



Bacchus Marsh
Grammar

ELC POLICY

Early Learning Centre Immunisation Policy

Approved by the School Principal 2 December 2024

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Immunisation Policy



Record Keeping
and Retention Policy

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Purpose and Background



1 Purpose and Background

- 1.1.1 To set out guidelines and requirements for the immunisation for children and staff at our service, in line with Victorian health laws and regulations, 'No Jab No Pay' legislation, 'No Jab No Play' legislation, and the *Education and Care Services National Regulations*
- 1.1.2 We aim to protect children, families, staff and the broader community by promoting immunisation as an effective way to prevent the spread of vaccine-preventable diseases

2 Scope

- 2.1.1 This policy applies to:
 - 'Staff': the approved provider, paid workers, volunteers, work placement students, and third parties who carry out child-related work at our service (e.g., contractors, subcontractors, self-employed persons, employees of a labour hire company)
 - Children who are in our care, their parents, families and care providers
 - Visitors to our service who carry out child-related work, including allied health support workers

3 Definitions

- 3.1.1 The following definitions apply to this policy and related procedures:
 - 'Australian Immunisation Register' (AIR) is the national register that records immunisations given to people of all ages in Australia
 - 'Exclusion period' is the time during which a child or staff member must not attend the service
 - 'Immunisation' is the process of inducing immunity to a specific germ by giving a vaccine or antiserum, or gaining antibodies by having the disease
 - 'Infectious diseases' are illnesses caused by the spread of microorganisms (germs) – bacteria, virus, fungi and parasites – to humans to other humans, animals or the environment, including food and water
 - 'Notifiable disease' is a disease that must be reported to our local public health unit
 - 'Outbreak' means a sudden increase in the number of cases of a disease in a specific region or area. The definition of 'sudden increase' depends on the disease and how many cases normally occur in a population. For some rare diseases, an outbreak can be a single case
 - 'Parents' includes guardians and persons who have parental responsibilities for the child under a decision or order of court
 - 'Staff' refers to paid employees, volunteers, students, and third parties who are covered in the scope of this policy
 - 'Vaccination' is the administration of a vaccine. If vaccination is successful, it results in immunity. Note, to be fully immunised a person needs to be up to date with their age-appropriate scheduled vaccines

4 Policy Statement

4.1 Preventing the spread of infectious diseases through immunisation

- 4.1.1 We recognise and promote the important role that vaccines play in preventing the spread of diseases and protecting staff and children against serious illnesses
- 4.1.2 We encourage all staff and children to be vaccinated according to the recommendations in the Australian Immunisation Handbook and the [National Immunisation Program Schedule](#) (a series of immunisations given at specific times from birth to adulthood. See also the [Victorian Schedule](#))
- 4.1.3 We display Victorian immunisation information (attached) at our service, so staff and families are reminded to keep up to date with vaccinations

4.2 Immunisation for children at our service

Children's immunisation is mandatory – 'No Jab No Play'

4.2.1 To enrol in childcare in Victoria, children must either:

- Be fully immunised for their age
- Be on a catch-up schedule
- Have an approved exemption, or
- Be eligible for the '16-week support period'

4.2.2 Homeopathic treatments for immunisation are not recognised

Proof of immunisation status – immunisation history statements

4.2.3 At the time of enrolment, parents must give us a record of their child's immunisation status. We can only accept the following document:

- A current Australian Immunisation Register (AIR) 'Immunisation History Statement' that shows the child is either 'up to date' with their vaccines that are due for their age (i.e., that no vaccines are overdue two months prior to their first day of attending) OR that there is a valid medical immunisation medical exemption

4.2.4 We cannot accept a child's health and development record ('the green book'), overseas records or a letter from a GP

4.2.5 If a child is on a catch-up schedule, cannot be immunised due to a medical condition, or has natural immunity, but this is not reflected on their AIR immunisation history statement, parents should contact their immunisation provider to ensure the child's AIR record is updated

4.2.6 The AIR immunisation history statement must be provided within the two months prior to the child starting at the service (see 'Support Period' below as there are some exceptions)

4.2.7 A child can be enrolled if they have started a catch-up schedule that is displayed on their AIR immunisation history statement and their vaccines due on the catch-up schedule are not overdue two months prior to their first day of attending

4.2.8 We cannot accept overseas records as proof of immunisation because vaccination schedules vary across countries

4.2.9 Overseas immunisations can be transcribed by a GP/nurse to the AIR. Updates will then show on AIR immunisation history statements

4.2.10 When a parent has a concern about providing an immunisation history statement, we refer them to:

- The Royal Children's Hospital Melbourne Immunisation clinic on 1300 882 924, option 2
- Monash Immunisation, Monash Medical Centre on 1300 882 924, option 4
- Surveillance of Adverse Events Following Immunisation (SAFEVIC) on 1300 882 924, Option 1

4.2.11 AIR immunisation statements and forms are available through [Medicare \(Services Australia\)](#)

16-week support period ('grace period')

4.2.12 If a child is eligible for the '16-week support period', we can enrol them even if they are not, or cannot prove, they are up to date, with their immunisations

4.2.13 The support period is for 16 weeks commencing from the date the child first attends our service

4.2.14 During this time, families should bring their child's vaccinations up to date or get the required documentation

4.2.15 We provide support, referrals and information to families who need it, using the [resources available from the Victorian Department of Health](#)

4.2.16 Families who meet any of the following criteria are eligible for the support period:

- Children evacuated following emergency (such as flood or fire)
- Children in emergency care (for example, emergency foster care) under the Children, Youth and Families Act 2005

- Children in the care of an adult who is not the child's parent due to exceptional circumstances such as illness or incapacity
- Children identified by their parents as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander
- Children who hold or whose parents hold a health care card, pension concession card, Veterans Affairs Gold or White card
- Children from a multiple birth of triplets or more
- Children who are refugees or asylum seekers
- Children who are on or who have been on a Child Protection Order
- Children in or who been in foster care or out-of-home care
- Children who have a report made about them under the Children Youth and Families Act 2005
- Families that have received support through Family services, including ChildFIRST; Services Connect; a community-based child and family service; or an integrated family service

4.2.17 We use the Victorian Government's [support period eligibility assessment form](#), if we need it

4.2.18 At the end of the support period, if we have not received a valid immunisation history statement, we are not required to cancel the child's enrolment. However, we will provide parents with referrals for advice about vaccinations

Parents must update their children's immunisation history

4.2.19 The immunisation record we have for a child must reflect their current immunisation status (*National Regulations s 177(2)*)

4.2.20 Parents must provide us with an updated immunisation history statements for their children

4.2.21 In line with the 'No Jab, No Play' laws, we take reasonable steps to make sure that we hold a current immunisation history statement for each child. We do this by:

- Twice a year, requestion parents to provide evidence of an up-to-date immunisation for their child
- Reviewing enrolment records for children who are at greater risk of falling behind with their immunisations
- Following up requests for up-to-date immunisation history statements if necessary
- Assessing immunisation history statements to make sure they are still up to date after enrolment
- Supporting families to get their child immunised on time by providing information and referrals
- Storing the child's most recent AIR immunisation statement on their enrolment record

Record keeping requirements for children's immunisation history

4.2.22 By law, we must keep a child's AIR immunisation history statement on their enrolment record (*National Regulations s 162(f), i(i), i(ii)*)

4.2.23 If we use a support period eligibility assessment form, we also keep this with the child's enrolment form

4.2.24 We keep the records according to our record keeping and privacy and confidentiality policies. Only authorised staff and officers with the relevant authority (e.g., from local council or the Victorian Departments of Health and Humans Services, or Education and Training) can access the health records we hold for a child

No Jab No Pay – Child Care Subsidy and immunisation

4.2.25 The 'Child Care Subsidy' helps cover childcare fees. To be eligible for it, a child must be immunised, unless they are medically exempted

4.2.26 To meet the immunisation requirements for the Child Care Subsidy, children need to:

- Meet the Australian Department of Health and Aged Care's age-appropriate early childhood vaccination schedule; or
- Be on an approved catch-up schedule in line with the current Australian Immunisation Handbook; or



- Have an approved medical exemption recorded on the Australian Immunisation Register (AIR).
Vaccination objection is not a valid exemption

4.2.27 More information is available at [Services Australia](#)

4.3 Immunisation for educators and other staff

4.3.1 Although vaccinations are not compulsory, educators and all other staff are strongly encouraged to keep up to date with their vaccinations

4.3.2 People who work in children's education and care have an increased risk of some infectious diseases that can be prevented by immunisation

4.3.3 We encourage staff to be immunised according to the Australian Immunisation Handbook recommendations:

- Whooping cough (pertussis) – this is especially important for staff who are caring for children under 6 months. Staff who were vaccinated in childhood should get a booster vaccination
- Measles, mumps and rubella – important for staff who were born during or since 1966 who do not have immunisation records of 2 doses of the MMR vaccine or who do not have evidence of immunity to measles, mumps or rubella (a blood test can check immunity)
- Chickenpox (varicella) – important for staff who have not had chickenpox (a blood test can check immunity)
- Hepatitis A - important because children can be infectious even without symptoms
- COVID -19 – important for all staff to be up to date with boosters
- Flu (influenza) – annual flu vaccination to reduce the risk of serious complications from flu in young children
- Hepatitis B – important for staff caring if they care for children with developmental disabilities
- Japanese encephalitis – important for those at high risk and in some areas of Australia

4.4 Immunisation for pregnant women and immunocompromised children and staff

4.4.1 Pregnant women and immunocompromised children and staff should be vaccinated according to their doctor's recommendations

4.4.2 Pregnant and immunocompromised staff should get advice about their individual risks if they continue to work at our service

4.4.3 Our [Dealing with Infectious Diseases Policy](#) covers the potential complications of some infectious diseases for pregnant women or their unborn child, and the steps we take to protect pregnant and immunocompromised staff and visitors

4.4.4 Staff and families can refer to the *Staying Healthy Guidelines* for more information about vaccinations for pregnant women and immunocompromised children and their families in childcare

4.5 Exclusion of non-immunised children and staff

4.5.1 Staff must follow our excluding children and staff procedure (in our [Dealing with Infectious Diseases Policy](#)) if a child or staff member needs to be excluded due to an infectious disease

4.5.2 When a child or staff member has an infectious disease, they may need to be excluded from our service, regardless of whether they are immunised or not

4.5.3 When a child or staff member who is not immunised, or not fully immunised, is a contact of someone who has a vaccine preventable infectious disease, they may need to be excluded from our service

4.5.4 Non-immunised or not fully immunised children and staff may also be excluded during infectious disease outbreaks

4.5.5 Only a limited number of vaccine preventable diseases require non-immunised contacts to be excluded, and we consult with our local health unit about excluding the non-immunised contacts

4.5.6 Fees are still payable during exclusion periods



5 Principles

- 5.1.1 The safety and wellbeing of children in our care is our number one priority, and we promote immunisation as an effective way to reduce the risk of infectious diseases at our service
- 5.1.2 Our policies and procedures are based on the latest guidelines and recommendations from government health authorities, and we comply with all relevant legislation, regulations and standards
- 5.1.3 We communicate with staff, families, children and government authorities to manage and mitigate risks for infectious diseases, ensuring that everyone is informed and contributing to a safe environment
- 5.1.4 We have an open and supportive environment, and communicate with each other about vaccinations in a diplomatic and respectful way
- 5.1.5 We protect children and staff by obtaining, maintaining and storing accurate health records
- 5.1.6 We regularly review and update our policies and procedures to make sure they still reflect current best practices and address emerging health risks

6 Policy Communication, Training and Monitoring

- 6.1.1 This policy and related documents can be found in our Policy Folder and OneDrive Policy folder
- 6.1.2 The approved provider and nominated supervisor provide information, training and other resources and support regarding the Immunisation Policy and related documents
- 6.1.3 All staff (including volunteers and students) are formally inducted. They are given copies of/access to, review, understand and formally acknowledge this Immunisation Policy and related documents
- 6.1.4 The nominated supervisor runs a professional development program for each staff member, which covers this policy
- 6.1.5 Roles and responsibilities are clearly defined in this policy and in individual position descriptions. They are communicated during staff inductions and in ongoing training
- 6.1.6 At enrolment, families are given copies of/given access to our Immunisation Policy and related documents
- 6.1.7 Families are notified in line with our obligations under the *National Regulations* when changes are made to our policies and procedures

7 Legislation Overview

7.1 Education and Care Services National Law and Regulations

Law	Description
s 167	Offence relating to protection of children from harm and hazards
s 172	Offence to fail to display prescribed information
S 174	Offence to fail to notify certain information to Regulatory Authority
Regulations	
s 88	Infectious diseases
s 162	Health information to be kept in enrolment record
s 168	Education and care services must have policies and procedures
s 170	Policies and procedures to be followed
s 171	Policies and procedures to be kept available
s 172	Notification of change to policies or procedures
s 177	Prescribed enrolment and other documents to be kept by approved provider

ss 181 ,183 - 184	Confidentiality and storage of records
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7.2 Other Applicable Laws and Regulations

Act / Regulation	Description
<i>Work Health and Safety Act 2011</i>	Describes the primary duty of care to people in the workplace
<i>Privacy Act 1988</i>	Principal act protecting the handling of personal information
<i>Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008 (Vic)</i> <i>Public Health and Wellbeing Regulations 2019 (Vic)</i>	Laws and regulations covering infectious disease management, including exclusion periods and notifiable diseases
<i>A New Tax System (Family Assistance) Act 1999</i>	Covers the Child Care Subsidy, including No Job No Pay

7.3 National Quality Standard

Standard	Concept	Description
2.1	Health	Each child’s health and physical activity is supported and promoted
2.2	Safety	Each child is protected
4.2	Professionalism	Management, educators and staff are collaborative, respectful and ethical
4.2.2	Professional standards	Professional standards guide practice, interactions and relationships
6.1	Supportive relationships with families	Respectful relationships with families are developed and maintained and families are supported in their parenting role
6.1.3	Families are supported	Current information is available to families about the service and relevant community services and resources to support parenting and family wellbeing
7.1	Governance	Governance supports the operation of a quality service
7.1.2	Management systems	Systems are in place to manage risk and enable the effective management and operation of a quality service
7.1.3	Roles and responsibilities	Roles and responsibilities are clearly defined, and understood, and support effective decision-making and operation of the service

7.4 Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF) V2.0 / Victorian Early Years Learning and Development

EYLF Outcome	Key Component
3: CHILDREN HAVE A STRONG SENSE OF WELLBEING	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children become strong in their social, emotional and mental wellbeing • Children become strong in their physical learning and wellbeing • Children are aware of and develop strategies to support their own mental and physical health and personal safety

7.5 National Principles for Child Safe Organisations

Most relevant principles
Child safety and wellbeing is embedded in organisational leadership, governance and culture



8 Related Documents

8.1 Key Policies

Dealing with Infectious Diseases Policy | Child Safe Environment Policy | Educator and Management Policy | Staffing Arrangement Policy | Work Health and Safety Policy | Privacy and Confidentiality Policy | Enrolment Policy | Medical Conditions Policy

8.2 Procedures

Roles and Responsibilities – Immunisation (attached) | Dealing with Infectious Diseases Procedures (in Dealing with Infectious Diseases Policy) | Medical management plans (in Medical Conditions Policy)

8.3 Resources

Immunisation information for display (attached)

9 Sources

Education and Care Services National Law and Regulations | National Quality Standard | A guide to the management and control of gastroenteritis outbreaks in children’s centres: VIC Health | NHMRC. Staying Healthy -Preventing Infectious Diseases in Early Childhood Education and Care Services 6th edition | Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008 | Public Health and Wellbeing Regulations 2019 | Exclusion periods for primary schools and children's services - Victorian Department of Health | Guidelines for No Jab No Play - Victorian Department of Health

10 Authorisation

ELC Document Name	Immunisation Policy	
Name of Reviewer: Approved Provider	Principal Andrew Neal	Signature:
Name of Reviewer: Nominated Supervisor	Kerry Osborn	Signature:
Date Revised	December 2024 Reviewed annually and when there are changes that may affect this policy or related procedures. The review will include checks to ensure the document reflects current legislation, continues to be effective, or whether any changes and additional training are required	

11 History

Date	Amendment
December 2024	1. New policy

12 Appendix A: Roles and Responsibilities – Immunisation

Approved provider responsibilities (not limited to)

Ensure our service meets its obligations under the *Education and Care Services National Law and Regulations*, including to: keep children’s immunisation status on their enrolment record (and certificate for immunisation or exemption where required); and take reasonable steps to ensure enrolment documents are accurate

Ensure that our service’s policies procedures for immunisation are appropriate in practice, up-to-date, best practice, and comply with all relevant legislation, standards and guidelines

Take reasonable steps to ensure our Immunisation Policy and related procedures are followed (e.g. through clear and accessible communication, and systemised inductions, training and monitoring of all staff – including volunteers, students)

Ensure that our service is meeting the immunisation requirements for enrolling children in Victorian (including No Jab No Play rules)

Ensure we follow public health unit’s advice about reporting and excluding non-immunised children and staff when required

Promote immunisation to staff and families

Ensure we store records health records confidentially and securely according to our policies and legal obligations

Regularly review this Immunisation Policy and related procedures in consultation with children, families, communities and staff

Notify families at least 14 days before changing this Immunisation Policy if the changes will: affect the fees charged or the way they are collected; or significantly impact the service’s education and care of children; or significantly impact the family’s ability to utilise the service

Nominated supervisor / persons in day-to-day charge responsibilities (not limited to)

Ensure our service meets its obligations under the *Education and Care Services National Law and Regulations*. Support the approved provider to keep children’s immunisation status on their enrolment record (and certificate for immunisation or exemption where required); and take reasonable steps to ensure enrolment documents are accurate

Support the approved provider to ensure that our service’s policies and procedures for immunisation are appropriate in practice, up-to-date, best practice, and comply with all relevant legislation, standards and guidelines

Implement this Immunisation Policy and related procedures



Take reasonable steps to ensure our Immunisation Policy and related procedures are followed (e.g. through clear and accessible communication, and systemised inductions, training and monitoring of all staff – including volunteers, students)

Follow Victorian (including No Jab No Play rules) immunisation requirements for enrolling children and communicate these to families and staff

Regularly promote the importance of staying up-to-date with vaccinations to staff and families (e.g., via social media, in newsletters, at staff meetings, displaying posters)

Liaise with our local public health unit and exclude non-immunised children and staff - if required. Communicate to staff and families about exclusion periods for vaccine preventable infectious diseases

Ensure that pregnant and immunocompromised staff are given information about immunisation. Advise them to get medical advice about the risks of working in childcare

Ensure we store health records confidentially and securely according to our policies and legal obligations

Contribute to policies and procedure reviews and risk assessments and plans in consultation with children, families, communities and staff. Support the approved provider to notify families of reviews and changes according to legislation and our policies and procedures

Educator / other staff responsibilities (not limited to)

Follow this Immunisation Policy and related procedures, including exclusion recommendations and periods for children and staff who are non-immunised

Discuss any specific needs you have related to managing infectious diseases and vaccinations with the nominated supervisor or approved provider, especially if you are pregnant, immune-compromised, or have other health considerations

Stay up to date with your vaccines to protect yourself, children and other staff members

Contribute to policy and procedure reviews and risk assessments and plans, and participate in training and professional development opportunities on health and infection control

Raise any concerns you have about our Immunisation Policy in a respectful and safe manner

Communicate with families about our Immunisation Policy in a respectful and professional way

Families responsibilities (not limited to)

Provide us with an accurate record of your child's immunisation status at enrolment and keep the record up to date with any subsequent vaccinations



Raise any concerns you have about our Immunisation Policy in a respectful and safe way

Comply with the immunisation requirements set out in this policy

13 Appendix B: Immunisation Information for Display

Current Immunisation Schedule

DISPLAYED IN THE SERVICE – download at <https://www.health.vic.gov.au/immunisation/immunisation-schedule-victoria-and-vaccine-eligibility-criteria>]

Where to get your child vaccinated

See your doctor or local health clinic to have your child immunised. All Victorian local councils run immunisation sessions.