



NARNIA EARLY LEARNING

ACN 002 919 584

(Administered by St. Philip's Christian Education Foundation Ltd.)

IMMUNISATION FOR CHILDREN AND STAFF

Children who attend early education and care services are in close contact with a large number of other children for lengthy periods and are at increased risk of catching and transmitting illnesses and diseases. Some of these are preventable through immunisation. Educators are also at risk, particularly when pregnant.

Vaccination is recognised as the most effective way to prevent the spread of infectious diseases. In Australia, immunisation is optional. However, from 1 January 2018, parents must ensure their child's immunisations are up to date in order to be eligible for Child Care Subsidy. Exceptions are made for children with medical contraindications or natural immunity or certain diseases, and for those on a recognised catch-up schedule. Objections on the basis of personal, philosophical or religious beliefs (i.e. vaccination objections) are no longer accepted for exemption (i.e. do not provide eligibility for Child Care Subsidy).

Prior to enrolling children, early education and care services are now required to obtain approved documentation from parents about their children's immunisation status.

Policy statement

This Policy details Narnia's practices with regard to the enrolment and continued attendance of children based on their immunisation status. It also details the actions Narnia will take in the event of an outbreak of a disease which can be prevented by immunisation. Narnia supports the protection of children and educators through immunisation, and provides families and staff with information about immunisation and vaccine preventable illnesses and diseases.

The spread of vaccine preventable diseases within our Centres is minimised through: monitoring immunisation records; complying with recommended exclusion guidelines and timeframes for children and staff; and, routine personal and environmental health and hygiene practices.

Strategies and practices

- The *Immunisation for Children and Staff Policy* is explained to parents when they enrol their child in Narnia, and their attention is specifically drawn to their responsibilities under the Policy.
- Parents are required to provide the approved documentation of their child's immunisation status before their child commences at Narnia, and evidence of each vaccination thereafter. For young children, this will usually occur at 2, 4, 6 and 18 months, and 4 years. The approved documentation required is one of the following:
 - o a current ACIR Immunisation History Statement which shows that the child is up to date with their scheduled immunisations;

- o a current ACIR Immunisation History Form on which the immunisation provider has certified that the child is on a recognised catch-up schedule;
 - o an ACIR Immunisation Exemption – Medical Contraindication Form (IM011) which has been certified by an immunisation provider. QA 2.1.4
- Staff are required to complete a Staff Immunisation Form detailing their immunisation status before they commence at the Service. They are encouraged to review the form annually and update it whenever a change in status occurs. QA 2.1.4
 - Staff are encouraged to keep up to date with their immunisations.
 - Narnia maintains a record of the immunisation status of each child (in the childcare management system (Qikkids)). QA 2.1.4
 - Narnia routinely minimises the spread of illness and disease by promoting correct handwashing and other hygiene practices, and maintaining clean and hygienic environments. QA 2.1.3, 3.1.2
 - In the event of an outbreak of a vaccine preventable disease, Narnia will notify the relevant health authority, and will follow its recommended guidelines and directives. Children who are not immunised (medical reasons) may be excluded from the Service for the duration of the outbreak. In addition, staff who are not immunised may request to take LWOP during the period of outbreak. QA 2.1.1, 2.3.3
 - As soon as practicable after the outbreak of a vaccine preventable disease at Narnia, staff will notify parents or authorised emergency contacts when they collect their children, and send a note home with the child. Information sheets will be distributed to families. Parents of unimmunised children (medical reasons) will be contacted directly and also provided with written notice detailing the specific period their child will be excluded from the centre. Signs will be displayed prominently throughout the centre informing families of the outbreak. QA 2.1.4
If a child becomes unwell or is suspected of symptoms of an excludable infectious illness, the child's parents or authorised emergency contact are contacted immediately to collect their child. Wherever possible, the child is separated from the main group of children and one educator nominated to care for the child to reduce the risk of cross infection. QA 2.1.4
 - In the case of serious ill health or hospitalisation, the child or staff member is to provide a medical certificate from their doctor verifying that they are sufficiently recovered to return to the centre. However, the Nominated Supervisor has the final say on whether the child or a staff member may return to the Service. QA 2.1.1
 - Narnia maintains an Illness and Infectious Disease Register with the date, time, name symptoms and action taken. QA 7.3.1
 - Narnia encourages staff to discuss with their doctor the topic of immunisation and the additional risks of contracting a vaccine preventable illness or disease inherent in their close, regular contact with the children. Narnia also recommends that staff who may be considering pregnancy apply for screening for immunity for infections which carry risks of miscarriage or damage to the foetus (e.g. rubella, chicken pox, cytomegalovirus). QA 2.1.4
 - Risk assessments are conducted for unimmunised educators and pregnant staff to determine if any alteration to their work is necessary.

Covid-19

All staff at Narnia Centres must be vaccinated. Evidence of vaccination must be uploaded to the immunisation portal on MY SPCC

Positive cases

What is the process for managing positive cases?

Any staff or student who tests positive to COVID is required to follow NSW Health requirements under the Public Health Order for testing positive and self-isolation. Currently, the requirement is:

- isolate for 7 days following the positive test
- leave isolation after 7 days unless they have symptoms (including, a sore throat, runny nose, cough, or shortness of breath). Note: if a person continues to have symptoms, they are able to leave isolation after 7 days with a medical clearance. Once a person who has tested positive to COVID-19 has finished their isolation period they can immediately return to school settings. The PHO requires staff (including contractors) and students to immediately notify the school of their positive result. Schools can determine how this is to occur and to whom. Schools will no longer have to send cohorts home or undertake contact tracing when there is a case within the school. In place of contact tracing, there will be a generic letter available that the school can use to alert the school community that there has been a case and to monitor for symptoms. There will be no requirement to differentiate between close/casual contacts. The school can determine who the letter needs to be sent to - just a class or a wider cohort or possibly even the whole school depending on the contact the person who has tested positive had in the two days prior to being symptomatic or testing positive.

Close contacts

There have been changes to NSW Health contact tracing processes for close contacts and the introduction of a 'household contact'. A household contact is a person who lives with someone who has COVID-19. Only household contacts are required by NSW Health to isolate for 7 days unless the person has previously tested positive to COVID and ended their isolation for this in the past 28 days. Previously, those that had been with a positive case for 4 or more hours was also considered a close contact – the definition has been updated and this no longer makes someone a close contact (i.e. close contacts are household contacts only). There is an exemption in place to allow school/OSHC/ELC staff and students identified close/household contacts to leave isolation for the purpose of attending school/OHSC. Currently the PHO exemption requires these people to have a PCR test and then RAHT tests daily for the 7- day isolation period and notify the school of the outcome of each test. The exemption from isolation is only to attend school/OHSC/ELC, at other times the person must comply with the isolation requirements. Any other individual that has contact with a COVID positive person is not required to isolate but is advised by Health to assess the level of risk of the contact and respond accordingly. This means any exposure to COVID at school or socially does not result in a person being a close contact

Vaccination status of visitors: Narnia centres are required to ensure that all staff and contractors onsite are vaccinated. This means that they should be asking staff for evidence of vaccination through the provision of their vaccination certificate or immunisation record. Schools may sight the evidence and make a record of it or request a copy which is a reasonable approach because fraudulent certificates were an issue in the early days of the mandate. Schools should keep vaccination records securely as they are sensitive health information

Medical Exemptions: A valid medical contraindication certificate allows a staff member to be at work (on site at Narnia centres) without breaching the PHO. Whether or not the school can meet its work, health and safety obligations is a separate assessment and should consider how the risk of the staff member transmitting COVID and contracting COVID. It is established that unvaccinated persons carry a higher viral load, so they contract COVID more easily and are more likely to transmit COVID. A staff member who is unvaccinated and cannot wear a mask would be very high risk. We are not aware of anything preventing such a person working with food but the school's risk assessment should take that into account along with other factors such as proximity to other staff, and hygiene measures. The school may determine the risk to be unacceptable.

What if a close contact staff member who tests negative doesn't want to attend school?

The employee could be offered leave without pay if the school chooses to approve that or it may become a disciplinary matter. Contact the Workplace Management Team for further advice.

Can a school insist that a staff member does not use the exemption and isolate for a full 7 days?

Yes, and if they do so the employee could be offered leave without pay or annual leave.

Responsibilities of parents

To provide documentation of their child's immunisation status before the child commences at the Service, and update this as changes occur.

To inform the Service if a communicable disease occurs in the family because the child may become a carrier.

Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011, National Quality Standard 2011

QA	2.1.1	Each child's health needs are supported
	2.1.3	Effective hygiene practices are promoted and implemented
	2.1.4	Steps are taken to control the spread of infectious diseases and to manage injuries and illness, in accordance with recognised guidelines
	2.3.2	Every reasonable precaution is taken to protect children from harm and any hazard likely to cause injury
	2.3.3	Plans to effectively manage incidents and emergencies are developed in consultation with relevant authorities, practised and implemented
	3.1.2	Premises, furniture and equipment are safe, clean and well maintained
	7.3.1	Records and information are stored appropriately to ensure confidentiality, are available from the service and are maintained in accordance with legislative requirements

Regs	88	Infectious diseases
	90	Medical conditions policy
	162	Health information to be kept in enrolment record
	168	Education and care service must have policies and procedures

Sources

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- Department of Health (Australian Government). *The Australian Immunisation Handbook*. (2015). 10th Edition. <http://www.immunise.health.gov.au/internet/immunise/publishing.nsf/Content/Handbook10-home> accessed 15 February 2016.
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- Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011.
- Guide to the National Quality Standard 2011.
- National Health and Medical Research Council. (2012). *Staying Healthy: Preventing infectious diseases in early childhood education and care services. 5th edition*. http://www.nhmrc.gov.au/_files_nhmrc/publications/attachments/ch55_staying_healthy_child_care_5th_edition_0.pdf accessed 15 February 2016.
- Queensland Health. *Immunisation History Statements*. <https://www.health.qld.gov.au/clinical-practice/guidelines-procedures/diseases-infection/immunisation/service-providers/statements/default.asp> accessed 15 February 2016.
- Department of Health (Australian Government). *Immunise Australia Program*. <http://www.immunise.health.gov.au/> accessed 6 February 2016
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- NSW Health. *Interim* vaccination objection form for enrolment in NSW childcare centres*. <http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/immunisation/Documents/vaccination-objection-form-for-child-care-centres.pdf>
- NSW Health. *New immunisation requirements in child care from 1 January 2018*. <http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/immunisation/>
- COVID-19 FAQs FOR NSW INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS PUBLISHED 17 JANUARY 2022

Policy review

Narnia encourages staff and parents to be actively involved in the review of each of its policies and procedures. In addition, Narnia will accommodate any new legislative changes as they occur and any issues identified as part of Narnia's commitment to quality improvement. Narnia consults with relevant recognised authorities as part of the review to ensure the policy contents are consistent with current research and contemporary views on best practice.