

IMMUNISATION AND INFECTIOUS DISEASES GUIDELINE



Kindergarten Programs

1. Purpose and Intent

The City of Casey is committed to ensuring all children attending a City of Casey managed Child Youth and Family service are provided with a safe and secure environment that adheres to National Regulations. The City of Casey prioritises health and safety by minimising the spread of infectious disease, being responsive to any instance where a child with an infectious disease attends a service, and by effective management of immunisation documentation.

2. Scope

This guideline applies to the Approved Provider, Person with Management and Control, Nominated Supervisors, staff, educators, students on placement, volunteers, parents, children, and others attending the programs and activities of City of Casey managed kindergartens.

3. Definitions

Key Term	Definition
Approved Provider	An individual or organisation, such as City of Casey, that has completed an application form and been approved by the Regulatory Authority as fit and proper (in accordance with Sections 12, 13 and 14 of the National Law) to operate one or more education and care services.
Australian Immunisation Register (AIR)	The national register that records vaccinations for individuals in Australia.
Excludable Disease	A disease that requires exclusion under Department of Health guidelines.
Exclusion Period	The required timeframe a child or staff member must stay away from the service to prevent disease spread.
Immunisation History Statement (IHS)	An official record issued by the Australian Immunisation Register showing a child's vaccination status.
Infectious Disease	A disease that can be spread from one person to another person via contact, droplets, airborne transmission.
Medical Exemption	A valid, GP-certified reason a child cannot be vaccinated.
National Immunisation Program (NIP)	Australian government program providing free vaccines according to schedule.

No Jab No Play	Victorian law requiring immunisation (or valid exemption) for enrolment in early childhood services.
Nominated Supervisor	A person who is the Responsible Person in Day-to-Day Charge, and has been nominated by the Approved Provider (City of Casey) of the service under Part 3 of the Act to be the Nominated Supervisor of that service, and who has consented to that nomination. The Nominated Supervisor has day-to-day responsibility for the service in accordance with the National Regulations. All services must have a Nominated Supervisor.
Notifiable Disease	A disease that must be reported to the Department of Health by law.
Person with Management and Control	Individuals responsible for managing the delivery of a service or those who have significant influence over its activities. PMCs have specific legal obligations for ensuring compliance within early childhood education and care providers.
Support Period (No Jab, No Play)	The temporary enrolment allowance (up to 16 weeks) for eligible families to catch up immunisations.

4. Background

Infectious diseases are common in children and can spread rapidly in education and care services. The Department of Health sets out [Exclusion periods for primary schools and children's services](#) to protect the public by preventing, or containing, outbreaks of common infectious conditions in schools and other children's services.

As a service provider, City of Casey is committed to taking all reasonable steps to prevent the spread of infectious diseases at the centre, and ensure that the parent/guardian, authorised nominee or emergency contact of each child enrolled at the service is notified of the occurrence of an infectious disease as early as possible. The service has a duty of care to ensure that everyone attending is provided with a high level of protection during all hours that the service is operating by:

- Responding to the needs of the child or adult attending the service with symptoms of an infectious disease.
- Complying with Government exclusion schedules and guidelines.
- Providing up-to-date information and resources regarding protection of all children from infectious diseases and immunisation programs.

City of Casey supports the National Immunisation Program (NIP). Practices implemented in Council's kindergartens are in accordance with the No Jab No Play legislation, which aims to increase immunisation rates for young children in the community.

The Victorian Government offers an immunisation program for children to assist in preventing the spread of infectious diseases.

5. Responsibilities for this guideline

Child Youth and Family Management, Person with Management or Control or the Approved Provider	• Provide strong leadership that supports a culture of child health and safety in the everyday practice of City of Casey employees. • Ensure all educators are provided with a copy of these guidelines and have a clear understanding of the procedures and practices, as well as providing educators with clear guidelines, policies, and procedures.
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	• Implement the Victorian Child Safe Standards legislation into practice. • Ensure robust induction procedures that include the provision of information regarding the implementation of the practices outlined in these guidelines are followed. • Notify the Department of Health immediately if advised by an educator that a child is suspected of having one of the notifiable infectious diseases listed at the service. • Ensure cross-infection control strategies in the event of an outbreak of an infectious disease. • Ensure there are sufficient resources available for educators and parents in relation to the identification and management of infectious diseases. • Enable educators to keep informed about current information and research, ensuring that any changes to the exclusion table or immunisation schedule are communicated to educators in a timely manner. • Ensure effective procedures are in place to support the No Jab, No Play legislative requirements.
Educators	Infection control and notifications • Ensure that, reasonable steps are taken to prevent the spread of an infectious disease when there is an outbreak, or if someone attends the service with a diagnosed infectious disease (Regulation 88(1)). • Contact parents of children who become unwell while attending the service. • Minimise contact in the service where possible when a child presents with symptoms of an excludable disease. • Notify the Team Leader if a child is suspected of having one of the infectious and notifiable diseases listed at the service. • Follow the advice of the Department of Health upon a notifiable infectious disease, including: • Notify parents at the service of a confirmed diagnosis of a notifiable disease by placing a notice prominently at the entrance to the kindergarten and advising individuals personally as required. • Contact parents personally if they are aware that the infectious disease may compromise the family's health. For example, if the disease would compromise: • An immunocompromised person, i.e., a person whose immune system is weakened or compromised such as a people who are pregnant, are known to have HIV or AIDS or are undergoing chemotherapy. • A sibling under 12 months. • Non-immunised children attending the service. • Ensure that a child who is not immunised against a vaccine preventable notifiable disease does not attend

the service and does not return until there are no more occurrences of that disease at the service and the recommended minimum exclusion period has ceased (Regulation 85(2) of the Public Health and Wellbeing Regulations 2009).

- Record instances of notifiable infections (see attachment 4) and follow exclusion periods for cases and contacts.
- Ensure that a child who is not immunised against a vaccine-preventable disease set out on The Department of Health [Exclusion periods for primary schools and children's services](#) does not attend the service during the exclusion period. Educators should consult with their Team Leaders and/or the Department of Health for advice as required.
- Only exclude the unwell child, not other children and adults (unless directed otherwise by the Department of Health)
- Make available information about the recommended minimum exclusion periods to parents using the service.
- Follow simple hygiene practices such as hand washing, effective cleaning procedures, monitoring immunisation records and complying with recommended exclusion guidelines and timeframes for children, educators and staff.
- Conduct thorough inspections of the service to assess any risks or potential sources of infection.
- Ensure the child does not attend education and care service premises until the exclusion period has concluded.
- Maintain confidentiality in accordance with the *Privacy and Confidentiality Guidelines*.

Immunisation Records

- Receive, assess and approve an *Immunisation History Statement* produced by the Australian Immunisation Register before confirming the child's enrolment for 3-year-old and 4-year-old kindergarten (note: that this includes 4-year-old children whose families submitted this information previously for their 3-year-old kindergarten enrolment, even if it is at the same service). Educators should refer to Attachment 1 *Assessing Immunisation Evidence*.
- Attach the *Immunisation History Statement* to the *Child's Enrolment Record* before the child commences at the service.
- If the parent cannot provide a current *Immunisation History Statement*, assess the child's eligibility for the Support Period and file within the *Child's Enrolment Record* (educators must use Attachment 2 *Immunisation Support Period Eligibility Assessment*).
- Take all reasonable steps, as outlined under Item 5 of this guideline, and in the No Jab No Plan legislation, to support families to access an up-to-date *Immunisation History Statement* to finalise their enrolment at the service.
- Maintain a record of all children who are not immunised due to medical exemptions, or who qualify for the Support Period and are not up to date with their immunisations (Educators will use

	Attachment 3 <i>Educator record of non-immunised children in attendance at the service</i>). - Inform parents of enrolled children of their obligation to provide an updated <i>Immunisation History Statement</i> when their child receives vaccinations while attending and ensure these are filed within the Child's Enrolment Record. - Advise their Team Leader and the Kindergarten Enrolment and Planning (KEP) Team Leader if an enrolment cannot proceed due to a family being unable to provide an <i>Immunisation History Statement</i>, and the family is not eligible for the Support Period.
Parents/Guardians	Infection control and notifications - Inform the service if their child has an infectious disease or has been in contact with a person who has an infectious disease, and that may impact on the health and wellbeing of other children, educators and parents attending the service. - Comply with the recommended minimum exclusion periods. - Comply with the recommended minimum exclusion periods when an infectious disease has been diagnosed at the service and their child is not fully immunised against that infectious disease, until there are no more occurrences of that disease, and the exclusion period has ceased. - Remain contactable while the child attends the service to respond if the child becomes unwell. Immunisation Records - Complete enrolment forms no more than two months prior to the child's commencement at the service and provide their child's current <i>Immunisation History Statement</i> from the Australian Immunisation Register (AIR), as per section 5 of these guidelines. - After each vaccination, provide an updated <i>Immunisation History Statement</i> issued by AIR to be included in the child's records at the service.

6. Immunisation and enrolment

Immunisation History Statements and Confirming Enrolment

Waiting list registration and expressions of interest for a place at the City of Casey occurs before the enrolment process commences.

Parents are required to complete enrolment forms no more than two months prior to the child's commencement at the service and provide their child's current *Immunisation History Statement*. Once all documentation has been received and has been approved by the City of Casey as meeting regulatory requirements, the educator at the kindergarten can confirm the child's enrolment.

An *Immunisation History Statement* from the Australian Immunisation Register (AIR) is the only form of documentation accepted for the purpose of enrolling in an early childhood education and care service. The child's *Immunisation History Statement* from AIR shows the child is up to date with vaccinations for their age. The Medicare logo and Australian Government crest must be present and identifiable to be considered valid and all pages of the statement must be submitted.

Immunisation History Statements can be requested at any time by:

- Using the Express Plus Medicare app, myGov account or Medicare online services.

- Contacting the AIR on 1800 653 809.
- Visiting a local Medicare or Centrelink office.

Families who do not hold a Medicare card must call AIR to request an *Immunisation History Statement*. A translating and interpreting service is available by calling 131 450.

The educator will review and assess the child's *Immunisation History Statement* to determine if the child's immunisation status for the purposes of enrolment is up to date for their age. The *Immunisation History Statement* will be kept by the service and filed within the *Child's Enrolment Record*.

Documentation for a child vaccinated overseas

Children vaccinated overseas must have their records assessed by an immunisation provider and be offered catch-up vaccinations as required. The immunisation provider will report overseas vaccines to AIR to update the child's records. The parent can then request an *Immunisation History Statement* from AIR. Parents can be further supported with translation services by using the [Australian Government Free Translating Service](#).

Unacceptable documentation

Under the legislation, the following documents are not accepted by the City of Casey for the purpose of confirming enrolment:

- Evidence provided by an immunisation provider i.e. GP or local council.
- Alternative immunisation records such as overseas immunisation, homeopathic immunisation, or a statutory declaration.

Medical Contraindication

A medical practitioner may determine if a child has a medical reason for not being immunised or not having received a specific vaccine. In this case a General Practitioner (GP) needs to complete and sign a *Medicare Immunisation Exemption Medical Contraindication* form and send it to AIR. AIR then updates the child's records to produce an *Immunisation History Statement*. The updated *Immunisation History Statement* from AIR can then be provided by the parent to the service to confirm enrolment.

Eligibility to enrol under the 'Support Period'

There are some children in the community whose families face difficulties accessing vaccinations and/or the required documentation to prove immunisation status. Under the legislation, families who meet the below criteria are eligible to enrol and commence at the service while they bring their children's vaccinations up-to-date and/or obtain an *Immunisation History Statement*:

- Identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander.
- Are a refugee or asylum seeker.
- Are from multiple births of triplets or more.
- Children who hold or whose parents hold a healthcare card, pension concession card, and/or a Gold or White Department of Veterans' Affairs card.
- Children evacuated from their home following an emergency (such as flood or fire)
- The child is in the care of an adult who is not the child's parent due to an emergency or exceptional circumstance (such as parental illness or incapacity)
- Are involved with Child Protection services or have been in the past.
- Receive support through Family Services or have in the past.
- Are living on crisis or emergency accommodation.
- Are being supported by a housing agency or Family Violence service.

Within 16 weeks after the date on which the child first attends the early childhood service, the person in charge of the early childhood service must take reasonable steps to ensure that an *Immunisation History Statement* is provided for the child.

Child does not have an up-to-date *Immunisation History Statement* and is not eligible for the Support Period

The City of Casey supports families to update the child's immunisation so that their enrolment can be completed. Educators will support families to request an [Immunisation catch-up schedule](#) if required.

If a family is experiencing difficulty with obtaining an *Immunisation History Statement* and the child is not eligible for the Support Period, educators can support the family by:

- Referring them to the City of Casey [Immunisation Service](#) if they have a Medicare card.
- Encouraging them to visit their GP if they do not have a Medicare card.

Educators who are still experiencing difficulties with obtaining the correct documentation to enrol a child can consult their Team Leader for further assistance.

Conscientious objection (non-medical grounds) to vaccination

Conscientious objection and vaccination objection on non-medical grounds are not valid exemptions from immunisation requirements under the No Jab, No Play legislation.

If the family is not eligible for the Support Period, and objects to going on a catch-up schedule to enable the enrolment to proceed, the enrolment cannot be finalised, and the place will be cancelled.

Parents with questions regarding the No Jab No Play legislation are encouraged to seek more information via [Better Health Channel](#).

Child transfers to another City of Casey kindergarten

Should a child transfer to another kindergarten, another copy of the child's *Immunisation History Statement* must be provided by the parent for the new kindergarten educator.

Updating immunisation records

The No Jab, No Play legislation requires educators to take reasonable steps to monitor and document the ongoing immunisation status of children following enrolment. The National Quality Framework regulations also specify that the approved provider must take reasonable steps to ensure children's enrolment forms are accurate (regulation 177). This includes, but is not limited to, the immunisation status of the child.

After a child's enrolment has been finalised, the No Jab, No Play legislation does not require services to exclude enrolled children, except in the case of a disease outbreak.

7. Infectious diseases and exclusion periods

Notifiable diseases

A notifiable disease is any disease that is required by law to be reported to government authorities. In the case of early childhood education and care services, the Department of Health has determined the following infectious diseases as requiring a notification immediately where a case is suspected:

- Diphtheria
- Haemophilus influenzae Type b (Hib)
- Measles
- Meningococcal infection
- Mumps
- Poliovirus infection

- Pertussis ("whooping cough")
- Rubella ("German measles")

The purpose of the notification is to prevent the spread of these infectious diseases. The City of Casey will be guided by Department of Health and will observe the minimum exclusion periods regarding the outbreak of any infectious diseases.

Other infectious disease exclusion periods

City of Casey operates under statutory obligations regarding exclusion periods for infectious diseases that are set out on the Department of Health's [School exclusion table for primary schools and children's services](#). The City of Casey will observe the minimum exclusion periods regarding the outbreak of any infectious diseases. Parents of children who are not fully immunised will be required to keep their child at home when an infectious disease is diagnosed at the service, and until there are no more occurrences of that disease and the exclusion period has ceased.

Coronavirus (COVID-19)

To slow the spread of COVID-19 if a child is unwell, families and educators are required to follow the current [guidelines provided by the Victorian State Government](#).

Practices to reduce the risk of spread of infection

The City of Casey will take all reasonable steps to prevent the spread of infectious diseases at the service by ensuring that everyone in attendance is provided with a high level of protection. It is not possible to completely eliminate exposure when children spend time within large groups. The City of Casey utilises the recommended tools and strategies as per the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) Staying Healthy: Preventing infectious diseases in early childhood education and care services (5th edition) to help limit the spread of illness and infections.

8. Associated documents and attachments

This guideline should be read in conjunction with guidelines for:

- Hygiene guidelines
- Dealing with Medical Conditions guidelines
- Asthma guidelines
- Anaphylaxis guidelines
- Allergies guidelines
- Diabetes guidelines
- Epilepsy guidelines
- Enrolment guidelines
- Incident, Injury, Trauma, and Illness guidelines
- Privacy and Confidentiality guidelines
- City of Casey Occupational Health and Safety StrategyCity of Casey Occupational Health and Safety Framework
- Attachment 1: Assessing Immunisation Evidence
- Attachment 2: Support Period eligibility assessment form
- Attachment 3: Educator record of non-immunised children at the service
- Attachment 4: Infectious disease exclusion of contacts
- Kindergarten educator to parent letter immunisation update
- Kindergarten educator to parent letter to enrol

9. Relevant legislation

Relevant legislation and standards include but are not limited to:

- Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010
- Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011: Regulation 88 Infectious Diseases
- National Quality Standard (NQS), Quality Areas 2 and 6
- Public Health Act 2010
- Public Health and Wellbeing Regulations 2019
- Public Health and Wellbeing Amendment (No Jab No Play) Bill 2015
- Health and Child Wellbeing Legislation Amendment Act 2018

10. Resources

- Department of Health [No Jab No Play for early childhood education and care services](#)
- Department of Health [Communicable disease management](#)
- Department of Health [Exclusion periods for primary schools and children's services](#)
- Department of Health [Outbreak case list – Child care facility – ill children/staff](#)
- Department of Health [A guide to the management and control of gastroenteritis outbreaks in children's centres](#)
- Department of Health [Guidelines for the investigation of gastroenteritis](#)
- National Health and Medication Research Council [Staying healthy guidelines](#)

11. Statement of Commitment to Child Safety

All children or young people who attend services, programs, and events delivered by, and spaces owned or managed by the City of Casey, have the right to feel and be safe. The wellbeing and safety of children and young people in our care will always be our priority.

Council has zero-tolerance of child abuse and is committed to creating and maintaining a child safe and child-friendly organisation where all children and young people are valued and protected from abuse, harm and neglect.

The City of Casey is committed to creating and maintaining a child safe organisation where protecting children and young people from abuse, harm and neglect is embedded in the everyday thinking and practice of Council, its employees, contractors and volunteers.

12. Monitoring, evaluation and review

The City of Casey will ensure:

- Regular monitoring of the implementation of this guideline and its associated documents including training and compliance.
- This guideline and its associated documents are kept up to date with current legislation, policy and best practice.
- Review and evaluation of this guideline and its associated documents as part of the service's review cycle, or as required.

Reviewed by:	CYF Policy Officer in conjunction with Kindergarten Programs Leadership and Early Years and Partnerships Leadership		
Approved by:	Director – Community Life		
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13. Document History

Date changed	Change Type

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