



# MSS & WAABINY OSHC ILLNESS POLICY



## PURPOSE

Montessori Stepping Stones (MSS) operates to provide care and education for children, and aims to ensure a safe and healthy environment for all children in its care. Yet, we are not able to provide the 1:1 support that a sick child requires to ensure their wellbeing, and we have a responsibility not to compromise the health and safety of other children and employees.

## SCOPE

All people involved in the healthy, safe, food environment at MSS – as well as children, families, educators and employees who assist in the continuous improvement and implementation of relating quality practices.

## DESCRIPTION/GENERAL

Families that utilise MSS services place a high level of trust and responsibility on educators in the belief that, in their absence, their children will be kept safe and their health and wellbeing protected.

All children have the right to develop to their full potential in an environment which provides for their health, safety and wellbeing. Effective infection control procedures assist services to protect all persons from, and minimise the potential risk of, disease and illness. Children that are unwell pose a risk of infection to other children and educators/Employees.

## LEGISLATION AND GOVERNMENT REQUIREMENTS

Laws relating to protection of privacy and confidentiality; duty of confidentiality arising from contract with parent; to whom and when information must be disclosed;

- Occupational Safety and Health Act 1984
- Health (Food Hygiene) Regulations 1993
- Food Standards Australia New Zealand Act 1991
- Education and Care Services National Law (WA) Act 2012
- Education and Care Services National (WA) Regulations 2012.

## DEFINITIONS/PRINCIPLES/STRATEGIES FOR POLICY IMPLEMENTATION

The Education and Care Services National (WA) Law Act 2012 requires that MSS, the nominated supervisor and management take reasonable care to protect children from foreseeable risk of infection. The Education and Care Services National (WA) Regulations 2012 require MSS to take appropriate action to prevent the spread of an infectious disease at the service and to notify parents/guardians as soon as possible if there is an occurrence of an infectious disease at our service. All of the strategies and procedures detailed in this policy reflect those that are detailed in the National Health and Medical Research Council publication, "Staying Healthy – 5<sup>th</sup> edition".

Page	1	Review Date:	27/11/2019
P:\Centre Operation\MSS - New 2015\01 Policies\Word\MSS.P23 Illness.Docx			
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# MSS & WAABINY OSHC ILLNESS POLICY



## CHILDREN'S NEEDS

Protection from infection; to feel physically and emotionally well, and to feel safe in the knowledge that their wellbeing and individual health care needs will be met when they are not well.

## FAMILIES' NEEDS

Families expect that our educators will care for their children appropriately should they become unwell while in our care, and keep them informed about their child's wellbeing whilst at the centre - that their children will be protected from unnecessary exposure to infection.

## EDUCATOR AND EMPLOYEES NEEDS

Protection from infection and to receive management support through clear written policies and understanding the issues regarding the care of children who are feeling unwell; (i.e. 1 to 1 with sick child). To be able to maintain good communication with families with clear written policies to give to families so that they take responsibility for their child when sick. To have current information on childhood illness, communicable and notifiable diseases and vaccinations offered to educators at risk.

## MANAGEMENT NEEDS

Educators/employees to take action when they suspect a child is not well enough to be at the centre. For families to co-operate in keeping sick and infectious children away from the service.

## MANAGEMENT OF UNWELL CHILDREN

Sick children, as defined below, cannot be admitted to the centre to safeguard the health of other children and employees.

## EXCLUSION CRITERIA

A child who has any of the following symptoms cannot be admitted to the service:

- ear, eye or discoloured nasal discharge
- an undiagnosed rash
- high temperature (see High Temperature - Fever below)
- infectious sores or diseases
- vomiting and/or abnormally loose bowel actions for that child
- any obvious signs of ill health

Employees with symptoms listed above will not attend work or will be sent home if they start to display these symptoms while at work. If an employee has a work-caused illness it will be notified to the WHS regulator as required by work health and safety legislation.

Page	2	Review Date:	27/11/2019
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# MSS & WAABINY OSHC ILLNESS POLICY



## ONSET OF ILLNESS AT THE CENTRE

If a child becomes unwell whilst at our centre, the parents/guardians will be notified and asked to pick the child up and remove them from our care as soon as possible. All illness at the service is recorded on the Child Illness register.

If parents/guardians and/or emergency contacts cannot be contacted or cannot collect the child, relief educators will be organised to care for the child at the parent/guardian's expense. This is to ensure the child can be properly cared for away from the other children (thus reducing the risk of spread of any infection), and the required educator-to-child ratios are maintained for the remainder of the children in care. This information is provided to families at the time of enrolment.

This strategy may not be possible in some areas due to lack of available relief educators. Where this is not possible MSS, the supervisors will need to determine how the sick child can be cared for away from the other children, whilst still maintaining the required educator-to-child ratios. It may be possible for a non-contact employee (e.g. Coordinator, Administration Assistant, Management) to care for the child until the parent/guardian arrives to collect the child. Note: food handlers should not care for sick children.

## HIGH TEMPERATURE – FEVER

A fever is a temperature of 38°C or higher. Fever is one of the ways the body fights infection. It can develop slowly, over a few days, or the fever can rise very quickly. Usually, this doesn't have anything to do with the illness that causes the fever.

A normal temperature in children is 36.5°C to 37.5°C, although it depends on their age, what they have been doing, the time of day and at which part of the body you take the temperature.

Body temperature is usually lowest in the early hours of the morning and highest in the late afternoon and early evening.

If a child has a temperature of between 37.5°C to 38°C, the parent/guardian will be contacted to inform them of the situation. The child's temperature and condition will be closely monitored, and if the situation remains the same, or improves, the parent/guardian will be informed and the child can remain at the service.

If the temperature rises or the child starts displaying signs of ill health such as drowsiness, paleness, breathing difficulty, less urine than usual or any of the symptoms listed in the exclusion criteria above, the child's parent/guardian will be notified and asked to take the child home. If the parent/guardian cannot attend to collect the child, and the temperature reaches 38°C or above, an ambulance will be called. While waiting for the ambulance educators will take physical steps to try to reduce the child's temperature i.e. removing excess clothing, laying child in a cool place, encouraging the child to drink cool water etc.

Where a parent/guardian is asked to seek medical advice regarding their child's health, the service will provide (for the Doctor's information), details about the child's symptoms and any illnesses that have recently affected children or educators/employees attending the service. All names other than the said child will be kept confidential. The Doctor will be asked to complete a Doctor's Clearance Certificate Form to pronounce the child fit for child care and that other children are not at risk of infection through exposure to this child, before the child can return to the centre.

Page	3	Review Date:	27/11/2019
P:\Centre Operation\MSS - New 2015\01 Policies\Word\MSS.P23 Illness.Docx			
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## MSS & WAABINY OSHC ILLNESS POLICY



In the event of an outbreak of a communicable disease at the service, educators, employees, families, visitors and the local public health unit will be notified immediately and in accordance with the NHMRC recommended notifiable diseases, to help minimise the number of children or Employees that become unwell.

### TEETHING

Parent/guardians should advise the educator when their child is teething so that the child's needs are met.

When the child who is teething becomes unwell and displays symptoms which include:

- high temperature, flushed cheeks, drooling, the service will contact the parent/guardian who will either:
  - come to the service to collect the child; or
  - provide written authority via email for the educator to administer **ONE** child dose of analgesic, provided in advance by the parent/guardian. All over the counter medications must also meet policy requirements described in the Medications and Medical Conditions policy.

A child who is teething may be administered more than one dose of the analgesic within the week, but only one dose during each day.

### INFORMATION FOR FAMILIES

Children at MSS are at greater risk of catching coughs and colds because of increased exposure to infections in the group care setting. The service will therefore provide information to families about infection control requirements of the service, e.g. hand hygiene, respiratory etiquette.

MSS acknowledges that medications contain potent chemical active agents which affect the body's metabolism and should be treated with due respect and care at all times, and require families to only use over the counter medications when directed to do so by their child's doctor.

Page	4	Review Date:	27/11/2019
P:\Centre Operation\MSS - New 2015\01 Policies\Word\MSS.P23 Illness.Docx			
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