



Glen Eira Kindergarten Association INC.

<b>Title</b>	Dealing with Infectious Disease Policy
<b>Policy Category</b>	Childrens Programs
<b>Policy Type</b>	Mandatory
<b>NQF Standard</b>	NQS: Quality Area 2 and 6
<b>Related Legislation</b>	See legislation map

### Background and Context

This policy will provide clear guidelines and procedures to follow when:

- a child attending GEKA shows symptoms of an infectious disease
- a child at GEKA 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.

**Note: This policy includes information on child immunisation.**

GEKA is committed to:

- providing a safe and healthy environment for all children, staff and any other persons attending the service
- responding to the needs of the child or adult who presents with symptoms of an infectious disease or infestation while attending the service
- complying with current exclusion schedules and guidelines set by the Department of Health
- providing up-to-date information and resources for families and staff regarding protection of all children from infectious diseases and blood-borne viruses, management of infestations and immunisation programs.

GEKA supports the Immunise Australia Program and National Immunisation Program (NIP), which is currently recommended by the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) and supported by the Commonwealth Government. All educators/staff at GEKA are committed to preventing the spread of vaccine-preventable diseases through simple hygiene practices such as hand washing, effective cleaning procedures and assessing acceptable immunisation documentation and complying with recommended exclusion guidelines and timeframes for children and educators/staff.

Infectious diseases are common in children. Children are at a greater risk of exposure to infections in a children's service than at home due to the amount of time spent with a large number of other children. Infectious diseases are divided into four categories (A, B, C, D) on the basis of the method of notification and the information required. The Department of Health 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 conditions common in schools and other children's services and is regulated by the *Public Health and Wellbeing Regulations 2009*.

GEKA must take reasonable steps to prevent the spread of infectious diseases at the service, and ensure that the parent/guardian, authorised nominee or emergency contact of each child enrolled at the service is notified of the occurrence of an infectious disease as soon as possible. The service must have policies and procedures in place for dealing with infectious diseases (Regulation 88). The service has a duty of care to ensure that everyone attending the service is provided with a high level of protection during all hours that the service is in operation. Protection can include:

- notifying children, families and educators/staff when an excludable illness/disease is detected at the service
- complying with relevant health department exclusion guidelines
- increasing educator/staff awareness of cross-infection through physical contact with others.

The Victorian Government offers an immunisation program for children to assist in preventing the spread of infectious diseases.

Early childhood education and care services that are regulated under the *Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010* have legislative responsibilities under the *Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008* to only offer a confirmed place in their programs to children with acceptable immunisation documentation (refer to *Definitions*).

### Scope

This policy applies to GEKA, Nominated Supervisor, educators, staff, students on placement, volunteers, parents/guardians, children and others attending GEKA's programs and activities, including during offsite excursions and activities.

### Definitions

**Acceptable immunisation documentation:** documentation as defined by the *Immunisation Enrolment Toolkit for early childhood education and care services* as acceptable evidence that a child is fully vaccinated for their age, or is on a recognised catch-up schedule if their child has fallen behind their vaccinations; or has a medical reason not to be vaccinated; or has been assessed as being eligible for a 16 week grace period.

**Blood-borne virus (BBV):** A virus that is spread when blood from an infected person enters another person's bloodstream. Examples of blood-borne viruses include human immunodeficiency virus ([HIV](#)), [hepatitis B](#), [hepatitis C](#) and [viral haemorrhagic fevers](#). Where basic hygiene, safety, infection control and first aid procedures are followed, the risks of contracting a blood-borne virus are negligible.

**Communicable Disease and Prevention Control Unit:** Responsibility for communication and advice in relation to infectious diseases on behalf of the Secretary of the Victorian Department of Health and Human Services. The unit must be contacted by telephone on 1300 651 160.

**Exclusion:** Inability to attend or participate in the program at the service.

**Illness:** Any sickness and/or associated symptoms that affect the child's normal participation in the program at the service.

**Infection:** The invasion and multiplication of micro-organisms in bodily tissue.

**Infestation:** The lodgement, development and reproduction of arthropods (such as head lice), either on the surface of the body of humans or animals, or in clothing.

**Infectious disease:** An infectious disease designated by the Communicable Disease and Prevention Control Unit (refer to *Definitions*), Victorian Department of Health and Human Services in Schedule 7 of the *Public*

*Health and Wellbeing Regulations 2009*, the Minimum Period of Exclusion from Primary Schools and Children's Services Centres for Infectious Diseases Cases and Contacts.

**Medication:** Any substance, as defined in the *Therapeutic Goods Act 1989* (Cth), that is administered for the treatment of an illness or medical condition.

**Minimum exclusion period:** The period recommended by the Communicable Disease and Prevention Control Unit (see *Definitions*) Victorian Department of Health and Human Services for excluding any person from attending a children's service to prevent the spread of infectious diseases as specified in Schedule 7 of the *Public Health and Wellbeing Regulations 2009*, the Minimum Period of Exclusion from Primary Schools and Children's Services Centres for Infectious Diseases Cases and Contacts. The exclusion period table, published by the Department of Health and Human Services, can be accessed at <https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/public-health/infectious-diseases/school-exclusion/school-exclusion-table>.

**Nominated Supervisor:** A person who has been nominated by GEKA under Part 3 of the Act and who has consented to that nomination in writing can be the Nominated Supervisor. All services must have a Nominated Supervisor(s) with responsibility for the service in accordance with the National Regulations (Section 5 and 161).

**Pediculosis:** Infestation of head lice that is transmitted by having head-to-head contact with another person who has head lice. Pediculosis does not contribute to the spread of any infectious diseases, and outbreaks of this condition are common in schools and childcare facilities.

**Serious incident:** A serious incident (regulation 12) is defined as any of the following:

- the death of a child while being educated and cared for at the service or following an incident at the service
- any incident involving serious injury or trauma while the child is being educated and cared for, which
  - a reasonable person would consider required urgent medical attention from a registered medical practitioner; or
  - the child attended or ought reasonably to have attended a hospital e.g. a broken limb\*
- any incident involving serious illness of a child while that child is being educated and cared for by a service for which the child attended, or ought reasonably to have attended, a hospital e.g. severe asthma attack, seizure or anaphylaxis\*.
  - \*NOTE: In some cases (for example rural and remote locations) a General Practitioner conducts consultation from the hospital site. Only treatment related to serious injury or illness or trauma are required to be notified, not other health matters.
- any emergency for which emergency services attended.
  - NOTE: This means an incident, situation or event where there is an imminent or severe risk to the health, safety or wellbeing of a person/s at an education and care service. It does not mean an incident where emergency services attended as a precaution.
- a child appears to be missing or cannot be accounted for at the service
- a child appears to have been taken or removed from the service in a manner that contravenes the National Regulations
- a child was mistakenly locked in or out of the service premises or any part of the premises.

Examples of serious incidents include amputation (e.g. removal of fingers), anaphylactic reaction requiring hospitalisation, asthma requiring hospitalisation, broken bone/fractures, bronchiolitis, burns, diarrhoea requiring hospitalisation, epileptic seizures, head injuries, measles, meningococcal infection, sexual assault, witnessing violence or a frightening event.

If GEKA is not aware that the incident was serious until sometime after the incident, they must notify the regulatory authority within 24 hours of becoming aware that the incident was serious.

Notifications of serious incidents should be made via telephone initially to the regional Department of Education and Training (DET) and subsequently, through the NQA IT System portal (<http://www.acecqa.gov.au>) via GEKA Management

## Policy

### **GEKA is responsible for:**

- ensuring 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 (Regulation 88(1))
- ensuring that where there is an occurrence of an infectious disease at the service, a parent/guardian or authorised emergency contact of each child at the service is notified of the occurrence as soon as is practicable (Regulation 88(2))
- ensuring that information from the Department of Health about the recommended minimum exclusion periods (refer to *Definitions*) is displayed at the service and is available to all stakeholders including staff, parents/guardians, students and volunteers
- contacting the parent/guardian and Communicable Disease Prevention and Control Unit (refer to *Definitions*) within 24 hours if on reasonable grounds, GEKA believes that a child enrolled at the service is suffering from a vaccine-preventable disease being:
  - a) Pertussis, or
  - b) Poliomyelitis, or
  - c) Measles, or
  - d) Mumps, or
  - e) Rubella, or
  - f) Meningococcal C, as required under Regulation 84(2) of the *Public Health and Wellbeing Regulations 2009*
- ensuring that a child is excluded from the service in accordance with the recommended minimum exclusion periods (refer to *Definitions*) when informed that the child is infected with an infectious disease (refer to *Definitions*) or has been in contact with a person who is infected with an infectious disease (refer to *Definitions*) as required under Regulation 85(1) of the Public Health and Wellbeing Regulations 2009
- contacting the Communicable Disease Prevention and Control Unit (refer to *Definitions*) if there is an outbreak of two or more cases of gastrointestinal illness in a 48 hour period
- ensuring children who are offered a confirmed place have acceptable immunisation documentation (refer to *Definitions*)
- ensuring when directed by the Secretary, that a child who is not immunised against a vaccine-preventable disease does not attend the service until the Communicable Disease Prevention and Control Unit (refer to *Definitions*) directs that such attendance can be resumed (Regulation 85(2) of the Public Health and Wellbeing Regulations 2009)
- notifying DET within 24 hours of a serious incident (refer to *Definitions*)
- supporting the Nominated Supervisor and the educators/staff at the service to implement the requirements of the recommended minimum exclusion periods
- ensuring information about immunisation legislation is displayed and is available to all stakeholders refer to: [www.health.vic.gov.au/immunisation/factsheets/schedule-victoria.htm](http://www.health.vic.gov.au/immunisation/factsheets/schedule-victoria.htm)
- conducting a thorough inspection of the service on a regular basis, and consulting with educators/staff to assess any risks by identifying the hazards and potential sources of infection
- ensuring that the Nominated Supervisor, staff and everyone at the service adheres to the Hygiene Policy and the procedures for infection control relating to blood-borne viruses
- ensuring that appropriate and current information and resources are provided to educators/staff and parents/guardians regarding the identification and management of infectious diseases, blood-borne viruses and infestations

- keeping informed about current legislation, information, research and best practice
- ensuring that any changes to the exclusion table or immunisation laws are communicated to educators/staff and parents/guardians in a timely manner.

**The Nominated Supervisor is responsible for:**

- ensuring 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 (Regulation 88(1))
- ensuring that where there is an occurrence of an infectious disease at the service, a parent/guardian or authorised emergency contact of each child at the service is notified of the occurrence as soon as is practicable (Regulation 88(2))
- ensuring that information from the Department of Health Services about the recommended minimum exclusion periods (refer to *Definitions*) is displayed at the service and is available to all stakeholders including staff, parents/guardians, students and volunteers
- contacting the parent/guardian and Communicable Disease Prevention and Control Unit (refer to *Definitions*) within 24 hours if on reasonable grounds, GEKA believes that a child enrolled at the services is suffering from a vaccine-preventable disease being:
  - a) Pertussis, or
  - b) Poliomyelitis, or
  - c) Measles, or
  - d) Mumps, or
  - e) Rubella, or
  - f) Meningococcal C,

as required under Regulation 84(2) of the *Public Health and Wellbeing Regulations 2009*

- ensuring that a child is excluded from the service in accordance with the recommended minimum exclusion periods (refer to *Definitions*) when informed that the child is infected with an infectious disease (refer to *Definitions*) or has been in contact with a person who is infected with an infectious disease (refer to *Definitions*) as required under Regulation 85(1) of the Public Health and Wellbeing Regulations 2009
- contacting the Communicable Disease Prevention and Control Unit (refer to *Definitions*) if there is an outbreak of two or more cases of gastrointestinal illness in a 48 hour period
- ensuring that a minimum of one educator with current approved first aid qualifications is in attendance and immediately available at all times the service is in operation (refer to Administration of First Aid Policy). (As a demonstration of duty of care and best practice, ELAA recommends that all educators have current approved first aid qualifications and anaphylaxis management training and asthma management training.)
- establishing good hygiene and infection control procedures, and ensuring that they are adhered to by everyone at the service (refer to Hygiene Policy and relevant procedures for infection control relating to blood-borne viruses)
- ensuring the exclusion requirements for infectious diseases are adhered to as per the recommended minimum exclusion periods (refer to *Definitions*), notifying GEKA and parents/guardians of any outbreak of infectious disease at the service, and displaying this information in a prominent position
- contacting the advising parents/guardians on enrolment that the recommended minimum exclusion periods will be observed in regard to the outbreak of any infectious diseases or infestations (refer to: <https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/public-health/infectious-diseases/school-exclusion/school-exclusion-table>).
- advising the parents/guardians of a child who is not fully immunised on enrolment that they will be required to keep their child at home when an infectious disease is diagnosed at the service, and until there are no more occurrences of that disease and the exclusion period has ceased

- requesting that parents/guardians notify the service if their child has, or is suspected of having, an infectious disease or infestation
- providing information and resources to parents/guardians to assist in the identification and management of infectious diseases and infestations
- maintaining confidentiality at all times (refer to Privacy and Confidentiality Policy).

**All educators are responsible for:**

- encouraging parents/guardians to notify the service if their child has an infectious disease or infestation
- observing and recording signs and symptoms of children who may appear unwell, and informing the Nominated Supervisor
- providing access to information and resources for parents/guardians to assist in the identification and management of infectious diseases and infestations
- monitoring any symptoms in children that may indicate the presence of an infectious disease and taking appropriate measures to minimise cross-infection
- complying with the Hygiene Policy of the service and the procedures for infection control relating to blood-borne viruses
- maintaining confidentiality at all times (*refer to Privacy and Confidentiality Policy*).

**Parents/guardians are responsible for:**

- keeping their child/ren at home if they are unwell or have an excludable infectious disease (refer to *Definitions*)
- informing GEKA or Nominated Supervisor as soon as practicable if their child has an infectious disease (refer to *Definitions*) or has been in contact with a person who has an infectious disease (Regulation 84(1) of the Public Health and Wellbeing Regulations 2009) and providing acceptable immunisation documentation for their child
- complying with the recommended minimum exclusion periods (refer to *Definitions*) or as directed by the GEKA or Nominated Supervisor in consultation with the Communicable Disease Prevention and Control Unit (refer to *Definitions*)
- where a child is on an immunisation catch-up schedule, ensuring that the child’s immunisations are updated in line with the schedule and providing acceptable immunisation documentation to the service
- regularly checking their child’s hair for head lice or lice eggs, regularly inspecting all household members, and treating any infestations as necessary
- notifying the service if head lice or lice eggs have been found in their child’s hair and when treatment was commenced
- complying with the Hygiene Policy and the procedures for infection control relating to blood-borne viruses when in attendance at the service.

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

**Approvals and Revision**

Date	Version	Author	Revision Description
Q3 2012	1.00	GEKA Management	New Policy
Q1 2021	4.00	GEKA Management	Annual Review