

Policy Statement

The objective of this procedure is to articulate Affinity Education Group's compliance with National Law and Regulations, including amendments, from the Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011 and the Education and Care Services National Regulations WA 2012.

Maintaining effective levels of hygiene is the most important step in minimising the spread of infection in any type of environment. An early childhood environment is more susceptible to spreading infection due to the number of children, exposure to bodily fluids and the close proximity between children and educators. Infection control procedures are one of the most regularly implemented practices in an early childhood service.

Effective hygiene strategies assist the service in maintaining its duty of care to protect all users of the service from disease and illness. Practices will be implemented thoroughly and consistently and, when dealing with children, they will be implemented discreetly with respect and dignity.

Scope of Policy

This procedure applies to all infectious conditions including, but not limited to, common colds, gastrointestinal illness, COVID 19 and other contagious illnesses and vaccine preventable illnesses

Procedure Strategies

Infection control procedures will be implemented by all service users in order to minimise the risk of spreading infections. The chain of infection refers to the way germs are spread and all steps are necessary for infection to spread from person to person. The three steps in the chain of infection are:

1. The germ has a source.
2. The germ spreads from the source.
3. The germ infects another person.

To stop infections spreading, you can break the chain of infection at any point through:

- Effective hand hygiene
- Appropriate use of gloves
- Exclusion of ill children, educators and other staff
- Immunisation
- Cough and sneeze etiquette
- Effective environmental cleaning.

EFFECTIVE HAND HYGIENE

All employees will be trained in effective hand washing and hygiene practices and have access to health and hygiene procedures and processes.

Hand washing is the most effective way to minimise the risk of spreading infection and is the preferred method in hand hygiene practices. The alternative method in hand hygiene practices is to use an alcohol-based gel rub when there is no or limited access to soap and running water or at the entry of buildings.

Educators, students and volunteers and children will thoroughly wash their hands regularly throughout the day and at the following times:

Accountable (Owner)	National Quality Manager	Accountable	Nominated Supervisor
Responsible	All staff, students, volunteers, families	Document Version	V5.1
Consulted	People teams, Compliance, Quality	Date Approved	Jan 2026
Informed	All staff, students, volunteers	Date next reviewed	Jan 2027

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Infection Control Procedure

POL 2-P17

Who	Before	After
Educators and other staff	- Starting work, so harmful germs are not introduced into the service - Eating or handling food - Giving medication - Putting on gloves - Applying sunscreen or other lotions to children - Going home, so harmful germs are not taken home with you	- Eating or handling food - Using the toilet - Helping children use the toilet - Taking off gloves - Changing a nappy (see section 2.5 Nappy changing and toileting) - Cleaning the nappy change area - Wiping a child's nose or your own nose - Cleaning up body fluids such as faeces, urine, vomit or blood - Handling garbage - Coming in from outside play - Applying sunscreen or other lotions to children - Touching animals
Children	- Starting the day at the service; parents and carers can help with this - Eating or handling food - Going home, so harmful germs are not taken home with them	- Eating or handling food - Using the toilet - Touching mucus (snot) - Coming in from outside play - Touching animals

Staying Healthy: 6th Edition

As a general rule, hands should be washed **before** touching anything that needs to stay clean and **after** touching something that could be a potential contaminant.

Washing hands with soap and water

The entire process of washing, rinsing and drying hands should take at least 30 seconds. As advised by Staying Healthy: 6th Edition, the following are the five steps involved in hand washing using soap and water

1. Wet hands with running water (preferably warm water, for comfort).
2. Apply soap to hands. (Liquid soap from a pump-dispenser is preferred over a bar of soap to prevent cross-contamination. Anti-bacterial varieties of soap are not necessary.)
3. Lather soap and rub hands thoroughly, including the wrists, the palms, between the fingers, around the thumbs and under the nails. Rub hands together for at least 20 seconds (for about as long as it takes to sing 'Happy birthday' once).
4. Rinse thoroughly under running water.
5. Dry thoroughly. (Single use paper towel is used to dry hands.)

Children and infants will follow the same hand washing procedures as listed above. Children may need reminding of the times when hand washing is required and the steps involved in the hand washing process. Children will require close supervision during the procedure to ensure thorough cleanliness and to minimise soap contact with mouths or eyes.

Infants and babies will require direct contact and assistance throughout the procedure. They may stand at a low basin to carry out the procedure. Alternatively, with small babies, their hands may be wiped with pre-moistened wipes and then dried effectively.

Hand washing procedures will be promoted at all times throughout the day and incorporated into the program. Signs and displays will be positioned at children's eye level in and around bathrooms and hand washing facilities as well as adult hand washing facilities such as in bathrooms.

Cleaning hands with alcohol-based rubs

As advised by Staying Healthy: 6th edition, only use an alcohol-based hand rub (hand sanitiser) if your hands are not visibly dirty or when soap and water is not available, otherwise use soap and running water. The hand rub should contain 60–80% alcohol. Alcohol-based hand rubs will be stored out of reach of children. Where children are using the hand rub, direct contact and supervision is required to minimise the risk of gel getting into contact with mouths or eyes.

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Hand sanitiser will be available at the entrance/ foyer of the service and all centre users will be encouraged to use the gel on arrival and departure of the building.

There are three steps to using alcohol-based hand rub:

1. Apply the amount of hand rub recommended by the manufacturer to palms of dry hands.
2. Rub hands together, making sure you cover in between fingers, around thumbs and under nails.
3. Rub until hands are dry.

APPROPRIATE USE OF GLOVES

Disposable gloves should be worn at any time the educator, student or volunteer may come into contact with bodily fluids including faeces, urine, mucous, saliva, vomit or blood such as when:

- Changing nappies
- Toileting children
- Wiping noses
- Cleaning up bodily fluids
- Handling soiled clothing
- During first aid procedures

Disposable gloves will be worn during cleaning procedures where potentially contaminated or infectious surfaces or objects are present. (Reusable gloves may be worn for cleaning procedures providing they are labelled, used by one person and for one purpose and thoroughly cleaned and dried between uses. An example of one purpose may include for washing dishes only. The same gloves will not be used for other purposes. It is for this reason that it is preferred that disposable gloves are used.)

Blue coloured disposable gloves should be used in kitchen areas during food preparation as outlined in Food Safety Programs, as relevant.

Be conscious about surfaces or objects touched while wearing gloves. For example, remove gloves after nappy change prior to touching doorknobs or gates.

Disposable gloves are single use and will be disposed of after each use. Remove gloves effectively and safely by peeling them backwards over the wrist and down until it is inside out and held in the gloved hand. Remove the other in the same fashion and pull over the first glove. This way you have one glove inside the other and both are inside out. Dispose of these in a hands-free, lidded garbage bin and then wash your hands.

Please note: Wearing gloves does not replace the need for washing hands, both prior to and after use.

Hand Care

It is important to maintain a regular skin care regime in order to prevent dry skin, dermatitis, cracks, cuts or abrasions which are common with frequent hand washing and glove use. A barrier cream or moisturiser should be applied regularly. If cracks, cuts or abrasions are present on hands, a waterproof dressing or band-aid should be applied and gloves worn at all times mentioned above. This is both to prevent germs entering into the skin and also the spread of germs from the broken skin.

EXCLUSION OF ILL CHILDREN, EDUCATORS AND OTHER STAFF (Refer to the Exclusion Procedure and the Infectious Diseases and Immunisation Procedure)

IMMUNISATION (Refer to Infectious Diseases and Immunisation Procedure)

COUGH AND SNEEZE ETIQUETTE

Coughing and sneezing produces airborne particles that can spread easily. It is important that educators, children and families practice appropriate cough and sneeze etiquette to minimise this risk. Some steps include:

- Encouraging the person to turn away from food when they cough and sneeze
- Encouraging the person to cough or sneeze into their elbow rather than their hand

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- If a tissue is used to cover the face, dispose of the tissue immediately
- Wash hands after coughing or sneezing
- Encourage nose blowing, dispose of tissues immediately after use and thoroughly wash hands

EFFECTIVE ENVIRONMENTAL CLEANING

It is to be assumed that all body fluids, secretions and excreta are considered infectious even when the child or adult appears perfectly well as they may be contagious but may not present with symptoms or the symptoms may develop at a later stage.

In order to minimise the spread of infection through contact with body fluids, secretions and excreta

- a) Apply disposable gloves when dealing with bodily fluids
- b) Wash any blood, faeces and urine off the skin with warm, soapy water.
- c) Remove any matter (blood, faeces, vomit) with paper towel and place in a plastic bag to be sealed and placed in a bin outside of the centre.
- d) Cover the entire area with a solution of detergent and hot water and wipe with a mop or paper towel.

Cleaning a blood spill

Size of Spill	What to do
Spot (e.g. drop of blood less than the size of a 50-cent coin)	Wear gloves • Wipe up blood immediately with a damp cloth, tissue or paper towel • Place the cloth, tissue or paper towel in a plastic bag or alternative; seal the bag and put it in the rubbish bin • Remove gloves and put them in the rubbish bin • Wash surface with detergent and warm water • Wash your hands with soap and water
Small (up to the size of the palm of your hand)	Wear gloves • Place paper towel over the spill and allow the blood to soak in • Carefully lift the paper towel and place it in a plastic bag or alternative; seal the bag and put it in the rubbish bin • Remove gloves and put them in the rubbish bin • Clean the area with warm water and detergent using a disposable cloth or sponge; place the cloth in the rubbish bin • Wipe the area with diluted bleach and allow to dry • Wash your hands with soap and water
Large (more than the size of the palm of your hand)	Wear gloves • Cover the area with an absorbent agent (e.g. kitty litter or sand) and allow the blood to soak in • Use a disposable scraper and pan to scoop up the absorbent material and any unabsorbed blood or body fluids • Place the absorbent agent, the scraper and the pan into a plastic bag or alternative; seal the bag and put in the rubbish bin • Remove gloves and put them in the rubbish bin • Mop the area with warm water and detergent; wash the mop after use • Wipe the area with diluted bleach and allow to dry • Wash your hands with soap and water

Always prepare bleach solutions according to the manufacturer's instructions. Because bleach loses strength over time, always make up new dilutions of bleach as required. Any diluted bleach that is not used within 24 hours of preparation should be discarded.

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Cleaning faeces, vomit and urine

When cleaning up spills of faeces, vomit or urine, the following procedures should be used:

- Wear gloves.
- Place paper towel over the spill and allow the spill to soak in. Carefully remove the paper towel and any solid matter. Place it in a plastic bag or alternative, seal the bag and put it in the rubbish bin.
- Clean the surface with warm water and detergent, and allow to dry.
- If the spill came from a person who is known or suspected to have an infectious disease (e.g. diarrhoea or vomit from a child with gastroenteritis), use a disinfectant on the surface after cleaning it with detergent and warm water.
- Wash hands thoroughly with soap and running water (preferably warm water).

Cleaning nasal discharge

Use a clean, single use tissue to assist children and babies to wipe their noses. Dispose of the tissue immediately and wash your hands thoroughly with soap and running water, alternatively use alcohol-based hand rub if soap and water are not available. The use of gloves is not necessary although if gloves are worn, hands must be washed after glove removal.

Nappy room cleaning

The nappy change mat/ cover will be cleaned after each use using warm soapy water as advised in Staying Healthy: 6th edition. Other products may be used when approved. If faeces or urine spill onto the change surface, remove and/or absorb the matter with paper towel, clean the surface with warm soapy water and then disinfectant and leave it to dry. The change mat/ cover will be removed and thoroughly cleaned with warm soapy water and, if possible, left in the sun to dry.

Warm soapy water = detergent mixed with warm water. Make fresh batches of warm soapy water at regular intervals including high peak nappy change times.

Bathroom cleaning

Children's bathrooms are to be thoroughly cleaned at least twice daily; during rest time and in the afternoon; and as necessary between these times. Toilets are to be cleaned with a detergent and water solution and paper towel. The basins, taps and benches are to be cleaned with detergent and water solution and a separate paper towel*. The floor is to be cleaned with disinfectant or floor cleaner and hot water and a mop. If any minor spills in the bathroom occur, these will be wiped up immediately using paper towel. Disposable gloves will be worn when cleaning bathroom areas.

General room cleaning

Rooms and floors must be kept clean at all times. Allowance will be made during messy and sensory experiences. All hard surfaces including chairs and high chairs, tables, benches and door handles will be cleaned with a detergent and water solution and paper towel*. Floors must also be swept regularly to ensure they are free of dirt, sand or food. Floors mopped at least once daily or more often as required using disinfectant or floor cleaner and water and a mop. Windows and window sills will be cleaned weekly or more frequently on a needs basis. Curtains within children's reach will be wiped over regularly and laundered at least 6 monthly or more often as required.

Resource cleaning

- Resources, beds and toys made of plastic may be cleaned by:
 - being sprayed and wiped over with a soap/detergent and water solution and paper towel*; or
 - placed into the dishwasher; or
 - washed with detergent and hot water and allowed to drip dry; or
 - soaked in a sterilising solution
- Resources and toys made of soft fabrics may be placed in a washing machine, following the washing machine manufacturer instructions and hung in the sun to dry, where possible.
- Resources and toys made from wood may be cleaned by:
 - being sprayed and wiped over with a soap/detergent and water solution and paper towel*; or
 - washed with detergent and hot water and allowed to drip dry
- Resources and toys that have visible contaminants or have been mouthed will be removed from use and thoroughly cleaned. All other toys and resources used by children will be cleaned daily.

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*Microfibre cloths may be used in place of paper towel providing they are used for one purpose (e.g. tables) and hung up to dry between uses. Cloths must be thoroughly laundered and dried daily.

Service washing

All linen including centre sheets, washers, bibs, tea towels, table cloths or other linen are to be washed daily, or after each use. Cushion covers and other soft materials such as dress up clothes may be laundered weekly or more often as required. The manufacturer's instructions must be followed when using the washing machine and when measuring the soap/liquid to use. If possible, it is preferred to dry the washing on the line in the sun or if this is not an option, it may be dried in a dryer.

Carpets, mats and curtains

Carpets and mats should be vacuumed daily and steam cleaned at least every 6 months. Curtains should be washed every 6 months and when they are visibly dirty. Spot clean carpets, mats and curtains if they are visibly dirty in a small area.

Sandpits

Sandpits should be tightly covered when not in use to prevent contamination from animal faeces and other debris including sharp or dangerous items such as discarded glass, cans or other rubbish. The sand will be raked over before each use to help screen for and eliminate foreign objects. Sand that is contaminated by animal or human faeces, blood or other body fluids will be removed using gloves and a shovel and will be disposed of in a sealed plastic bag or alternative. The remaining sand will be covered with a solution of detergent and hot water and raked over. If possible, the effected sand should be left exposed to the sun. Where extensive contamination has occurred the entire sand will be disposed of and replaced. Adults and children must wash their hands with soap and water after playing in the sandpit.

Sanitary Clean

Following an outbreak of an infectious condition and on the recommendation of the local health unit, the Facilities team will arrange for a sanitising clean/ deep clean of the centre.

The company arranged to complete the clean will contact the centre prior to closing to arrange entry. The Centre Manager, or their delegate, will request all families take their belongings home, such as linen and bags, to launder and return to the centre on their child's next day of attendance.

References

- Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011
- Education and Care Services National Regulations WA 2012
- NHMRC. 2024. 'Staying Healthy: 6th Edition'.
<https://www.nhmrc.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/attachments/Staying-Healthy/Staying-healthy-guidelines.pdf>

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