

HYGIENE POLICY

Best Practice – Quality Area 2

AUTHORISATION

This policy was adopted by the Approved Provider of Greenbrook Kindergarten on 7th June 2022

REVIEW DATE: NOVEMBER 2022

PURPOSE

This policy will provide guidelines for procedures to be implemented at Greenbrook Kindergarten 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

Greenbrook Kindergarten 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, staff 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 about 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 Approved Provider, Persons with Management or Control, Nominated Supervisor, Person in Day to Day Charge, educators, staff, students on placement, volunteers, parents/guardians, children and others attending the programs and activities of Greenbrook Kindergarten, including during excursions and offsite 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, staff 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*

The most current amendments to listed legislation can be found at:

- Victorian Legislation – Victorian Law Today: <http://www.legislation.vic.gov.au/>
- Commonwealth Legislation – ComLaw: <http://www.comlaw.gov.au/>

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.

Airborne diseases: Airborne diseases are illnesses spread by tiny pathogens in the air. These can be bacterial, fungi or viruses, but they are all transmitted through airborne contact. In most cases, an airborne disease is contracted when someone breathes in infected air. Air is most commonly infected through breath, particularly by sneezing, coughing and through phlegm.

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 (refer to *Dealing with Infectious Diseases Policy*).

Influenza: Influenza is a highly contagious disease, usually prevented by vaccination and treated by managing symptoms. Spread by body fluids from infected people, symptoms include a runny nose and sore throat (as defined by the Australian Government Department of Health. Health.gov.au)

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

Novel Coronavirus - Covid – 19: Also known as Sars – CoV – 2 Is an infectious disease caused by a newly discovered coronavirus that has not previously been identified.

Pandemic: "A worldwide spread of a new disease" as defined by the World Health Organisation

Pandemic Disease: An epidemic (affecting many persons at the same time) disease that has spread over a large area, i.e. it's "prevalent throughout an entire country, continent or the whole world."

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 Health, Victoria, Food Safety: <http://www.health.vic.gov.au/foodsafety/>
- Communicable Diseases Section, Public Health Group, Victorian Department of Human Services (2011), *The Blue Book: Guidelines for the control of infectious diseases*. Available at: <https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/about/publications/researchandreports/The-blue-book>
- National Health and Medical Research Council (2013) *Staying Healthy: Preventing infectious diseases in early childhood education and care services* (5th edition): <https://www.nhmrc.gov.au/about-us/publications/staying-healthy-preventing-infectious-diseases-early-childhood-education-and-care-services>

Service policies

- *Administration of First Aid Policy*
- *Administration of Medication Policy*
- *Dealing with Infectious Diseases Policy*
- *Dealing with Medical Conditions Policy*

- *Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Policy*
- *Occupational Health and Safety Policy*
- *Privacy and Confidentiality Policy*

PROCEDURES

The Approved Provider or Persons with Management and Control is responsible for:

- ensuring that all staff 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
- 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 the service has laundry facilities or access to laundry facilities, or other arrangements for dealing with soiled clothing, nappies and linen, including hygienic facilities for storage prior to their disposal or laundering (Regulation 106(1)) – Greenbrook's procedures – Laundry is sent home to individual families. Soiled clothing is placed into a biohazard bag and bag is placed in foyer cupboard for parents to collect.
- ensuring that the laundry and hygiene facilities are located and maintained in a way that does not pose a risk to children (Regulation 106(2)) These facilities cannot be accessed by children.
- 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 staff 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
- providing hand washing guidelines for display 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 or Person in Day to Day Charge is responsible for:

- implementing and ensuring that all staff members 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 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 sunhats, in such a way as to prevent cross-contamination
- ensuring that equipment and toys are cleaned as required
- ensuring any chemicals and cleaning agents are non-toxic and 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 and staff 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.

Educators and other staff 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 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 relation to changing nappies for children:

- 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 –Greenbrook Kindergarten’s nappy change procedures
- disposing of soiled nappies in a safe and hygienic manner in line with this policy.
- Filling out the nappy change register and passing on to parents on a monthly basis

In relation to the toileting of children:

- ensuring soap and drying facilities are available at all times when children are in attendance at the service, including ensuring paper towels are available if the child does not have their hand towel.
- ensuring children do not share the use of items related to personal care, such as hand towels for drying hands.
- 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.

In relation to cleaning toys, clothing and the service in general:

- 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
- washing and disinfecting mattress covers and linen, where applicable.

In relation to children's contact with one another:

- 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.

In relation to indoor and outdoor environments:

- 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.

In relation to the safe handling of body fluids or materials in contact with body fluids:

- avoid direct contact with blood or other fluids
- not be 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.

In relation to effective environmental cleaning:

- clean with detergent and warm water followed by rinsing and drying to remove 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
 - nappy change areas/mats must be washed with disinfectant wipes and spray 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 handwashing on arrival at the service.
- adhering to extra infection control and hygiene procedures that may be in place during a pandemic (see attachment 3)

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, 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: Nappy change procedure
- Attachment 2: Handwashing guidelines

- Attachment 3: Procedures for Infection Control and Hygiene relating to airborne illnesses during a Pandemic such as Influenza or Covid 19

Attachment 3

PROCEDURES FOR INFECTION CONTROL & HYGIENE RELATING TO AIRBORNE ILLNESSES DURING A PANDEMIC

To assist with infection control, the following procedures regarding attendance / general procedures must be followed during a pandemic:

- All children and staff who are unwell **must** remain at home. This includes anyone with the following symptoms a temperature from 37.5c upwards, coughing, discoloured mucus discharge, sore throat, shortness of breath.
- Parents who have children with complex medical needs should seek advice from the child's medical practitioner to support informed risk assessment and decision making regarding the suitability of their child attending.
- The AHPPC advises the following to children and families in high risk categories:

“Alternative care arrangements should be considered for children in the high-risk category for coronavirus (COVID-19). ACHHP recommends parents seek medical advice for these children. “

- More information about high risk categories can be found here:

<https://www.healthdirect.gov.au/coronavirus-covid-19-groups-at-higher-risk-faqs>

- The number of people entering the service should be kept to an absolute minimum.
- Anyone in the high risk category will be excluded from entering the service.(Stopped at the gate) This includes grandparents who fall into the elderly category of 65 years and over, any adult with pre-existing medical conditions and anyone showing signs of acute respiratory infection (eg. Cough, sore throat, runny nose) Under these circumstances, the children will be collected upon arrival at the gate by a staff member and dismissed at the gate by a staff member.
- School aged children and/or younger siblings must always be with their parent/family and cannot interact or play in or with any toys, equipment or play spaces.
- All adults and school aged children must adhere to social distancing. Where members of the same family living together enter, they must stay together, and social distancing is not required. For example, a parent and older sibling drop off the kinder child; they can stay in closer proximity to each other.

- All educators and staff will be social distancing with each other, parents and families and where possible, children. We absolutely remain committed to safe, trusting and secure relationships with children and will be continuing to offer high quality care and education within guidelines.
- Staff attendance – if any staff are displaying symptoms mentioned above, they will need to contact the Covid Hotline. 1800 675 398
- Programs will as much as is possible and practical, seek to reduce the numbers of children spending time together in close contact. This includes reducing group gatherings and having only a few children at any time in a play space as well as working with children to try to social distance.
- We are aiming for 19 children and 5 staff max to be in the indoor space at any time
- When not raining, programs will be mostly, if not entirely, conducted outdoors. Please make sure your child has a coat and warm clothing to accommodate for this. We already spend lots of time outdoors in the colder weather, so this isn't a new practice for us. Research often suggests that children can be more resilient to viruses and germs when outdoor play is encouraged.
- 1 x staff member at a time in the staff offices
- 1 x staff member at a time in the kitchen
- Sign in / sign out procedures will be done by a staff member
- Children's visual attendance Bee activity will be relocated outdoors
- There will be no entry into the kindergarten room by family members. Entry will be permitted into the bathroom area only. (Max 7 people at any time – approximately 2 x families) A staff member will be located at the door to let families through. This is applicable on both arrival and dismissal.

Hygiene Procedures

- When staff are entering the kindergarten they will use hand sanitiser / antibacterial wipes after getting out of their car, before entering the gate. Upon entering they will wash their hands with soap and water.
- **Parents / children entering the kindergarten** will be provided with hand sanitiser after entering the gate. A staff member will dispense this ... keeping the required distance between child / parent.
- Child and parent must then proceed to the bathroom area to wash their hands.
- Staff and children to regularly wash hands throughout the session and always before and after eating / after using the toilet. Staff members will be required to direct and supervise all hand washing.
- Hand sanitiser should be provided in every room where soap and water is not available.
- Hands are to be washed / sanitised before entering the kitchen and touching kettle / tea & coffee facilities / fridge, cupboards etc.
- All staff are to be responsible for thoroughly cleaning, drying and putting away their own cups, plates, utensils etc.
- After using the adult toilet please spray toilet and door handle with disinfectant spray before exiting
- If a parent wishes to use the adult toilet, they must alert a staff member (sign to be on toilet door) staff member must use disinfectant spray afterwards
- Practice regular hygiene as per our normal kindergarten procedures and policies.

- As much as possible, we ask that heating is not used indoors and that doors and windows remain open to allow for air flow throughout the room.

Cleaning & disinfecting procedures to be followed:

- During a pandemic there will be increased cleaning and disinfecting procedures in place
- All staff and cleaning contractors are required to adhere to full childcare cleaning guidelines from the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC)
- In addition to this we must:
 - clean and disinfect high-touch surfaces at least daily (e.g. tables, hard-backed chairs, doorknobs, light switches, remotes, handles, desks, toilets, sinks)
 - wash and launder play items and toys including washable plush toys as appropriate in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions. If possible, launder items using the warmest appropriate water setting for the items and dry items completely
- Couch to be covered with sheets
- Cleaning is to be done with a cloth and our regular cleaning products. Cloths must be washed in hot soapy water between use
- Disinfecting is to be done with disinfectant wipes or paper towel and a bleach solution diluted or a commercial grade disinfectant spray. Paper towels and disinfectant wipes are only to be used once and then be disposed of.
- Pls note – cleaning needs to be done before disinfecting!
- Cleaning / disinfecting must be progressive throughout the day. It is to be carried out in the morning before children arrive, throughout the day and after the session has finished
- Cleaning / disinfecting will be a part of every staff members non - contact jobs required to be done

Infection control / hygiene procedures to follow when providing first aid treatment to / changing the nappy or pull up of a child during a pandemic:

Under our pandemic plan, children who are displaying symptoms of being unwell will be isolated from other children in an appropriate space in our playroom or outdoors

First Aid Equipment

- First aid supplies
- Nappy changing supplies
- Disposable gloves
- Disposable towels
- Detergent
- Access to warm water
- Adult Face Masks
- Adult eye goggles
- Adult disposable aprons

Procedures

Put on the following personal protective equipment as deemed necessary to the first aid procedure you're applying / toileting needs your assisting with (use common sense)

1. Put on disposable gloves.
2. Put on a face mask
3. Put on eye goggles
4. Put on disposable apron
5. Attend to the child's first aid needs / toileting needs at the safest distance possible.
6. After attending to the child's first aid needs, remove and place personal protective equipment in appropriate disposable plastic bag/zip lock bag/bio hazard container, seal and place it in a rubbish bin inaccessible to children.
7. Wash hands in warm, soapy water and dry (follow the *Handwashing guidelines* in the *Hygiene Policy*).
8. Remove child's contaminated clothing (if applicable) and store in leak-proof disposable plastic bags. Give these bags to the parent/guardian for washing when the child is collected from the service.

ATTACHMENT 1
Nappy change procedure

ATTACHMENT 2
Handwashing guidelines