

	Hygiene Policy & Procedures
Version No.	Version6 2024
Authorisation	General Manager
Expiry Date	Policy to be reviewed Annually
Responsible Officer	Manager Evolve Early Learning & Kindergarten
Policy Owner	Evolve Early Learning & Kindergarten

Policy

Evolve Early Learning & 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 of 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.

Purpose

Evolve Early Learning & Kindergarten is committed to:

- Effective and up-to-date control of the spread of infection
- The provision of an environment that is safe, clean and hygienic.
- This policy has been adapted from *PolicyWorks Manual - National Quality Framework* released by the Early Learning Association Australia.

Scope

This policy applies to Evolve Early Learning & Kindergarten who is responsible for the direct education and care of children including offsite excursions and activities.

This policy applies to the Approved Provider, Nominated Supervisor, \Educators, Staff, Students on placement, Volunteers, Parents/guardians, Children and others attending Evolve Early Learning & Kindergarten.

National Quality Standards (NQS)

Quality Area 2: Children's Health and Safety

2.1 Health – Each child's health and physical activity is supported and promoted

2.1.1 Wellbeing and comfort - Each child's wellbeing and comfort is provided for, including appropriate opportunities to meet each child's needs for sleep, rest and relaxation

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

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.

Education and Care National Regulations

- Health, Hygiene and safe food practices (National Regulations 77)
- Laundry and hygiene facilities (National Regulations 106)
- Toilet and hygiene facilities (National Regulations 109)

Responsibility/Accountability

The Approved Provider, according to Regulations is responsible for the implementation of this policy. This will be achieved through the Centre Manager and the staff:

- That all staff and volunteers are provided with access to this policy and have a clear understanding of the procedures and practices outlined within
- 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 (National Regulations 77)
- Establishing robust induction procedures that include the provision of information regarding the implementation of the practices outlined in this policy
- Developing an appropriate Cleaning and Sanitising schedule that outlines daily, weekly, monthly, quarterly and annual Cleaning and Sanitising requirements and responsibilities
- 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, where applicable
- 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 (National Regulations 106)
- That the laundry and Hygiene facilities are located and maintained in a way that does not pose a risk to children (National Regulations 106)
- 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 (National Regulations 112)
- That adequate, developmental and age-appropriate toilet, washing and drying facilities are provided for use by children, and that these are safe and accessible (National Regulations 109)
- Reviewing staff training needs in relation to understanding and implementing effective Hygiene practices in early childhood settings
- Providing access to a copy of the NHMRC guidelines "Staying Healthy" for the prevention of Infectious Diseases in child care for the service (refer to *Sources*)
- Providing hand washing guidelines for display at each hand washing location
- There is an adequate supply of non-toxic Cleaning and Hygiene products, including gloves, at all times.

The Nominated Supervisor 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 (National Regulations 77)
- 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 beds, bedding and sunhats, in such a way as to prevent cross-contamination
- Ensuring that there is a regular and thorough Cleaning and disinfecting schedule for all equipment and toys
- 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 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 terms of changing nappies for children, educators are responsible for

- 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
- Disposing of soiled nappies in a safe and hygienic manner in line with this policy.

In terms of the toileting of children, educators are responsible for:

- Ensuring soap and drying facilities are available at all times when children are in attendance at the service
- Ensuring children do not share the use of items related to personal care, such as hand towels for drying hands, toothbrushes and hairbrushes
- Encouraging children to flush the toilet after use
- Encouraging and assisting (where required) children to wash their hands according to hand washing guidelines 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.

For cleaning toys, clothing and the service in general, educators are responsible for:

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

In regard to children's contact with one another, educators are responsible for 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
- 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.

For the indoor and outdoor environments, educators are responsible for:

- 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

- 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.
- Safe handling of body fluids or materials in contact with body fluids
- Accidental spills and secretions of body fluid are a fact of life in a child care setting. In managing these spills, Certified Supervisors and other staff/educators must ensure that they:
 - Avoid direct contact with blood or other fluids
 - Are not 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.

Effective environmental cleaning

- Cleaning is an important part of infection control as germs are unable to multiply on clean, dry surfaces. Effective Cleaning with detergent and warm water followed by rinsing and drying removes 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
- When washing at the child care premises, staff are to consider washing items separately to minimise cross-contamination, for example, tea towels washed separately from sheets, face washers washed separately to play mats/rugs
- Nappy change areas/mats must be washed with detergent and warm water 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 hand washing on arrival at the service.
- Volunteers and students, while at the service, are responsible for following this policy and its procedures.

Definitions

The terms defined in this section relate specifically to this policy and related procedures. For commonly used terms e.g. Approved Provider, Regulatory Authority etc. refer to the *Glossary of Terms*.

Word/Term	Definition
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.
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 after use and clean hands with 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.
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.

HYGIENE PROCEDURES

Purpose

This procedure will provide a process for:

- Effective and up-to-date control of the spread of infection
- The provision of an environment that is safe, clean and hygienic.

Procedures

The provision of an environment that is safe, clean and in a hygienic condition is necessary for the general health of all.

- Environments must be regularly cleaned and kept in a hygienic state to protect against vermin and bacterial and fungal outbreaks which can have serious consequences to health.
- In addition to the general health of children it is necessary that the educator/staff set an example that will promote sound Hygiene practices.
- All services must adhere to basic Hygiene standards, be uncluttered and in good repair inside and out, at all times. Benches, tables, floors and sinks must be clean and free of waste and all equipment must be clean and available for use at all times.
- To ensure that health and Hygiene practices are of a high standard at all times the service will, where appropriate, encourage the children to become responsible for their own Hygiene.
- In the case of younger children, the service will provide the level of care and supervision required to ensure appropriate Hygiene standards are maintained.

Important things to remember are:

- Disposable towel and liquid soap are the preferred option
- Effective hand drying is just as important as thorough hand washing.

In terms of hand washing educators/staff are required to:

Ensure that they are appropriate role models by washing their hands

- Before preparing food
- Before and after eating
- After blowing nose or coming into contact with bodily fluids
- After handling animals
- After smoking
- Before and after administering first aid
- After toileting themselves or child
- Before and after changing nappies

All hand washing must take place in an area not used for food preparation or washing dishes encourage children to flush the toilet after use, and wash their hands:

- After toileting
- Before and after eating
- After handling animals
- After blowing nose or coming into contact with bodily fluids
- Before activities involving food
- After messy/sensory play.

In terms of the use of hand wipes

Hand wipes may be used in the following circumstances:

- After blowing noses if it is going to compromise appropriate supervision
- On excursions where running water is not available. Hands must then be washed at the next available opportunity

In terms of nappy changing

- Gloves should be worn at all times when changing nappies
- Check to make sure that the supplies needed are ready - fresh nappies and clothes, paper towels or pre-moistened towelettes and disposable gloves.
- Place paper on the change table
- Remove the child's nappy and put any disposable nappy in a hands-free lidded bin
Place any soiled clothes (including any cloth nappy) in a plastic bag
- The child's bottom is cleaned with a pre-moistened disposable towelette.
- Remove the paper and put it in a hands-free lidded bin
- Remove your gloves and put them in the bin
- Place a clean nappy on the child
- Dress the child
- Take the child away from the change table
- Wash your hands and the child's hands
- After each nappy change, clean the change table with detergent and water
- Wash your hands

In terms of toileting

- Services must have toilet facilities which are safe and appropriate to the ages of the children in care and have equipment for Cleaning between usage.
- Toilet facilities must be accessible by the children.

In terms of bathing

- As general practice, bathing children in care will not take place unless a child has vomited or soiled themselves, is in overnight or weekend care and it is essential for good health and Hygiene.

If bathing occurs

- Check the temperature and the depth of the bath water before the child starts bathing, have another Educator check this too
- Never leave a young child alone or under the supervision of an older child while in the bath
- Encourage children's independence while bathing. Where, possible encourage children to wash themselves
- While supervising bathing, ensure that each child's dignity is respected and their need for privacy considered
- Where possible have another Educator to be present whilst bathing child

References, Sources, Links to Legislation and Other Documents

Please refer to Reference and Sources page.

Related service policies:

Administration of Medication Policy

Administration of First Aid Policy

Dealing with Medical Conditions Policy

Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Policy

Dealing with Infectious Diseases Policy

Occupational Health and Safety Policy Privacy and Confidentiality Policy.