

Title	Hygiene Policy
Policy Category	Childrens Programs
Policy Type	Best Practice
NQF Standard	NQS: Quality Area 2
Related Legislation	See legislation map

Background and Context

This policy will provide guidelines for procedures to be implemented at the Glen Education service to ensure:

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

Glen Education 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
- Implementing and following heightened infection control procedures during a pandemic, to minimise the risk of cross-infection and the spread of infectious diseases and illness 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 on 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.

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 hygiene

- exclusion of sick children, staff and visitors
- immunisation.

Other strategies to prevent infection include:

- cough and sneeze etiquette
- appropriate use of gloves and in the case of a pandemic, additional disposable personal protective equipment (PPE) to include disposable aprons, and face masks.
- social distancing at least 1.5 metres from other people, in the case of a pandemic.

effective environmental cleaning and the heightened cleaning of high touch surfaces during a pandemic, with additional chemicals and high grade disinfectants. 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.

Scope

This policy applies to Glen Education, Nominated Supervisor/Glen Education Leader, educators, staff, students on placement, volunteers, children, parents/guardians and others attending the programs and activities of the Glen Education service, including during offsite excursions and activities.

Definitions

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. At Glen Education, this is done through the use of sustainable cleaning products. During this process, micro-organisms will be removed but not destroyed.

Communicable disease: A disease capable of being transmitted from an infected person or species to a susceptible host, either directly or indirectly.

Cough and sneeze 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, clean hands with soap and water and dry thoroughly. Staff may additionally use a disinfectant hand rub/sanitiser, if available.

Glen Education Leader: A person who is nominated by Glen Education Management to provide leadership and mentoring (operational and educational) across the organisation, that aligns with the National Early Years Framework and who actively promotes and ensures adherence to all Glen Education practices, policies and procedures.

Heightened infection control measures: These include additional handwashing and hand sanitising, additional handwashing/sanitising throughout the day and especially before and after eating, after blowing or wiping your nose, coughing, sneezing or using the toilet; additional cleaning of high touch surfaces, such as door handles, equipment, telephone, buzzers/keypads etc.

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.

Neutral detergent: A cleaning agent available commercially and labelled as 'neutral' or 'neutral pH'.

Pandemic: an outbreak of a disease that occurs over a wide geographic area and affects an exceptionally high proportion of the population as declared by the World Health Organisation (WHO).

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE): is protective clothing, gloves, masks, goggles, or other garments or equipment designed to protect the wearer's body from injury or infection. An example of hazards addressed by protective equipment include physical, chemical, and airborne particulate matter.

Nominated Supervisor/Glen Education Leader: A person who has been nominated by Glen Education under Part 3 of the Act and who has consented to that nomination in writing can be the Nominated Supervisor. All services must have a Nominated Supervisor(s) with responsibility for the service in accordance with the National Regulations (Section 5 and 161).

Sanitising: A process that destroys micro-organisms. Sanitising a surface or hands can reduce the number of micro-organisms present. The process of sanitisation usually involves ensuring a surface are thoroughly cleaned with both heat and water, followed by the use of chemicals.

Policy

Responsibilities

Glen Education is responsible for:

- ensuring that all staff and volunteers are provided with a copy of this policy and have a clear understanding of the procedures and practices outlined within
- ensuring the Nominated Supervisor/Glen Education Leader, educators, staff and volunteers at the service implement adequate health and hygiene practices, and safe practices for handling, preparing and storing food (Regulation 77(1))
- 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
- contacting the local council's Environmental Health Officer for information about obtaining a needle/syringe/sharps disposal unit and instructions for its use
- ensuring that hygiene facilities are located and maintained in a way that does not pose a risk to children (Regulation 106(2))
- ensuring 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 (Regulations 112(2)&(4))
- ensuring that adequate, developmental and age-appropriate toilet, washing and drying facilities are provided for use by children, and that these are safe and accessible (Regulation 109)
- reviewing staff training needs in relation to understanding and implementing effective hygiene practices in early childhood settings
- providing a copy of the NHMRC guidelines for the prevention of infectious diseases in child care for the service
- providing hand washing guidelines for display at each hand washing location
- ensuring there is an adequate supply of non-toxic cleaning and hygiene products, including gloves, at all times.

The Nominated Supervisor/Glen Education Leader 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 (Regulation 77(2))
- 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 Glen Education Management 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 (see the exclusion procedure)
- storing or presenting items 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 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.
- Ensuring information is displayed regarding confirmed cases of infectious diseases

All 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
- ensuring safe disposal of all PPE, by removing after use and immediately placing items in a disposable plastic bag which is then sealed and disposed of in outdoor garbage bins to minimise the risk of cross contamination.
- 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 Glen Education 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.
- Ensuring information is displayed regarding confirmed cases of infectious diseases

In terms of changing nappies for children, all 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 (refer to sample nappy-changing and toileting guidelines)
- disposing of soiled nappies in a safe and hygienic manner in line with this policy.

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

- ensuring soap and drying facilities are available at all times when children are in attendance at the service, including ensuring paper towels are available. Using disposable paper towel is the preferred option in education and care services.
- 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, all educators are responsible for:

- removing toys that a child has mouthed, sneezed or coughed on, so they can be washed prior to repeated use
- 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
- washing and disinfecting mattress covers and linen, where applicable.

In regard to children's contact with one another, all educators are responsible for:

- educating and encouraging children in good personal hygiene practices, such as:
- washing and thoroughly drying 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, and not lending them to other children
- 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, all 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
- covering the sandpit when not in use to prevent contamination
- emptying water containers, such as water trays, each day (refer to Child Safe Environment Policy)
- disposing of any dead animals/insects found on the premises in an appropriate manner. Disposing of PPE used, in a safe and efficient manner to prevent contamination

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, Nominated Supervisor/Glen Education Leader 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
- nappy change areas/mats must be washed/wiped down with soap 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 (see the exclusion procedure)
- 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.

Approvals and Revision

Date	Version	Author	Revision Description
Q3 2012	1.00	Glen Education Management	New Policy
Q2 2022	5.00	Glen Education Management	Policy updated due to rebranding May 2022