious diseases in child care for the service
- ensuring hand washing guidelines are displayed at each hand washing location
- ensuring there is an adequate supply of non-toxic cleaning and hygiene products, including gloves, at all times.

The Nominated Supervisor is responsible for:

- implementing and ensuring that all educators and volunteers at the service follow adequate health and hygiene practices, and safe practices for preparing, handling and storing food to minimise risks to children (Regulation 77(2))
- developing effective hygienic systems for cleaning, such as using colour-coded sponges/cloths in each area
- ensuring sponges are cleaned, rinsed and stored separately, and replaced regularly
- ensuring that an inspection of the outdoor areas, in particular the sand and soft-fall areas, are conducted daily to ensure they are maintained in a safe and hygienic manner
- informing GKA, the Approved Provider, of any issues that impact on the implementation of this policy
- actively encouraging parents/guardians to keep children who are unwell at home to prevent the spread of infection to other children and educators
- storing or presenting items, such as beds, bedding and sunhats, in such a way as to prevent cross-contamination
- ensuring that there is a regular and thorough cleaning and disinfecting schedule for all equipment and toys
- ensuring any chemicals and cleaning agents are stored out of reach of children
- ensuring that all educators/staff wear disposable gloves when changing nappies or dealing with open wounds or other body fluids, and dispose of those gloves and soiled materials in a sealed container or plastic bag
- maintaining the service in a clean and hygienic manner throughout the day, such as wiping benches and tables before and after eating, and cleaning up spills
- actively encouraging educators who have, or are suspected of having an infectious disease to not attend the service in order to prevent the spread of infection to others attending the service.
- Ensuring hand washing guidelines are displayed at each hand washing location

Certified Supervisors and other educators are responsible for:

- implementing and promoting correct hand washing and hygiene practices, as outlined in this policy
- maintaining the service in a clean and hygienic manner throughout the day, such as wiping benches and tables before and after eating, and cleaning up spills
- conducting a daily inspection of the outdoor areas, in particular the sand and soft-fall areas, to ensure they are maintained in a safe and hygienic manner
- informing GKA as the Approved Provider of any issues that impact on the implementation of this policy
- actively encouraging parents/guardians to keep children who are unwell at home to prevent the spread of infection to other children and educators
- being conscious of their responsibility to not attend the service when they have or suspect they have an infectious disease.

In terms of changing nappies for children, educators are responsible for:

- attending to the individual personal hygiene needs of each child as soon as is practicable

- changing nappies and attending to individual personal hygiene and toileting needs of each child according to recommended procedures (refer to Attachment 1 – Sample nappy-changing and toileting guidelines)
- disposing of soiled nappies in a safe and hygienic manner in line with this policy.

In terms of the toileting of children, educators are responsible for:

- ensuring soap and drying facilities are available at all times when children are in attendance at the service, including ensuring paper towels or hand towels are available if hand-dryers are either not working or not installed at the service
- ensuring children do not share the use of items related to personal care, such as hand towels for drying hands, toothbrushes and hairbrushes
- encouraging children to flush the toilet after use
- encouraging and assisting (where required) children to wash their hands according to hand washing guidelines (refer to Attachment 2) after toileting
- encouraging children to tell a staff member if they have had a toileting accident
- monitoring and maintaining toileting facilities in a safe, clean and hygienic manner while children are in attendance; this requires periodic checking of the bathroom area
- respecting diverse styles of toileting children due to cultural or religious practices
- respecting the possible need to maintain privacy of toileting and dressing.

For cleaning toys, clothing and the service in general, educators are responsible for:

- removing toys that a child has sneezed or coughed on (place in a 'toys-to-be-cleaned' box)
- wearing gloves when cleaning (general purpose gloves are sufficient; wash and hang outside to dry when finished)
- washing mouthed toys daily using warm water and detergent and, if possible, drying in the sun
- wiping over books with a moist cloth treated with detergent
- ensuring washable toys and equipment are cleaned term by term or annually, as required
- where applicable, washing and disinfecting mattress covers and linen.

In regard to children's contact with one another, educators are responsible for:

- educating and encouraging children in good personal hygiene practices, such as:
  - washing their hands after blowing and wiping their nose
  - not touching one another when they are cut or bleeding
  - disposing of used tissues promptly and appropriately, and not lending them to other children
  - using their own equipment for personal care, such as toothbrushes, hats, brushes and combs
  - only touching the food they are going to eat
  - using their own drink bottles or cups.

For the indoor and outdoor environments,educators are responsible for:

- keeping the indoor and outdoor environments as clean and hygienic as possible at all times, including the safe disposal of discarded needles/syringes/sharps
- promptly removing blood, urine and faeces (including animal) either indoors or outdoors, using the appropriate cleaning procedures
- covering the sandpit when not in use to prevent contamination
- emptying water containers, such as water trays, each day (refer to *Water Safety Policy*)
- disposing of any dead animals/insects found on the premises in an appropriate manner.

Safe handling of body fluids or materials in contact with body fluids:

Accidental spills and secretions of body fluid are a fact of life in a child care setting. In managing these spills, Certified Supervisors and other staff/educators must ensure that they:

- avoid direct contact with blood or other fluids
- are not at eye level when cleaning/treating a child's face that has blood on it, as a child's blood can enter the mouth/nose of a staff member when a child cries or coughs
- wear gloves wherever possible
- cover any cuts/abrasions on their own hands with a waterproof dressing.

Effective environmental cleaning:

Cleaning is an important part of infection control as germs are unable to multiply on clean, dry surfaces. Effective cleaning with detergent and warm water followed by rinsing and drying removes the bulk of infectious organisms from a surface. Particular attention should be paid to the following:

- toilets/sinks must be cleaned daily and separate cleaning cloths/sponges must be used for each task
- mouthed toys must be washed immediately or placed in a separate container for washing at a later time
- all bench tops and floors must be washed regularly
- children's cups/drink bottles used for water must be washed daily
- when washing at the child care premises, staff are to consider washing items separately to minimise cross-contamination, for example, tea towels washed separately from sheets, face washers washed separately to play mats/rugs
- nappy change areas/mats must be washed with detergent and warm water after each use.

Parents/guardians are responsible for:

- keeping their child/ren home if they are unwell or have an infectious disease that requires their exclusion from the education and care service
- informing the service if their child has an infectious disease
- supporting this policy by complying with the hygiene practices when attending the service or when assisting with a service program or activity
- encouraging their child/ren to develop and follow effective hygiene practices at all times, including hand washing on arrival at the service.

Volunteers and students, while at the service, are responsible for following this policy and its procedures.

EVALUATION

In order to assess whether the values and purposes of the policy have been achieved, GKA as the Approved Provider will:

- regularly seek feedback from everyone affected by the policy regarding its effectiveness
- monitor the implementation, compliance, complaints and incidents in relation to this policy and ensure satisfactory resolutions have been achieved
- 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 parents/guardians at least 14 days before making any changes to this policy or its procedures.

ATTACHMENTS

- Attachment 1: Sample nappy-changing and toileting guidelines
- Attachment 2: Hand washing guidelines

AUTHORISATION

This policy was adopted by the Geelong Kindergarten Association as the Approved Provider on 7 August 2013.

REVIEW DATE: 31 May 2017

ATTACHMENT 1
Sample nappy-changing and toileting guidelines

Suggested practices

- Ensure that the nappy change area is separate from food preparation and serving areas.
- Ensure that hand washing and drying facilities are adjacent to the nappy change area.
- Ensure that educators wear disposable gloves when changing nappies.
- Display a waterproofed poster of the nappy-changing procedure in all nappy change areas (provide multi-lingual translations as relevant for the service).
- Provide a nappy change mat or bench with an impervious, washable surface.
- Ensure that a walking child walks to the nappy change area and provide steps for the child if a bench is used (refer to *Occupational Health and Safety Policy*).

Procedures to consider if providing care for children under three years of age

- Have an adequate number of clean nappies stored within reach of the nappy change area.
- Keep all nappy change solutions, wipes, soiled nappies and clothes in a place that is not accessible to children.
- If using cloth nappies, use nappy covers where practicable. Ensure nappy covers are replaced at each nappy change. Wrap-around nappy covers are preferable as they avoid the spread of germs that can occur when nappy covers are pulled down over a child's legs and feet.
- During outbreaks of diarrhoea, use disposable nappies rather than cloth nappies.
- Where possible, educators who change nappies should not be involved in food preparation on the same day.

Nappy changing for older children

All children's personal hygiene needs must be attended to as soon as is practicable; therefore, if a child is not toilet trained or soils their underclothing, the service will need to ensure that appropriate facilities and supplies are provided for changing nappies/clothing in a safe and hygienic matter. It is not appropriate to leave a child in a wet or soiled nappy/clothing until the parent/guardian is available to attend to their child's personal hygiene. How and where these facilities are provided in an education and care environment will depend on the space and layout of the bathroom area (refer to *Occupational Health and Safety Policy*).

Services are advised to consider implementing procedures that ensure that the requirements of the regulations are met while recognising an individual child's need for respect and privacy, hygiene, supervision and occupational health and safety requirements. Services are reminded that it is not acceptable to change a child's clothing or nappy in areas that are not licensed for such activities, such as the office, foyer, kitchen and adult/disabled toilets.

Changing nappies

- Wear disposable gloves.
- Ensure that the nappy changing area has been cleaned with detergent and water, and that the change sheet/paper has been placed on the changing area prior to changing the nappy.
- Ensure that all adults at the service who change children's nappies use their hands to hold the child away from their body as they carry them to the changing area. Wherever possible, children should be encouraged to walk to the change area.
- Children should not be left alone during the entire time their nappy is being changed.
- All soiled items of clothing should be removed from the child's body along with the nappy.
- Extremely soiled nappies/clothing may need to have the contents tipped into the toilet.

- Nappies must be placed into plastic bags or a lined rubbish bin (a hands-free lidded bin that is inaccessible to children is recommended).
- Children should be cleaned, and soiled wipes placed into a lined rubbish bin. The change sheet/paper should also be discarded immediately after the nappy change.
- The adult must remove their gloves before touching the child's clean clothes or putting on a clean nappy, taking care not to let their skin touch the outer contaminated surface of the glove. Used gloves must be discarded in the bin along with other soiled items.
- Dress the child and wash the child's hands.
- The nappy change area must be cleaned immediately after each use with neutral detergent and warm water.
- If necessary, the cloth nappy/clothing should be rinsed before being placed into a plastic bag for collection by the parent/guardian.
- Adults involved in the nappy change process must ensure that their hands are washed and dried thoroughly after each change.

ATTACHMENT 2
Hand washing guidelines

These guidelines are based on information provided in *Staying Healthy in Child Care: Preventing infectious diseases in child care* (4th Edition), National Health and Medical Research Council (2005).

(Note: this publication is currently being revised and will have significant changes. It is important that services refer to the most up-to-date version of this resource.)

Hand washing techniques

Hands are the body parts most responsible for transferring infectious organisms, which can then lead to the spread of illness and disease.

It is essential that hands are properly washed upon arrival and at intervals throughout the day. Correct hand washing techniques are a vital part of good hygiene practices, and all educators should be trained in a set hand washing procedure.

The process of thoroughly washing, rinsing and drying your hands or a child's hands should take around 30 seconds. This is the approximate amount of time it takes to sing *Happy Birthday* twice, or the *Alphabet Song* once. Alternately, you could count to 10 while you wash and then count to 10 again while you rinse.

There are five steps to washing hands:

- Wet hands with running water (warm water is most comfortable).
- Apply soap to hands.
- Lather soap and rub hands thoroughly, including the wrists, palms, between fingers, around the thumbs and under the nails. Rub hands together for 20 seconds.
- Rinse under running water.
- Dry thoroughly.

When to wash hands

Before	After
Educators and other staff Eating or handling food Starting work Giving medication Putting on gloves	**Educators and other staff** Taking off gloves Changing a nappy Coming in from outside play Using the toilet Cleaning the nappy change area Helping children use the toilet Wiping a child's nose or your own nose Handling garbage Cleaning up faeces, vomit or blood
Children Starting the day at the service Eating or handling food Going home	**Children** Eating or handling food Touching nose secretions Using the toilet Coming in from outside play Having their nappy changed