

Infectious Diseases Procedures

1. Definitions

CEDP refer to Catholic Education Diocese of Parramatta

Exclusion (or excluding/excluded) refers to a circumstance where a particular child is refused entry/participation in any school/class activity/function, both at the school or in an alternative location (including class activities/functions that occur out of normal school hours).

Highly infectious diseases refers to those diseases listed by the NSW Department of Health as infectious diseases requiring a period of exclusion from school and reporting by the school. A full list is at Appendix A.

Highly susceptible individuals refer to individuals who have particular vulnerability to, or risks associated with, certain diseases such as the elderly, children with suppressed immunity or pregnant women.

Immunisation certificate refers to a statement as to the immunisation history of a child issued by the Australian Childhood Immunisation Register.

NSW Health refers to the NSW Department of Health.

Public Health Officials refers to staff employed at Public Health Units or the NSW Department of Health.

Public Health Unit refers to a community health service based on locality.

Vaccine preventable diseases refer to those diseases listed by the NSW Department of Health as vaccine preventable diseases requiring reporting by the school. A full list is at Appendix A.

2. Purpose

- 2.1. These procedures are in place to assist school principals to meet the NSW Department of Health requirements in regards to infectious diseases in schools.
- 2.2. Infectious diseases can spread rapidly within the classroom and wider school community. Although many pose minimal risk to healthy individuals, some may have adverse and long-term effects on health if undetected or untreated. Some individuals may also have particular susceptibility to, or risks associated with, certain diseases, for example, children with suppressed immunity and pregnant women.
- 2.3. Schools have a duty of care to provide and maintain a healthy and safe environment for all staff, students and others working at or visiting the school and to minimise the risk of anyone in the school community contracting an infectious disease.

3. Immunisation records and enrolment

- 3.1. Prioritisation of enrolments as outlined in the CEDP enrolment policy and procedures are applied regardless of a child's immunisation status. A school must not subject a child who

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attends, or seeks to attend the school, to any detriment because of the child's immunisation status.

- 3.2. Children being enrolled in a CEDP primary school must provide an immunisation certificate.
- 3.3. Primary schools must request and record the immunisation status of each enrolled child. The immunisation certificate must be kept in safe custody and be produced for inspection on request by the Public Health Officer.
- 3.4. The principal must, on being asked to do so by a parent of the child or the principal of another school, forward the certificate to the principal of the other school.
- 3.5. A child without an immunisation certificate will not be prevented from enrolling in primary school.
- 3.6. Where the immunisation certificate is not, or cannot, be provided, the child is classified as not immunised and considered a "child at risk" under the *Public Health Act 2010 (NSW)* Section 85.
- 3.7. Under the *NSW Public Health Act 2010*, children without proof of immunisation may be asked by the principal or Public Health Officials to stay at home during an outbreak of vaccine preventable disease.
- 3.8. The exclusion of infectious children or staff is a major method of preventing the spread of infection in a school. Excluding a sick person provides a strategy to prevent the introduction or re-introduction of infection into a school. NSW Health requires that persons with certain infectious diseases be excluded from school. The minimum period of absence varies according to how long the person stays contagious or infectious after the onset of the symptoms.

4. Outbreaks of infectious diseases

- 4.1. Principals must notify their local Public Health Unit by phone as soon as possible after they are made aware that a child enrolled at the school is suffering from one of the following vaccine-preventable diseases:
 - 4.1.1. Diptheria
 - 4.1.2. Mumps
 - 4.1.3. Poliomyelities
 - 4.1.4. Haemophilus influenza Type B (Hib)
 - 4.1.5. Meningococcal disease
 - 4.1.6. Rubella ("German measles")
 - 4.1.7. Measles
 - 4.1.8. Pertussis ("whooping cough")
 - 4.1.9. Tetanus
- 4.2. Children who are not vaccinated against certain infectious diseases may be excluded from school if class members or staff are diagnosed with those diseases listed above.
- 4.3. Principals must consult with the Public Health Unit in regards to children not immunised during an outbreak of vaccine-preventable diseases including whether a child is to be excluded from school and for what duration.
- 4.4. Principals should notify the school community of the outbreak of any highly infectious diseases (Appendix A), or those diseases which have particularly adverse effects on highly susceptible individuals. Fact sheets for a range of infectious diseases can be downloaded from NSW Health for the purpose of informing the community.
- 4.5. Where there is an outbreak of any highly infectious or vaccine preventable diseases and a staff member is pregnant, or a staff member is not vaccinated against the vaccine preventable diseases and the staff member presents a medical certificate stating that they are at risk, a risk assessment will be made around the appropriate course of action. The principal will conduct the risk assessment in consultation with the Head People and Culture.
- 4.6. Where a child who is not immunised and is enrolled and marked as a "child at risk" the parent must be informed that the child may be excluded from school for their own protection if there is an outbreak of a vaccine-preventable disease in the school.
- 4.7. In the case of an outbreak of either vaccine preventable or highly infectious diseases, the school will:

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- 4.7.1. If applicable, provide a fact sheet, for all families in the affected class, upon receiving notification of an outbreak of one of the diseases listed in Appendix A.
- 4.7.2. Distribute the information to class teachers on the same day as notification.
- 4.7.3. Notify all parents of the outbreak in the next weekly newsletter.
- 4.8. Parents/Guardians are required to:
 - 4.8.1. Inform the school immediately if their child is diagnosed with any of the diseases listed in Appendix A, or have been in contact with an infected person.
 - 4.8.2. Comply with recommended periods of exclusion as determined by the school Principal in consultation with the Public Health Unit.
 - 4.8.3. Provide an immunisation certificate as to the immunisation history of a child if possible.
- 4.9. Staff have a responsibility to:
 - 4.9.1. Inform the principal immediately if notified by a parent/guardian that a child has been diagnosed with any of the diseases listed in Appendix A.
 - 4.9.2. Inform the principal immediately if the staff member is diagnosed with any disease listed in Appendix A.
 - 4.9.3. Distribute any notification information provided by the school, on the same day as received.

5. Bases of discretion

- 5.1. Method of notification of the school community will be at the discretion of the principal.
- 5.2. The period of exclusion for a “child at risk” will be determined by the principal in consultation with the Public Health Unit.

6. Related documents

CEDP Enrolment Policy and Procedures
 Appendix A Department of Health – Infectious Disease Factsheet
 NSW Health Infectious Disease Factsheets

7. Relevant legislation

Public Health Act 2010 (NSW)
Workplace Health and Safety Act 2011

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Appendix A: List of infectious diseases for notification

Vaccine preventable diseases

Principals must notify their local Public Health Unit by phone as soon as possible after they are made aware that a child enrolled at the school or facility is suffering from one of the following:

- Diphtheria
- Mumps
- Poliomyelitis
- Haemophilus influenzae Type b (Hib)
- Meningococcal disease
- Rubella ("German measles")
- Measles
- Pertussis ("whooping cough")
- Tetanus

Infectious diseases of childhood:

Children are at increased risk of some infectious diseases because they have not yet developed immunity to them, they tend to gather in groups, and they may have difficulty with some aspects of hygiene.

Principals should notify their school community of outbreaks of infectious diseases of childhood, which may pose a particular risk for highly susceptible individuals. A sample letter for measles is included in the subsequent appendices, which may be amended for a particular illness.

A [summary factsheet](#) of childhood infectious diseases can be downloaded through NSW Health, as well as specific factsheets for those diseases linked below:

- [Chicken Pox](#)
- [Conjunctivitis](#)
- [Gastroenteritis](#)
- German Measles (Rubella)
- Glandular Fever
- [Hand, Foot and Mouth Disease](#)
- Head Lice
- [Hepatitis A](#)
- Impetigo (school sores)
- [Influenza](#)
- [Measles](#)
- [Meningococcal Disease](#)
- Molluscum Contagiosum
- [Mumps](#)
- [Ringworm](#)
- Scabies
- Scarlet Fever
- Slapped Cheek
- [Whooping Cough](#)

A [comprehensive list of factsheets for infectious diseases](#) can be found at [NSW Health](#).

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