Infection Prevention and Control – Exclusion of Sick Children and Staff

Exclusion of Sick Children

Children who are unwell with an infectious illness should not attend the childcare setting where their attendance may place other children or staff at risk of infection.

The setting will follow the current **Public Health Agency (PHA) guidance on infection prevention and control in nurseries and childcare settings**, including the recommended exclusion periods for specific infectious illnesses.

Parents/carers will be informed of the setting's exclusion arrangements before their child starts and will be reminded that children must not attend when they are required to remain at home under current PHA guidance.

The Manager/Deputy Manager will ensure that parents/carers are informed of any changes to exclusion guidance and will seek advice from the PHA, the relevant Health and Social Care Trust Early Years Team or other appropriate health professional where there is uncertainty about an infectious illness or exclusion period.

Where a child has vomiting and/or diarrhoea, they must remain away from the setting until they have been free from vomiting and diarrhoea for **at least 48 hours and have had at least one formed/normal bowel motion**.

For other infectious illnesses, the setting will follow the current PHA exclusion guidance and any specific advice provided by the child's GP, PHA or Health and Social Care Trust.

A child should not be excluded solely because they have a minor illness where they are well enough to participate in normal activities and there is no specific PHA exclusion requirement. The child's individual needs and the risk of infection to others will be considered.

Procedure when a child becomes unwell

If a child becomes unwell while attending the setting:

- Staff will assess the child's condition and take appropriate action in accordance with the child's needs and the setting's medical emergency procedures.
- Where possible, the child will be cared for away from the main group of children in a quiet, suitable area while maintaining appropriate supervision.
- A member of staff will remain with the child at all times while arrangements are being made for collection.
- The child's parent/carer will be contacted as soon as possible and asked to collect the child.

- The child will remain under the supervision of an appropriate member of staff until collected.
- Staff will take reasonable steps to minimise the spread of infection, including appropriate hand hygiene and cleaning/decontamination of any contaminated areas or equipment.
- If the child's condition is serious, deteriorates rapidly or requires urgent medical attention, the setting's emergency procedures will be followed and emergency medical assistance will be sought.
- Details of the illness and any action taken will be recorded in accordance with the setting's recording procedures.
- Parents/carers will be informed of the circumstances and any relevant exclusion period.
- Where appropriate, advice will be sought from the PHA, the Health and Social Care Trust Early Years Team or another appropriate health professional.

Infectious diseases and outbreaks

The setting will maintain access to the current PHA guidance on infection control and exclusion periods.

Where there is a suspected or confirmed infectious disease or outbreak that requires notification or public health advice, the Manager/Deputy Manager will contact the appropriate PHA/Health and Social Care Trust service and follow the advice provided.

Parents/carers will be informed where appropriate, while maintaining confidentiality and protecting the personal information of individual children and families.

Exclusion of Childcare Staff

All childcare staff are required to follow this policy and the current PHA infection prevention and control guidance in order to minimise the risk of infection to children, colleagues and families.

Staff must inform the Manager/Deputy Manager if they develop symptoms of an infectious illness or if they believe they may have been exposed to an infection that could pose a risk to children or other staff.

Staff illness

- Staff experiencing vomiting and/or diarrhoea must inform the Manager/Deputy Manager immediately and must remain away from work until they have been free from symptoms for **at least 48 hours and have had at least one formed/normal bowel motion**.

- Staff with infected wounds or skin infections on exposed areas of the body should not work where this presents an infection risk. Appropriate medical advice should be sought where necessary.
- Cuts, abrasions, scratches and broken skin must be covered with a suitable waterproof dressing.
- Dressings must be kept clean, secure and replaced when necessary.
- Where staff are involved in food preparation or handling, suitable food-safe/blue waterproof dressings should be used in accordance with food hygiene requirements.
- Staff with respiratory infections must follow good respiratory hygiene and cough etiquette and practise effective hand hygiene.
- Staff with influenza or another infection requiring exclusion must remain away from work for the period advised by the current PHA guidance.
- Staff returning to work following an infectious illness must comply with the relevant PHA exclusion period.

The Manager/Deputy Manager will seek advice from the PHA, South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust or an appropriate health professional where there is uncertainty about whether a member of staff should attend work.

Pregnancy and infectious diseases

Some infectious diseases can present a particular risk to pregnant women or their unborn baby.

Where a pregnant member of staff may have been exposed to an infectious disease, the Manager will ensure that appropriate advice is sought promptly from the staff member's GP, midwife, occupational health service, PHA or other appropriate healthcare professional.

A risk assessment will be undertaken where appropriate and reasonable measures will be considered to protect the staff member and others.

Confidentiality will be maintained when dealing with staff health information.

Hand Hygiene

Effective hand hygiene is one of the most important measures for preventing the spread of infection in childcare settings.

Staff and children will be encouraged and supported to wash their hands correctly using **warm running water and liquid soap**, followed by drying with a disposable paper towel.

Children will be supervised according to their age and stage of development.

Hands should be washed particularly:

- before eating or handling food;
- after eating;
- after using the toilet;
- after nappy changing or assisting a child with toileting;
- after contact with bodily fluids;
- after wiping a child's nose;
- after coughing, sneezing or blowing the nose;
- after outdoor play where appropriate;
- after contact with animals;
- after cleaning activities; and
- whenever hands are visibly dirty.

Staff should:

- remove hand and wrist jewellery except for one plain band;
- keep sleeves above the elbow or roll long sleeves up when appropriate; and
- keep cuts and abrasions covered with waterproof dressings.

Handwashing facilities will be kept clean, adequately supplied and accessible to children.

Disposable paper towels will be provided. Cloth/cotton hand towels will not be used for communal hand drying.

Cleaning and Decontamination

The childcare setting will maintain a high standard of cleanliness to minimise the spread of infection.

Cleaning schedules will identify:

- areas and equipment to be cleaned;
- the cleaning method and products to be used;
- the frequency of cleaning;
- responsibility for cleaning; and

- any additional cleaning required following contamination or an infectious illness.

High-touch surfaces and areas that become contaminated will be cleaned promptly.

Where appropriate, an approved disinfectant will be used following cleaning and in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions.

Particular attention will be given to:

- tables and food preparation surfaces;
- door handles;
- taps and sinks;
- toilets and toilet handles;
- changing areas;
- frequently handled toys and equipment; and
- any area contaminated with vomit, diarrhoea, blood or other bodily fluids.

Cleaning chemicals will be stored securely away from children and used in accordance with COSHH requirements and the manufacturer's instructions.

Food Hygiene

The setting will comply with relevant Environmental Health food safety requirements and current PHA guidance.

Food will be prepared, stored, handled and served in a hygienic manner to minimise the risk of food poisoning and cross-contamination.

Procedure

- Food preparation and eating areas will be kept clean and hygienic.
- Tables and other food-contact surfaces will be cleaned before and after meals/snacks using an appropriate cleaning product.
- Food-contact surfaces will be cleaned using products suitable for their intended purpose.
- Children will wash their hands before eating and staff will ensure appropriate hand hygiene before preparing or serving food.
- Children will be provided with suitable individual eating utensils and crockery.
- Shared utensils and equipment will be washed thoroughly after use.

- Cups, bottles, plates, bowls and utensils will be cleaned appropriately and stored hygienically.
- Where a dishwasher is used, it will be operated in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions and used appropriately to achieve effective cleaning and sanitisation.
- Food will be stored at appropriate temperatures and protected from contamination.
- Raw and ready-to-eat foods will be kept separate.
- Staff will follow procedures to manage food allergies and individual dietary requirements.
- Children will not share food, drinks, cups or utensils where this could present a hygiene or allergy risk.
- Any food contaminated by a child who is unwell will be disposed of safely and the relevant surfaces/equipment cleaned appropriately.
- Staff involved in the preparation or handling of food will receive appropriate food hygiene training.

Staff involved in the preparation of meals and snacks will hold, as a minimum, a **Level 2 Food Hygiene Certificate**.

The setting will also have regard to current PHA guidance on nutrition and feeding children in childcare settings.

Training and Monitoring

The Manager/Deputy Manager will ensure that all staff receive appropriate induction and ongoing training in infection prevention and control.

Staff will be familiar with:

- the setting's Infection Prevention and Control Policy;
- exclusion periods for common infectious illnesses;
- hand hygiene;
- respiratory hygiene;
- cleaning and decontamination;
- food hygiene;
- nappy changing and personal care hygiene;

- management of bodily fluid contamination;
- procedures for children who become unwell; and
- procedures for suspected outbreaks of infectious disease.

The Manager/Deputy Manager will monitor compliance with this policy and review it when there are changes to PHA guidance, Northern Ireland Minimum Standards, Environmental Health requirements or advice from the South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust.

The policy will be reviewed at least annually and following any significant infection incident or outbreak.

Relevant Guidance

The setting will refer to the most current versions of:

- Northern Ireland **Childminding and Day Care for Children Under Age 12 Minimum Standards**;
- HSC Public Health Agency **Infection Prevention and Control – Best Practice Advice for Nurseries and Childcare Settings**;
- HSC Public Health Agency **Guidance on Infection Control in Schools and Other Childcare Settings in Northern Ireland**;
- relevant Environmental Health food safety requirements;
- relevant South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust Early Years and Infection Prevention and Control advice; and
- any specific advice issued by the PHA or Health and Social Care Trust during an infectious disease incident or outbreak.