



Policy Name:	Child, Parent/Carer and Staff Illness & Infectious Disease Policy	Policy Number:	FCP-004
Date Approved:	18 May 2017	Approved By:	Board of Management
Date Issued:	19 May 2017	Review Date:	May 2020
Version 1.5.	This version of the policy was approved 18 May 2017 and replaces the version approved 11 March 2016.		

1. Aim

The purpose of this policy is to outline the approach by Firstchance to:

- assist in reducing illness and preventing the spread of infectious disease;
- responding to children/young people supported by Firstchance and workers who experience an illness and/or develop an infectious disease; and
- supporting families to understand when and why they and/or their child/young person will be excluded from receiving support due to illness

We aim to follow transparent and fair procedures in line with the requirements set out by the Department Community Services and in accordance with the best practice approaches outlined by the National Health and Medical Research Council. Procedures in managing illness and infectious disease within our services are in line with the Firstchance Philosophy and are guided by the principles of:

- Transparency
- Integrity
- Collaboration
- Flexibility
- Strength Based Approach
- Adherence to funding body requirements

2. Scope

This policy applies to families who receive support from Firstchance and workers. For the purposes of this policy a child or young person also includes a sibling that may be visiting a group based program or present when support is delivered in the child's home.

3. Policy

Firstchance believes that children/young people, parent/carers and staff who are unwell should stay home to recover. This approach assists in reducing illness and preventing infectious disease in programs and also in the general community.

Firstchance understands that being in contact with a large number of children/young people for some time provides an opportunity for infectious diseases to be spread and that whilst it is not possible to prevent the spread of all infections and illnesses, a lot of illnesses from infectious disease can be prevented.

Firstchance will:

- (1) Ensure that appropriate action is taken to prevent the spread of any infectious disease
- (2) Ensure that all families or an authorised emergency contact of each child/young person supported by Firstchance are contacted and notified if there is an occurrence of an infectious disease as soon as practicable where they have had contact with a child or worker that may be infected.
- (3) Ensure that all workers are contacted and notified if there is an occurrence of an infectious disease as soon as practicable
- (4) Support families and workers with low immune conditions to identify risk factors and be proactive in taking appropriate action.

3.1 Procedures for preventing the spread of infectious disease

Medical evidence recommends that the three most important ways of preventing the spread of infectious disease are:

- Effective hand washing;
- Exclusion of sick children/young people, parent/carers or staff; and
- Immunisation

Firstchance supports the above methods with procedures for effective handwashing, cleaning and food safety procedures.

A Firstchance Illness & Infection Control fact sheet will be provided by Key Workers to families who access services delivered in their home at the end of term 1 of the school year. This fact sheet will be also be included in the Family Information pack on enrolment.

3.1.1 Responding to a child/young person or parent/carer who seems unwell

3.1.1.1 Firstchance services provided in child/young person's home

Where a family is receiving support delivered in their home and a child, parent/carer or other member of the household is unwell the parent/carer should contact Firstchance and cancel the visit.

Where workers arrive at a family home and find that a member of the household is unwell they will talk with the parent/carer and then leave the home.

Workers will contact the family within the next 2 days to follow up on the well-being of the person that was unwell and confirm a time for another visit.

3.1.1.2 Firstchance workers working in other education and care settings

Where the child/young person who is unwell is in another early childhood service and Firstchance workers are working in that setting, staff should communicate any concerns to the Director or person responsible for that setting. Where concerns remain workers will contact their Supervisor or Program Manager.

3.1.2 Excluding sick children/young people or parent/carers

The spread of certain infectious diseases can be reduced by excluding a person who is known to be infectious, from contact with others who are at risk of catching the infection.

Firstchance will follow the recommended minimum periods of exclusion set by the National Health and Medical Research Council based on risk of infection. Firstchance is also aware that some children/young people or parent/carers may need longer than the exclusion period to recover from an illness.

3.1.2.1 Children receiving support in a group/clinic based setting

When a child/young person receiving support at a playgroup/group operated by Firstchance or is attending the Firstchance clinic for supports, shows symptoms or has a medical diagnosis which fits a condition with an exclusion period the worker (in the case of a child/young person) will:

1. Remove the unwell child/young person from other children/young people
2. Ensure the child/young person is comfortable and appropriately supervised by parent/carer.
3. Ensure all linen, towels and clothing which has been used by the child/young person is washed separately and dried on the hot setting in the dryer.
4. Ensure all toys used by the child/young person are disinfected/washed.
5. Ensure all eating utensils used by the child/young person are separated and sterilised.
6. Inform all relevant families and workers of the presence of an infectious disease and provide fact sheets as required.
7. Ensure confidentiality of any personal health related information obtained by Firstchance and workers in relation to any child/young person or their family.
8. If a child/young person has been unable to attend a group based program or receive individualised services from Firstchance because of an infectious illness the person must provide a doctors certificate which specifically states the child/young person is cleared of the infectious illness.
9. Advise the parents when they may return to the playgroup/group or Firstchance clinic.

3.1.2.2 Excluding sick workers and parent/carers

In the case of a worker or parent/carer in attendance at a Firstchance program/office/clinic or in the parent/carer home, having symptoms or a medical diagnosis that fit a condition with an exclusion period according to the National Health and Medical Research Council the Program Manager will:

- Support the worker or parent/carer to access medical treatment, including contacting an ambulance if required
- Phone the worker's emergency contact or a person nominated by a parent/carer if required
- Advise the worker when they may return to work

Firstchance will take the opportunity to review infection control techniques with all parents/carers and workers when a person has been excluded due to illness. In particular the implementation of hand washing practices will be reviewed.

3.1.3 Infectious Diseases requiring Notification to the local Public Health Unit

Infectious Diseases notification will be directed by telephone to the local Public Health Unit, and will be initiated within twenty-four hours of diagnosis.

NSW local Public Health unit directory and contact details are available on the following NSW Health website – <http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/PublicHealth/Infectious/phus.asp>

All infectious diseases notification forms are available from Public Health Units and on the NSW Health website – <http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/public-health/forms>.

As outlined under Section 42D, Public Health Act 1991 (NSW), the Program Manager or delegate is required to notify the local Public Health Unit of the following infectious disease occurrences at the playgroup/group for children/young people–

- Diphtheria
- Measles
- Mumps
- Pertussis (Whooping cough)
- Poliomyelitis
- Rubella (German measles)
- Tetanus
- Tuberculosis

Workers are responsible for ensuring that their medical practitioner advises the Public Health Unit.

3.1.4 Immunisation

3.1.4.1 Children

Firstchance encourages immunisation however does not require immunisation records to be provided as there are other measures in place by government to enforce this.

3.1.4.2 Workers

Staff are encouraged to be aware of the immunisations recommended for people working in settings such as Firstchance and take proactive steps to access these. The National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) recommend that educators should be immunised against –

- Hepatitis A.
- Measles-Mumps-Rubella (MMR). (Educators born during or since 1966, who do not have vaccination records of two doses of MMR, or do not have antibodies for rubella, require vaccination).
- Varicella - if they have not previously been infected with chickenpox.
- Pertussis - An adult booster dose is especially important for those educators caring for the youngest children who are not fully vaccinated.

Although the risk is low, workers who care for children/young people with intellectual disabilities should seek advice about Hepatitis B immunisation if the children/young people are unimmunised.

Staff members that choose not to be immunised will be treated with the same respect as families.

3.1.4.3 Workers who are pregnant

Workers and other staff who are pregnant need to be aware of how some infections can affect their unborn child.

All staff, including pregnant workers will have access to the Staying Healthy in Childcare publication and are encouraged to consult their medical practitioner to consider the facts and risks of working in an education and care service.

All staff will follow good infection control and hygiene procedures.

Pregnant workers may be reallocated to support other families to reduce their risk of exposure to diseases that can harm an unborn baby. This will be determined following consultation with the worker's medical physician.

3.2 Medication

Parents/carers are responsible for administering any medication to their own children/young people and for keeping this medication safely away from others.

3.3 Keeping records

A record will be kept of any incidents of infectious illness experienced by any child/adult supported by Firstchance or Firstchance workers. Any health and medical records provided by parent/carers will be kept by Firstchance until the child/young person is 25 years of age.

This policy must be read in conjunction with the following Firstchance policies:

Medical Conditions Policy

Fees Policy

Administration of Authorised Medication Policy

Record Keeping Policy

4. References

"Staying Healthy in Early Childhood Education and Care- Preventing Infectious Diseases in Education and Care services" National Health and Medical Research Council, 2012

Work Health and Safety Act 2011 (NSW)

Work Health and Safety Regulations 2011

Public Health Act 1991

Public Health Amendment (vaccination of Children Attending Care Facilities) Act 2013

NSW Health Policy Directive - Notification of Infectious Diseases under the Public Health Act 1991

Disability Inclusion Act 2014

NSW Disability Service Standards

Standard 1 – Rights

5. Persons Responsible

All families who have children/young people receiving supports from Firstchance are responsible for:

- Familiarising themselves with information provided in the Parent Information Booklet on illnesses and symptoms that would prevent their child/young person or themselves from participating in a Firstchance service
- Keeping their child/young person or themselves at home until they are feeling well. If the family is receiving a support in their home the parents/carers should notify workers so they do not visit the home.
- Notifying Firstchance Administration where families are unable to attend or receive a service as soon as practical on the day of the absence
- Ensure workers are aware of any condition that could impact on their child/young person's wellness eg asthma, diabetes, allergy.

- Provide information from their child/young person's doctor to assist with the development of a written action plan to respond to any incidents of this illness.
- Notifying a Firstchance Key Worker for their child/young person's supports in the event that their child/young person has an infectious illness
- Supporting their child/young person to use behaviours that promote infection control eg hygienic use and disposal of tissues, regular handwashing, use of antibacterial gel etc

All workers are responsible for:

- Familiarising themselves with the reference material on exclusion of children/young people and staff immunisations outlined in the reference guide "Staying Healthy in Early Childhood Education and Care- Preventing Infectious Diseases in Education and Care services" National Health and Medical Research Council, 2012
- Supporting the children/young people and their families to use behaviours that promote infection control eg hygienic use and disposal of tissues, regular handwashing, use of antibacterial gel etc
- Following procedures that promote infection control
- Maintaining privacy, dignity and confidentiality of anyone diagnosed with an infectious illness
- Following relevant Safe Working Procedures
- Advising Firstchance via the Program Manager about any health concerns that they or their immediate family have that may be impacted upon by the illness of others.
- Staying away from work if they are unwell
- Notifying the local Public Health Unit of any notifiable infectious disease as required, in the absence of the Program Manager.

Key workers are responsible for:

- Distributing the "Illness and Infection Control" fact sheet at the end of term 1 each year.

Health & Safety Representative (HSR)

- Organising the distribution of the "Illness and Infection Control" fact sheet reminder to all families about strategies to prevent the spread of infectious disease

The Program Manager is responsible for:

- Ensuring that all families or an authorised emergency contact of each child/young person is contacted and notified if there is an occurrence of an infectious disease that may have come into contact with as soon as practicable. A fact sheet on the relevant disease will also be distributed.
- Ensuring workers are notified about the occurrence of an infectious disease as soon as practicable
- Notifying the local Public Health Unit of any notifiable infectious disease as required
- Ensuring this policy is implemented, upheld and reviewed

Board of Management are responsible for:

- Approval of this policy

6. Definitions

Board of Management – the governing body of Firstchance, comprised of elected or appointed members who jointly oversee the activities and legal responsibilities of the organisation

Contact - A person who has had the opportunity to acquire an infection from a specified type of exposure during the infectious period.

Contagious/infectious disease - a disease that can be passed from one person to another.

Family – refers to the parents/caregivers of the children or young people that receive support from a Firstchance program

Firstchance – all Firstchance Incorporated services and programs

Immunisation - The process of making a person immune by use of oral or injected vaccines

Incubation period - The time between an infectious agent entering a person's body and the appearance of a symptom of the disease. Incubation periods may range from a few hours to several years depending on the disease.

Infection period - The length of time a person who is infectious can pass the infection on to others

Manager – refers to the General Manager or Program Manager, whichever is relevant in the context of the situation

Supervisor – refers to all senior staff who are responsible for supervising one or more staff members

Workers – refers to employees and volunteers of the organisation

Visitor – any person who is visiting a Firstchance service who is not a staff member, child/young person or family/carer

Document review history

Date	Section	Change
April 2012	All	Amended to comply with Work Health and Safety Act 2011 and finalised Education and Care Services National Regulations
October 2012	Section 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inclusion of 3.1.4.3 Educators who are pregnant Addition to 3.1.4.2 Staff - to include possible restriction to working with children over 12 months old for staff who are not vaccinated
April 2013	4	Additional reference to NSW Disability Service Standards
April 2013	Relevant policies and procedures	Changed name in Related Policies from Medication Policy to Administration of Authorised medication Policy
February 2014	3.1.1	Separation of information under new sub headings to distinguish between services provided in different settings.
February 2014	3.1.4.1 & 4	Update to include reference to Public Health Amendment (vaccination of Children Attending Care Facilities) Act 2013.
March 2015	4	Additional reference to Disability Inclusion Act
March 2016	3.1.1.1	Removed Firstchance centre based programs section
	3.1	Addition of words 'or leaves the family's home', removal of reference to centre based services
	3.1.1.2	Changed to number to 3.1.1.1
	3.1.1.3	Changed to number to 3.1.1.2
	3.1.2.1	Creation of new sub-heading 'Excluding sick staff'
	3.1.3	Changed Nominated Supervisor of a service to Program Manager or delegate
	3.1.4.1	Removal of reference to Public Health Amendment (vaccination of Children Attending Care Facilities) Act 2013.

Date	Section	Change
	3.2	Reference to Teen Time program has been removed
	Relevant policies and procedures	Removed Attendance Policy – Centre Based Service ECIP
	4	Removal of reference to NQS, EYLF and National Regulations as Firstchance is no longer a licenced service
	5	Removed Teen Time coordinator and Supervisor responsibilities as no longer relevant
	6	Removed reference to Certified Supervisor, Educational Leader, Educator and Nominated Supervisor
May 2017	3	Inclusion of dot point to address role of families and workers with low immune conditions to identify risk factors and be proactive in taking appropriate action.
	3.1.1	Addition of information relating to when parent/carers or other household members are unwell.
	3.1 & 5	Addition of Key Worker responsibility to distribute the Illness & Infection Control Fact Sheet.
	3.1.2	Removed reference to air drying linen
	3.1.4.1	Removal of requirement for parent/carers to provide copy of immunisation records
	3.1.4.2 & 5	Removal of requirement for workers to provide copies of immunisation records and restrictions of settings for un-immunised staff as this was a licensing requirement.
	3.1.2.2	Additional reference to services provided in a home environment.
	3.2	Removal of reference to staff administering medication as this is no longer a role performed by Firstchance staff.
	3.3	Removal of reference to keeping staff declarations of their immunisation records on personnel files.
5	Addition of Program Manager role to distribute fact sheets on notifiable infectious diseases as required.	