

Tocumwal Pre-School

SECTION: 2 - Children's Health and Safety

POLICY NO: 2.6.1

POLICY: Handwashing

REVIEW DATE: 31.5.18 **DATE OF APPROVAL:**

Introduction

Maintaining high standards of hygiene is essential in preventing the spread of infectious diseases and ensuring good health. Effective hand washing practices assist significantly in reducing the likelihood of children becoming ill due to cross-infection or as a result of exposure to materials, surfaces, body fluids or other substances that may cause infection or illness. Hand hygiene is one of the most simple and effective ways to break the chain of infection. The most effective method of hand hygiene is using soap and water, and this is the best option when your hands are visibly dirty. If your hands are not visibly dirty, using alcohol-based hand rub is a fast, effective way to remove germs from your hands that may have been picked up from touching contaminated surfaces.

Goals – What are we going to do?

The Service aims to maintain a healthy and hygienic environment for children, staff and families by implementing effective strategies to minimise the potential risk of disease and illness. In assisting children to take a growing responsibility for their own health and physical wellbeing, educators model and reinforce personal hygiene practices with children. Routines provide opportunities for children to learn about health and safety (Early Years Learning Framework, page 32). Hand hygiene will be performed before touching anything that should stay clean (such as before eating or preparing food) and after touching anything that might contaminate your hands (such as after using the toilet or wiping a child's nose).

National Quality Framework, Quality Area 2: Children's Health and Safety

National Quality Standard 2.1 Each child's health and physical is supported and promoted

- 2.1.1 Each child's comfort and wellbeing and provide for, including appropriate opportunities to meet each child's need for sleep, rest and relaxation
- 2.1.2 Effective illness and injury management and hygiene practices are promoted and implemented
- 2.1.3 Healthy eating and physical activity are promoted and appropriate for each child

Strategies - How will it be done?

- The Centre's hand washing procedure will be placed near all hand washing areas for staff to follow (Section 2, Appendix 23).
- Children's hand washing areas will have a visual procedure available for children to follow
- Staff will role model correct hand washing techniques and give verbal reminders to children when washing hands.

Staff will wash and dry hands before:

- Preparing, cooking and handling food, especially ready-to-eat foods (e.g. sandwiches, cut fruit)
- Eating
- Putting on gloves
- Applying sunscreen to one or more children
- before and after changing a nappy
- giving medication
- going home (this prevents taking germs home)

Staff will wash and dry hands after:

- arriving at the Centre (reduces new germs being introduced to the Centre)
- using the toilet or helping a child use the toilet
- handling raw meat, raw poultry or raw eggs
- eating or handling food

- Applying sunscreen to one or more children
- sneezing, coughing, blowing your nose or wiping a child's nose
- changing nappies, handling potties or cleaning & touching changing mats
- cleaning up accidents in the kitchen
- handling rubbish and cleaning chemicals
- outside activities and touching animals
- cleaning up blood, faeces or vomit

Children will wash and dry hands before:

- Starting the day at the service; parents can help with this
- Eating or handling food
- Applying sunscreen
- Going home, so germs are not taken home with them

Children will wash and dry hands after:

- Eating or handling food
- Touching nose secretions
- Using the toilet
- Having their nappy changed—their hands will become contaminated while they are on the change mat
- Applying sunscreen
- Coming in from outside play
- Touching animals

To wash your hands you should:

- The process of thoroughly washing, rinsing and drying your hands or a child's hands should take around 30 seconds.

There are five steps to washing hands:

1. Wet hands with running water (preferably warm water, for comfort).

2. Apply soap to hands.
 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 15 seconds (for about as long as it takes to sing 'Happy birthday' once).
 4. Rinse thoroughly under running water.
 5. Dry thoroughly.
- Hands can be dried with paper towel or cloth towels. Cloth towels, if used, should be used by one person (i.e. not shared) and hung up to dry between uses. Cloth towels should be laundered regularly to reduce the risk of re-contaminating or cross-contaminating hands. Supervise children when washing their hands and help them get into the habit of hand hygiene.
 - If you wear rings or other jewellery on your hands, move the jewellery around your finger while you lather the soap to ensure that the area underneath the jewellery is clean.
 - Always wet hands first before applying soap. This helps the soap to lather more and prevents the skin from drying.

Statutory Legislation & Considerations

- National Quality Standard for Early Childhood Education and Care and School Age Care, Council of Australian Governments February 2018
- Education and Care Services National Amended Regulations 2018, Regulations 77, 168
- NSW Work Health and Safety Regulation 2011

Sources

- Early Years Learning Framework
- Community Early Learning Australia
- Guide to the National Quality Standard (3) ACECQA (2018)

- Guide to the Education and Care Services National Law and the Education and Care Services National Amended Regulations 2018
- Staying Healthy—Preventing infectious diseases in early childhood education and care services NHMRC, 5th Edition 2013 www.nhmrc.gov.au/guidelines-publications/ch55
- How to wash hands, NHMRC, Staying healthy, 5th edition, 2013
www.nhmrc.gov.au/_files_nhmrc/publications/attachments/ch55g_how_to_wash_hands_poster_130701.pdf