

**Dealing with Infectious Diseases**

**AUTHORISATION**

<b>POLICY TYPE:</b>	Operational
<b>POLICY LOCATION:</b>	Community Services
<b>RESPONSIBLE OFFICER:</b>	CSU Coordinator
<b>AUTHORISED BY:</b>	Director Corporate and Community Services
<b>DATE ADOPTED:</b>	9 July 2024
<b>ADOPTED BY:</b>	Manex
<b>MINUTE NO:</b>	
<b>REVIEW DUE DATE:</b>	June 2026
<b>REVISION NUMBER:</b>	
<b>RELATIONSHIP TO THE COMMUNITY STRATEGIC PLAN</b>	This Policy supports Council's Delivery Program Strategy 4.2 Provide quality, accredited and affordable Education and Care services within Bland Shire and surrounds (Bland Preschool, Family Day Care, Mobile Resource Unit and Toy library Services).

**DOCUMENT HISTORY**

<b>VERSION NO.</b>	<b>DATE</b>	<b>DESCRIPTION OF AMENDMENTS</b> <i>Include names of former policies that this policy will replace if applicable</i>	<b>AMENDED BY</b> <i>(Where required)</i>
0	October 2018		October 2020
1	March 2021		March 2022
2	May 2022		May 2024
3	June 2024	Reviewed, minimal updates	June 2026

**REVIEW OF THIS POLICY**

This Policy will be reviewed within Two (2) YEARS from the date of adoption or as required in the event of legislative changes. The Policy may also be changed as a result of other amendment that are to the advantage that Council and in the spirit of this Policy. Any amendment to the Policy must be with the approval of the General Manager/Manex.

## 1. Purpose:

The purpose of this policy is to minimise exposure of Infectious diseases to children, educators, staff and families at Bland Shire Children Services by implementing safe hygiene practices and procedures.

## 2. Scope:

This policy document applies to all educators and staff at Bland Shire Children Services Unit, including volunteers and working in conjunction with families enrolled within a service.

## 3. Outcomes:

To clearly advise that Bland Shire Children Services Unit identifies that the health and safety of children, staff and families is a core focus within the delivery of our service. The aim to reduce the spread of infectious diseases is paramount by educating children about the importance of maintaining safe hygiene practices and providing current information to families when dealing with infectious diseases by outlining the processes when managing an outbreak.

## 4. Roles and Responsibilities:

### The Approved Provider will:

- Notify the local public health unit (PHU) by phoning 1300 066 055 as soon as possible after being made aware that:
  - a child enrolled has a vaccine preventable disease/s, or a notifiable disease as outlined by the PHU, or
  - a child is reasonably suspected of having come into contact with a person who has one of these vaccine preventable diseases.
- Implement the recommendations from *NSW Department of Health* to prevent the spread of infectious diseases at the service.
- Ensure regulatory notifications have been met in relation to an outbreak of an infectious disease that poses risk to the health, safety or wellbeing of children at the service.
- Advise staff of the recommended immunisations for people working with children as per the Australian Government Department of Health Immunisation Handbook.
- Ensure nominated supervisor, educators and staff have read the policies and procedures in relation to dealing with infectious diseases and can source this information readily.
- Provide Educators and Staff the opportunity to obtain annual flu shots.

### The Nominated Supervisor will:

- Ensure that where there is an occurrence of an infectious disease at the Service, reasonable steps are taken to prevent the spread of that infectious disease.
- Communicate to families and display a notice stating the occurrence/s of an infectious disease; detailing the signs, symptoms, treatment and exclusion periods.
- Provide Department of Health NSW fact sheets to families where possible outlining sign, symptoms and treatments of current infectious disease outbreaks at the service.
- Implement the recommendations from *Staying Healthy in Child Care – Preventing Infectious Diseases in Child Care* to prevent the spread of infectious diseases;
- Ensure Educators are familiar with written procedures for exclusion of Educators as well as children in the event of an infectious illness.
- Ensure children with a medical exemption from receiving immunisations against infectious diseases are excluded from the service when an infectious disease has been diagnosed until there are no more occurrences within the service and the recommended exclusion period has ceased.
- Maintain an Immunisation register for all enrolled children to ensure immunisations remain up to date.

**Educators will:**

- Ensure children that are suspected of having an infectious illness are responded to and their health and emotional needs supported at all times. Contact families to arrange collection of their child as soon as practicable.
- Encourage families to advise the service if their child is diagnosed with an Infectious Illness.
- Facilitate children to participate in various hygiene practices throughout the day, including spontaneous, routine opportunities and intentional practices.
- Remain at home if unwell or develop symptoms significant to an Infectious Illness.
- Maintain their own immunisation status and advise the Approved Provider/Nominated Supervisor of any updates to their immunisation status.
- Take into consideration the grouping of children to reduce the risk of acquiring an infectious illness when planning the routines/program of the day.
- Implement the Dealing with Infectious Diseases Policy and remain up to date with changes to any relevant policy or procedure.
- Advise the Approved Provider of any risks associated with pregnancy and infectious diseases. This may include flexibility within work roles of all Educators (*excluding Family Day Care Educators*).

**In addition, Family Day Care Educators will:**

- Inform families if their own child/children (or other household member) are remaining home due to illness, on the days that children are to be in care. In the case of an infectious disease the Educator's Service must be closed.
- Advise families and the Coordination Unit of the closure.

**Parent/Families will:**

- Advise the service their child's immunisation status and documentation upon enrolment and update the service as status changes.
- Inform the service and keep their child at home if their child or a family member has been diagnosed with an infectious disease.
- In the event of the child not being fully immunised against infectious disease keep their child at home when an infectious disease has been diagnosed at the Service.
- Provide a clearance letter from an authorised medical practitioner to return to care, as requested by the Service.
- Have the opportunity to provide input into the review and effectiveness of policies and procedures of the Service via various methods.

**Recommended Practices:****NSW Immunisation Schedule for Children:**

The NSW Government Immunisation Toolkit for early childhood education and care services guides our practice and provides resources and information to support families' access to information regarding immunisation.

A child cannot be enrolled in any Bland Shire Council Children Services Unit service (with the exclusion of Playgroups) unless the parent/guardian has provided an approved immunisation statement that indicates the child:

- Is fully immunised for their age, or;
- Has a medical reason not to be vaccinated, or;
- Is on a recognised catch- up schedule.

**Staff Vaccination**

Bland Shire Council will provide a comprehensive staff vaccination program to help manage the risk of disease transmission in our services. Family Day Care Educators are encouraged to undergo a comprehensive vaccination program.

In particular, it is recommended that Educators are protected against influenza, measles, mumps, rubella, diphtheria, tetanus, whooping cough, varicella and hepatitis A.

### **Exclusion Periods**

Families are required to keep their child at home (called 'exclusion') in the event of an infectious illness or disease (including Covid-19). The aim of exclusion is to reduce the spread of infectious diseases in the service. The less contact there is between people who have an infectious disease and people who are at risk of catching the disease, the less chance the disease has of spreading.

There are recommended minimum exclusion periods; however, a child may need to stay home for longer until he/she is well enough to return to the service. The service will consider letters from doctors stating that the child can return to care, yet the child cannot return to care until the child's condition fulfils the service's criteria for returning to care. It is the doctor's role to make the diagnosis of an illness. The service, however, will decide on the response to an illness e.g. excluding the ill child, in consultation with their local public health unit. This may also involve excluding susceptible children and staff with whom the ill child has been in contact. To make a decision on the response to the illness, Bland Shire Children Services Unit staff refer to a list of recommended minimum exclusion periods as per the 'NHMRC (2013) Staying healthy – Preventing infectious diseases in early childhood education and care services - list of recommended minimum exclusion periods' and/or NSW Health advice. Educators and other staff working in the service are also required to follow the recommended minimum exclusion periods. In the case of any person living in a Family Day Care residence having or being suspected to have an infectious disease, the individual Service must close until that person and any subsequent infected household members have fully recovered and provided a Doctors Clearance to the Coordination Unit.

### **Reporting outbreaks to the Public Health Unit**

Outbreaks of communicable diseases represent a threat to public health. Management is required to notify the Public Health Unit as soon as possible after they are made aware that a child enrolled is suffering from one of the following diseases:

- Diphtheria
- Mumps
- Poliomyelitis
- Haemophilus influenza Type b (Hib)
- Meningococcal disease
- Rubella
- Measles
- Pertussis (whooping cough)
- Tetanus
- An outbreak of gastrointestinal or respiratory illness

## **5. Definitions:**

In this policy "staff" and "educators" refers to staff employed by Bland Shire Council Children Services Unit and Educators registered with Bland/Temora Family Day Care. "Volunteers" refers to parents/carers participating in Children Services events.

## **6. Legislation and Supporting Documents:**

Education and Care Services National Law 2010

Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011

Early Years Learning Framework – Belonging Being Becoming (2023, v.2)

My Time Our Place – Framework for School Aged Care in Australia

Immunisation Enrolment toolkit for early childhood education and care services – NSW Health 2023

<https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/immunisation/Pages/immunisation-enrolment-toolkit.aspx>  
Staying healthy- preventing infectious diseases in early childhood education and care services, 5th ed. Australian Government. National Health and Medical Research Council.  
Public Health Act 2010  
Incident, Injury, Trauma and illness Record  
Medication Record