



Sick Children Policy

RATIONALE

Regular attendance is important for the child. However, there is no advantage in sending a sick child to school. A child may be too ill to participate in activities even without symptoms. A child who is not well requires additional attention from the staff, which creates a burden on and promotes infection between staff and children. We acknowledge the difficulty of keeping children at home or away from childcare and school when they are sick and the pressures this causes for parent, however our school aims to minimize the transmission of infectious diseases by adhering to regulations and policies protecting the health of all children, staff, families and visitors.

AIMS

- Farmhouse Montessori School recognises the need to maintain a safe, healthy, stimulating environment for children in our care and ensure practices that minimize the spread of infectious diseases.
- Our aim is to highlight information parents will need to meet the N.S.W. Health Department's requirements and to educate and encourage staff, parents and children on practices that will minimize the spread of sickness.

PURPOSE

We aim to maintain the health and wellbeing of all children, staff, and their families, ensuring a healthy environment and minimising cross contamination and the spread of infectious illnesses by implementing best practice and high standards of personal hygiene within our School.

RELATED POLICIES

Control of Infectious Diseases
 Incident, Illness, Accident and Trauma Policy
 Medical Emergency Policy
 Administration of Medication Policy
 Asthma Management
 Epilepsy Management
 Diabetes Management

SCOPE

This policy applies to children, families, staff, management and visitors of the School.

IMPLEMENTATION

On enrolment with Farmhouse Montessori School, all parents and carers will be provided with a copy of the Health Policy together with relevant copies of the NSW Health Department information.

Parents are required annually to complete a health questionnaire, which indicates their child's sensitivities or allergies, recurring illness and medication taken. This information should be updated immediately when the parents or carers become aware of any medical problem.

Documented evidence of the child's immunisation status must be provided prior to the child's first day of school and updated each year otherwise an agreement must be signed by the parent/carer to withdraw the child during any outbreak of disease outbreaks.

In the event of an outbreak in the school of a vaccine-preventable disease (e.g. whooping cough, measles) all children who have not been vaccinated for that disease will, as required by the NSW Dept. of Health, be excluded from attending the school until the risk has passed.

Children who have any infectious disease are required to remain absent for the stated number of days or until the condition has cleared up, **whichever is later.**

Parents and Carers must notify the school **on the first day of the child's absence**, and supply on the child's return, a note detailing the reason and relevant dates for the absence. These notes will be filed with the child's records.

Should a child become ill during the course of the day or arrive too ill to participate in the daily activities, the parents/carer or nominated contact, will be notified and required to take the child home. In the meantime the child may need to lie down and checks need to be made on a regular basis regarding temperature and comfort. A staff member will be required to remain with the child until the parent arrives.

The Farmhouse Montessori School has adopted the Staying Healthy in Child Care – Preventing Infectious disease in child care Fifth Edition publication, developed by the National Health and Medical Research Council and the NSW public health unit. We aim to provide families with up to date information regarding specific illnesses and ways to minimise the spread of infection within the School.

We understand that it can be difficult for families to know when their child is sick. Families may experience problems taking time off work or study to care for their child at home. Obtaining leave from work or study can enhance negative attitudes in the workplace which can cause stress on families. Families may also experience guilt when they send their child to care who is not well. However, it is imperative that families preserve a focus not only on the well-being of their own child but also upon the well-being of other children and the child care professionals at the School.

Our Educators and Staff are not medical practitioners and are not able to diagnose whether or not a child has an infectious illness. However, if an infectious illness is suspected, the School may ask the family to collect their child from care as soon as possible or not bring the child to care.

Management and Educators may request families seek medical advice and provide a medical certificate stating that the child is no longer infectious prior to returning to care.

Minimizing the spread of infections and diseases in early education and care services

We understand that it can be difficult for families to know when their child is sick. Families may experience problems taking time off work or study to care for their child at home. Obtaining leave from work or study can contribute to negative attitudes in the workplace which can cause stress on families. Families may also experience guilt when they send their child to care who is not well.

However, it is imperative that families maintain a focus not only on the well-being of their own child but also upon the well-being of other children and the early childhood professionals at the Service. To protect the health of children and staff within the Service, it is important that children and staff who are ill are kept away from the Service for the recommended period.

At times, an outbreak of a new or 'novel' virus or infection may require exclusion from the Service that is not specified in general exclusion periods for common infectious illnesses. Information, education and recommendations regarding any 'novel' virus will be provided by the Australian Government Department of Health and/or local public health unit.

(see Excluding Children from the Service section)

The need for exclusion and the length of time a person is excluded depends on:

- how easily the infection can spread
- how long the person is likely to be infectious and
- the severity of the infectious disease or illness.

Our Educators and staff are not medical practitioners and are not able to diagnose whether or not a child has an infectious illness. However, if an infectious illness is suspected, our Service may ask the family to collect their child from care as soon as possible or not bring the child to care.

Management and Educators may request families seek medical advice and provide a medical certificate stating that the child is no longer infectious prior to returning to care.

To help minimise the spread of illness and infectious diseases our Service implements rigorous hygiene and infection control procedures and cleaning routines including:

- effective hand washing hygiene
- cough and sneeze etiquette
- use of gloves
- exclusion of children, educators or staff when they are unwell or displaying symptoms of an infectious disease or virus
- effective cleaning of the environment, toys and resources (including bedding)
- requesting parents and visitors to wash their hands with soap and water or hand sanitizer upon arrival and departure at the Service

EXCLUSION FROM SCHOOL

CHILDREN ARE REQUIRED TO STAY AT HOME IF ANY OF THE FOLLOWING CONDITIONS EXIST:

FAMILIES RESPONSIBILITY

- The child is in pain
- The child has an above normal temperature – child should be at normal temperature (38 degrees) without medication for 24 hours
- The first 24 hours the child is on antibiotics
- A rash present – unless medically diagnosed as non-infectious
- Conjunctivitis
- Sore throat, swollen glands or persistent cough
- A fresh cold with a cloudy discharge from the nose
- The child is not well enough to eat or play outside
- Vomiting or diarrhoea – child cannot return to school until he/she is free from symptoms after returning to a normal diet for 24 hours
- Any type of communicable disease – for the period specified by the NSW Dept. of Health or until symptoms clear – **whichever is later.**

Should a child suffer a chronic condition (e.g. asthma), symptoms related to this condition should be discussed with the child's Directress including the doctor's case plan for the condition. The Principal may consider whether the School is able to accommodate the child or whether another School may be more suitable.

- When a child has been diagnosed with an illness or infectious disease, the School will refer to Staying Healthy in Childcare (5th Edition) to find the recommended exclusion period and also request a medical clearance from the GP stating that the child is cleared to return to the childcare setting.
- When an infectious disease has been diagnosed, the School will display appropriate documentation and alerts for families including information on the illness/disease, symptoms, infectious period and the exclusion period. (This information can be obtained from Staying Healthy In Child Care 5th Edition)
- Children that have had diarrhoea and vomiting will be asked to stay away from the School for **48 hours** after symptoms have ceased to reduce infection transmission as symptoms can develop again after 24 hours in many instances.

CHILDREN ARRIVING AT THE SCHOOL WHO ARE UNWELL

The Farmhouse will not accept a child into the school if they:

- Have a contagious illness or infectious disease
- Are unwell and unable to participate in normal activities or require additional attention
- Have had a temperature, vomiting and/or diarrhoea in the last 24 hours
- Have started anti-biotics in the last 24 hours
- Have a contagious illness or disease
- Have been given medication for a temperature prior to arriving at the school.

(for more information please see Parent Handbook)

CHILDREN WHO BECOME ILL AT THE SCHOOL

Children may become unwell throughout the day, in which case the Principal, Management and Educators will respond to children's individual symptoms of illness and provide immediate comfort and care.

- Educators will closely monitor and document the child's symptoms on the Sickness at School report (Appendix 1)
- Children who are unwell at the Nth Head campus will be able to rest in a supervised area away from other children until parents or the emergency contact person is able to collect them. Children at the Nth Balgowlah campus will be supervised in the reception area or in the classroom at the discretion of the Authorised supervisor (per child).
- A child who has passed a runny stools/vomited whilst at the School will be sent home and may only return once a Doctor's Certificate has been produced or at the discretion of the Principal/Authorised Supervisor.
- Educators will take the child's temperature. If the child's temperature is 38°C or higher, management will contact the child's parents/guardian/emergency contacts as soon as possible to have the child picked up and provide verbal authorisation to administer paracetamol.
- Educators will attempt to lower the child's temperature by
 - Taking off their shoes and socks
 - Applying a cool washer behind their neck and on their forehead
 - Removing extra clothing layers (jumpers etc.)
 - Place the child in a lukewarm bath
- Place the child in a quiet area where they can rest, whilst being supervised
- Continue to document any progressing symptoms
- Complete Illness Record, ensuring the form has been completed correctly and signed by the parent/guardian/emergency contact.

REPORTING OUTBREAKS TO THE PUBLIC HEALTH UNIT

Outbreaks of communicable diseases represent a threat to public health. To prevent outbreaks it is important to monitor the number of people who contract certain infectious diseases and their characteristics, and to work with patients and their doctors to help prevent spread to other people.

The NSW Public Health Act 2010 lawfully requires and authorises doctors, hospitals, laboratories, school principals and childcare centre directors to confidentially notify NSW Health of patients with certain conditions, and to provide the information delineated on the notification forms. Specialist trained public health staff review this information and if necessary contact the patient's doctor, and sometimes the patient, to provide advice about disease control and to complete the collection of information.

All information is held confidentially in order to protect the patient's privacy. Both the NSW and Commonwealth Privacy Acts contemplate the release/disclosure of patient information where it is lawfully required or authorised.

Management is required to notify the local public health unit (PHU) by phone (call 1300 066 055) as soon as possible after they are made aware that a child enrolled at the School is suffering from one of the following vaccine preventable diseases:

- Diphtheria
- Mumps
- Poliomyelitis
- Haemophilus influenzae Type b (Hib)
- Meningococcal disease
- Rubella ("German measles")
- Measles
- Pertussis ("whooping cough")
- Tetanus
- An outbreak of 2 or more people with gastrointestinal or respiratory illness

The school will closely monitor health alerts and guidelines from Public Health Units and the Australian Government- Department of Health for any advice and emergency health management in the event of a contagious illness outbreak.

EXCLUDING CHILDREN FROM THE SERVICE

When a child has been diagnosed with an illness or infectious disease, the Farmhouse Montessori school will refer to information about recommended exclusion periods from the [Public Health Unit](#) (PHU)

- When an infectious disease has been diagnosed, the school will display appropriate documentation and alerts for families including information on the illness/disease, symptoms, infectious period and the exclusion period. (This information can be obtained from the *Public Health Unit*).
- If a vaccine preventable disease occurs in the school, children who have not been fully immunised will be excluded from care.
- Management will check all children's Immunisation records and alert parents as required.
- A medical clearance from the child's General Practitioner stating that the child is cleared to return to the school will also be required before the child returns to school.
- Children that have had diarrhoea and vomiting will be asked to stay away from the School for **48 hours** after symptoms have ceased to reduce infection transmission as symptoms can develop again after 24 hours in many instances.

COMMON COLDS AND FLU

The common cold (Viral upper respiratory tract infections) are very common in children occurring 6-10 times a year on average with the highest number usually being during the first 2 years in child care, kindergarten or school. Symptoms may include coughing, runny nose and a slight temperature.

In circumstances where a child appears to have a cold or flu symptoms, management will determine if the child is well enough to continue at the School or if the child requires parental care.

Our School aims to support the family's need for child care, however families should understand that a child who is unwell will need one-on-one attention which places additional pressure on staff ratios and the needs of other children.

Children who are generally healthy, will recover from a common cold in a few days. Keeping a child home and away from school or childcare, helps to prevent the spread of germs.

NOTIFYING FAMILIES AND EMERGENCY CONTACT

- It is a requirement of the School that all emergency contacts are able to pick up an ill child within a 30-minute timeframe if possible.
- In the incident that the ill child is not collected in a timely manner or should parents refuse to collect the child a warning letter will be sent to the families outlining School policies and requirements. Depending on the natural and seriousness of the illness an ambulance could also be called to collect the child.

MANAGEMENT AND EDUCATORS WILL ENSURE

- Effective hygiene policies and procedures are adhered to at all times
- Effective environmental cleaning policies and procedures are adhered to at all times
- All families are advised that relevant policies upon enrolment which will be explained by management including; Control of Infectious Diseases Policy, Sick Children policy, Incident, Illness & Injury and Accident & Trauma policy, Handwashing Policy and Medical Condition Policy are available on the school website.
- Any child who registers a temperature of 38°C or above will need to be collected from the School and will be excluded for 24 hours since the last elevated temperature or until the School receives a doctors clearance letter stating that the child is cleared of any infection and able to return to child care.

- A child who has not been immunised will be excluded from the School if; an vaccine preventable disease is reported within the School community and that child is deemed to be in danger of contracting the illness. Please refer to our Control of Infectious Diseases Policy.
- Families are notified to pick up their child if they have vomited or had diarrhoea whilst at the School.
- That if the situation or event presents imminent or severe risk to the health, safety and wellbeing of the child or if an ambulance was called in response to the emergency (not as a precaution) the regulatory authority will be notified within 24 hours of the incident.
- notification is made to the Regulatory Authorities within 24 hours of any incident involving serious injury or trauma to, or illness of, a child while being educated and cared for by an Education and Care Service, which:
- a reasonable person would consider required urgent medical attention from a registered medical practitioner or
- for which the child attended, or ought reasonably to have attended, a hospital. For example: whooping cough, broken limb and anaphylaxis reaction
- any incident or emergency where the attendance of emergency services at the Education and Care Service premises was sought, or ought reasonably to have been sought (eg: severe asthma attack, seizure or anaphylaxis)
- Parents or guardians are notified as soon as practicable and no later than 24 hours of the illness, accident, or trauma occurring.

FAMILIES RESPONSIBILITY

In order to prevent the spread of disease, families are required to monitor their child's health and not allow them to attend school if they have an infectious illness or display symptoms of illness.

For children who have ongoing medical needs such as asthma or anaphylaxis, parents should regularly review their child's health care action plans to ensure educators and other staff are able to manage their individual needs as required.

Families should implement effective hygiene routines at home such as regular handwashing and sneeze and cough routines (use of tissues, covering their mouth with coughing, sneezing into a tissue or elbow).

Notify the Service if your child has been unwell in the past 24 hours or someone in the family is/has been sick.

Signs of illness in a child may include but not withstanding :-

- | | |
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| • Runny, green nose | • Lethargy or decreased activity |
| • High temperature | • Breathing difficulty |
| • Diarrhoea | • Poor circulation |
| • Red, swollen or discharging eyes | • Poor feeding |
| • Vomiting | • Poor urine output |
| • Rashes (red/purple) | • A stiff neck or sensitivity to light |
| • Irritability, unusually tired or lethargic | • Pain |
| • Drowsiness | • Impetigo |

Families should keep up to date with their child's immunisation, providing a copy of the updated immunisation schedule to the School.

RETURNING TO CARE AFTER SURGERY

- Children who have undergone any type of surgery will need to take advice from their doctor/surgeon as to when it is appropriate to return to care.
- Children will require a medical clearance stating the child is fit and able to return to the School and participate in daily activities.

SOURCE

- Australian Children's Education & Care Quality Authority. (2014).
- Australian Government Department of Education, Skills and Employment *Belonging, Being and Becoming: The Early Years Learning*

Framework for Australia. (2009).

- Australian Government- Department of Health <https://www.health.gov.au/>
- Guide to the Education and Care Services National Law and the Education and Care Services National Regulations. (2017).
- Guide to the National Quality Standard. (2017)-(2020)
- Kearns, K. (2017). *The Business of Childcare* (4th Ed.).
- National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC): <https://www.nhmrc.gov.au/>
- National Health and Medical Research Council. (2012) (updated June 2013). *Staying healthy: Preventing infectious diseases in early childhood education and care services.*
- NSW Public Health Unit: <https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/Infectious/pages/phas.aspx>
- *Public Health Act 2010*
- Raising Children Network: <https://raisingchildren.net.au/guides/a-z-health-reference/fever>
- Revised National Quality Standard. (2018).
- The Sydney Children’s Hospitals network (2020). <https://www.schn.health.nsw.gov.au/search/site?query=fever>

REVIEW

Policy Reviewed	Modifications	Next Review Date
Sept 2018	New Format and New Logo Sickness at School report attached	Sept 2019
March 2020	Exclusion period added	2020
April 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changed position of colds and flu section • Additions to infectious diseases/illnesses • Additions for reporting outbreaks to Public Health • Deletion of use of sponging to reduce fever (Sydney Children’s Hospital recommendation) • Additional section for Approved Provider notification • Exclusion period recommendation resources added • Inclusion of Department of Health information Additional information for parents and families	

Appendix 1



Sickness at School Record

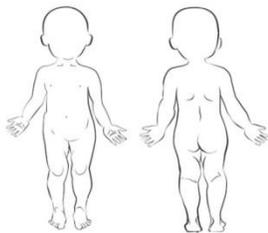
Child details

Surname: Given names:
 Date of birth: / / Age:
 Room/group:
 Staff present:

Illness

Circumstances surrounding child becoming ill, including apparent symptoms:

Time of illness: am/pm Date of illness: / /



- Abrasion, scrape
- Bite (Type)
- Bruise
- High Temperature
- Concussion
- Cut (Location)
- Rash
- Sprain
- Swelling
- Other (please specify)

Action Taken

Medical personnel contacted: Yes / No If yes, provide details:
 Did the child leave school? If Yes at what time?

TIME				
TEMPERATURE				
TAKEN BY WHOM				
AMOUNT OF MEDICATION				
NAME OF MEDICATION				
ADMINISTERED BY				
SIGNATURE				
CHECKED BY				
SIGNATURE				

Details of person completing this record

Name: Signature:
 Time record was made: am/pm Date record was made / /

