HAND HYGIENE POLICY

Having and encouraging effective hygiene practices in early childhood is essential for reducing the risk of infection. Helping children to develop appropriate personal hygiene habits, such as hand hygiene, will become embedded as they grow and develop. It is important to work with families to ensure children follow simple hygiene rules by incorporating effective hygiene strategies in both the Service and home environment.

NATIONAL QUALITY STANDARD (NQS)

QUALITY AREA 2: CHILDREN'S HEALTH AND SAFETY		
2.1	Health	Each child's health and physical activity is supported and promoted.
2.1.2	Health practices and procedures	Effective illness and injury management and hygiene practices are promoted and implemented.
2.2	Safety	Each child is protected.
2.2.1	Supervision	At all times, reasonable precautions and adequate supervision ensure children are protected from harm and hazard.

EDUCATION AND CARE SERVICES NATIONAL LAW AND NATIONAL REGULATIONS	
S. 2A	Paramount consideration—safety, rights and best interests of children
S. 3A	Paramount consideration
77	Health, hygiene and safe food practices
88	Infectious diseases
93	Administration of medication
106	Laundry and hygiene facilities
109	Toilet and hygiene facilities
168	Education and care service must have policies and procedures
170	Policies and procedures to be followed

RELATED POLICIES

Administration of Medication Policy Animal and Pet Policy Bottle Safety and Preparation Policy	Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Policy Nappy Change and Toileting Policy Pregnancy in Early Childhood Policy

Dealing with Infectious Diseases Policy Health and Safety Policy	Supervision Policy Work Health and Safety Policy

PURPOSE

Our Service is committed to ensuring the health and safety of all educators, staff, volunteers, families, and children by providing a safe and healthy environment. Effective hand hygiene significantly reduces the risk of infection and is therefore of the utmost importance. We aim to implement specific hand hygiene practices regularly to minimise the risks associated with cross infection of viral and bacterial borne diseases.

SCOPE

This policy applies to children, families, staff, educators, management, approved provider, nominated supervisor, students, volunteers and visitors of the Service.

IMPLEMENTATION

Infection can be spread through direct physical contact between people, airborne droplets from coughing and sneezing or from contact with surfaces and objects. Children come into contact with many other children and adults, toys, eating utensils, and equipment whilst being cared for in early education and care services. This high degree of physical contact with people and the environment creates a higher risk of children being exposed to and spreading infectious illnesses. Whilst it may not be possible for services to prevent the spread of all infections, we aim to create a hygienic environment to minimise the spread of diseases and infections.

Effective hand washing is a vital strategy in the prevention of spreading many infectious diseases. Research emphasises effective and frequent handwashing as the single most important way to reduce the spread of bacteria, germs, viruses, and parasites that may infect educators, staff and children in early childhood services and in our general population.

Micro-organisms such as bacteria, germs, viruses, and parasites are present on the hands at all times and live in the oil that is naturally produced on our hands. The use of soap or detergent and water removes most of these organisms and decreases the risk of cross-infection.

Our Service will adhere to National Regulation requirements, standards and guidelines to support the effectiveness of our *Hand Hygiene Policy*. We aim to educate and encourage children to wash their hands frequently and effectively which will help to reduce the incidence of infectious diseases, adhering to

guidelines provided in *Staying healthy: Preventing infectious diseases in early childhood education and care services* *6th edition* and recommendations from the Department of Health- Australian Health Protection Principal Committee (AHPPC) to guide best practice.

TO ENSURE THE GREATEST LEVEL OF PERSONAL HYGIENE OUR SERVICE WILL ENSURE:

- employees, parents/guardians, children and visitors wash their hands upon arrival at the Service or use the alcohol-based sanitiser; children will only use sanitisers under adult supervision
- hands are thoroughly dried using hand towel and disposed of in the bin provided
- disposable tissues are used to wipe noses, eyes or mouths and disposed of in the bin provided immediately after use
- hands are washed following the use of tissues
- hands are washed thoroughly using soap and water after using the toilet
- signage is provided to prompt visitors and children to wash their hands regularly and effectively when visiting our Service.

THE APPROVED PROVIDER/ MANAGEMENT/NOMINATED SUPERVISOR WILL:

- ensure the safety, health and wellbeing of children is the paramount consideration in all hygiene practices
- meet obligations under the Education and Care Services National Law and Education and Care Services National Regulations
- require educators and staff wash their hands:
    - before and after eating and handling food
    - before and after preparing bottles for infants
    - before and after applying sunscreen or other lotions to children
    - after using the toilet
    - after wiping a child's nose
    - after blowing their own nose
    - after helping children use the toilet
    - after touching animals
    - after cleaning high-touch surfaces (e.g., tables, light switches, door handles, computers, iPads)
    - after cleaning or mopping floors
    - after changing learning environments – rooms, indoor/outdoor
    - whenever their hands are visibly dirty (e.g., after gardening, mud play, painting)

    - before leaving the Service at the end of the day
- support educators and staff to adhere to effective food preparation and food handling procedures
- require educators and staff wash their hands before and after wearing disposable gloves when:
    - nappy changing/toileting, including preparation (e.g., cleaning the nappy change area)
    - preparing food
    - administering medication
    - administering first aid (e.g., managing cuts/bleeding)
    - cleaning spills (e.g., urine, faeces, vomit or blood)
    - cleaning with disinfectant or chemicals
    - after handling garbage and/or contaminated materials (nappies and other waste products)

EDUCATORS WILL:

- support children with hand hygiene in a respectful and age-appropriate manner that upholds their dignity, rights and autonomy
- explicitly teach children the correct process of hand washing
- actively supervise children when hand washing/cleaning
- remind children to wash their hands frequently throughout the day
- model effective hand washing procedures
- ensure the required equipment and resources are easily accessible and appropriate to use (e.g., liquid soap, running water, paper towels/cloth towels/warm air dryers)
- share information about routines and songs for hand washing with families to encourage routines at home
- participate in professional learning to maintain effective hygiene practices and support safe environments for all children.

We believe the hygiene practices of children being cared for should be as rigorous as those of staff and educators. Our environment supports the creation of appropriate healthy hygiene habits during early childhood to ensure lifelong healthy decisions and actions.

STRATEGIES EDUCATORS WILL USE TO ENCOURAGE EFFECTIVE HAND HYGIENE PRACTICE INCLUDE:

- talking about the importance of hand hygiene
- talking about when hand washing is appropriate and why (in an age-appropriate manner)

- singing a song or reciting a poem/rap as a guide to how long it should take to wash hands (e.g. singing " Happy Birthday " twice is a sufficient time frame)
- using a clear visual poster with step-by-step instructions
- using encouraging, positive language, such as *"Let's get our hands nice and clean!"*
- ensuring equipment is accessible (where appropriate), e.g., placing soap at the child's level with an easy-to-use pump
- providing clear, simple, and repetitive routines
- giving children sufficient time to practice and develop their skills
- ensuring adequate supervision and assistance is available when required
- use STEM opportunities to teach about germs and prevention (i.e., pepper and soap experiment)

HAND DRYING

Effective hand drying is just as important as comprehensive hand washing. Research states that wet hands can pick up and transfer up to 1000 times more bacteria than dry hands. Drying hands thoroughly also helps remove any germs that may not have been rinsed off.

Our Service provides children, staff, and educators with disposable paper towels/warm air dryers to ensure effective hand hygiene. Bins are provided with foot control lids to dispose of used paper towel.

HAND WASHING PROCEDURE

Wet hands with clean, running water, turn off the tap.

Rub soap all over your hands

Rub hands together for as long as it takes to sing "Happy Birthday" twice, or "Twinkle Twinkle Little Star" "Row Row Row your Boat".

Don't forget the backs of your hands, your wrists, between your fingers and under your fingernails

Rinse the soap off your hands under running water

Dry your hands using paper/ towels or under a warm air dryer.

ALCOHOL-BASED HAND SANITISER

Where possible, staff will use soap and water to clean their hands however, if this is not possible and hands are not greasy or visibly dirty, and an alcohol-based hand sanitiser may be used.

Hand sanitiser must be kept out of reach of children at all times, as it can be very dangerous if swallowed. Directions should be followed on how to use the sanitiser correctly. The effectiveness of an alcohol-based hand sanitiser to kill microorganisms or prevent their growth should be at least 60% alcohol.

As per National Regulations, a safety data sheet will be kept on file for any alcohol-based hand sanitiser used in the Service.

HAND SANITISER PROCEDURE

Apply the recommended amount of liquid (as per the manufacturer) to the palm of one hand

Rub it all over both hands until the sanitiser dries

This takes about 20 seconds

Be careful not to wipe the sanitiser off before it is dry.

RESOURCES

Better Health Be a Soapy Hero!

NSW Department of Health Handwashing poster

Play School Hello Friends! (A COVID-19 Special)

The Wiggles: The Handwashing Song

CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT/REFLECTION

Our *Hand Hygiene Policy* will be evaluated and reviewed on an annual basis or earlier if there are changes to legislation, ACECQA guidance or any incident related to our policy. Feedback will be requested from children, families, staff, educators and management, and notification of any change to policies will be made to families within 14 days.

RELATED RESOURCES

Hand Washing Poster Hand Washing Procedure	Supervision Guidelines and Procedure Stop Sanitise Poster

SOURCES

Australian Children's Education & Care Quality Authority. (2026). *Guide to the National Quality Framework*
Early Childhood Australia. (2016). *Code of Ethics*
Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010
Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011
National Health and Medical Research Council. (2024). *Staying Healthy: preventing infectious diseases in early childhood education and care services* (*6th Ed*.).
Victoria State Government Better Health Channel *Handwashing-why it's important*

REVIEW

POLICY REVIEWED BY	[NAME] Amy Flockhart	[POSITION] office admin	[DATE] 19/06/2026
POLICY REVIEWED	JUNE 2026	NEXT REVIEW DATE	JUNE 2027
VERSION NUMBER	V12.06.26		
MODIFICATIONS	• annual policy review- updated name of policy in line with Staying Healthy terminology • edits to improve clarity and consistency • child safety principles added- paramount consideration • added information in line with Staying Healthy guidelines • sources updated • hyperlinks checked and repaired as required		
PREVIOUS MODIFICATIONS			
JUNE 2025	• annual policy maintenance • sources checked for currency and repaired as required		