



PROCEDURE

Document Name:	CELC 2.8.1 Infectious Diseases
Approved By:	Chris Warner Director CELC & Business Services
Approval Date:	12/08/2026
Next Review	12/08/2029
Previous Approval	New

PURPOSE

This procedure outlines the practices and requirements for preventing, identifying, managing, and responding to infectious diseases within Centacare Early Learning and Care (CELC) services.

The purpose of this procedure is to:

- Protect the health, safety, and wellbeing of children, families, employees, volunteers, and visitors.
- Minimise the risk of transmission of infectious diseases within the service.
- Support consistent infection prevention and control practices across all CELC services.
- Ensure compliance with relevant legislation, public health advice, and recognised health guidelines.
- Provide clear processes for monitoring, reporting, communicating, and responding to infectious diseases and outbreaks.

SCOPE AND AWARENESS

This procedure applies to all children enrolled in CELC services and all employees, volunteers, contractors, students, work experience participants, families, and visitors.

This procedure applies to:

- Infection prevention and control practices.
- Management of suspected or confirmed infectious diseases.
- Exclusion and return-to-care/work requirements.
- Communication and notification processes.
- Reporting obligations to health authorities and regulatory bodies.
- Responses to infectious disease outbreaks and public health events.

All persons attending or engaged by a CELC service are expected to comply with this procedure and any additional infection control measures implemented in response to public health advice.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Approved Provider

- Ensuring the service implements effective infection prevention and control practices.
- Providing resources, training, and support to assist employees in meeting infection control requirements.

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- Supporting compliance with relevant legislation, public health advice, and organisational requirements.
- Supporting required reporting processes and communication with health authorities where applicable.
- Monitoring infection control practices and responding to identified risks and outbreaks.

Nominated Supervisor

- Implementing and monitoring infection prevention and control practices within the service.
- Ensuring employees receive infection control information, training, instruction, and supervision.
- Promoting and modelling good hygiene practices throughout the service.
- Confirming and maintaining children's immunisation records.
- Managing infectious disease incidents and outbreaks within the service.
- Communicating relevant information, exclusion requirements, and outbreak notifications to families via OWNA.
- Reporting infectious diseases and outbreaks to Queensland Health and other authorities as required.
- Ensuring cleaning schedules are implemented and completed.
- Monitoring compliance with this procedure and addressing any identified concerns.
- Maintaining infection control information and resources for children, families, employees, and visitors.
- Requesting medical clearance for a child's return to care where required.

Educators and Other Employees:

- Following this procedure and all infection prevention and control measures.
- Maintaining effective health, hygiene, cleaning, and infection control practices.
- Participating in required infection control training and education.
- Promoting and supervising good hygiene practices with children.
- Monitoring children for signs and symptoms of illness and reporting concerns to the Nominated Supervisor.
- Following safe practices when caring for unwell children, including the use of personal protective equipment (PPE) where required.
- Completing cleaning tasks and records as required.
- Reporting infection risks, hazards, incidents, symptoms of illness, or outbreaks promptly.
- Advising the Nominated Supervisor if they are unwell or have been exposed to an infectious disease.
- Complying with exclusion and return-to-work requirements when unwell.

Families and Parents/Guardians

- Following the service's requirements relating to infectious diseases, immunisation, and exclusion periods.
- Informing the service if their child has been diagnosed with, exposed to, or displays symptoms of an infectious disease.
- Keeping children at home when they are unwell or when exclusion requirements apply.
- Providing medical clearance where requested before their child returns to care.

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- Providing current health information, emergency contact details, and up-to-date immunisation records.
- Advising the service of changes to their child's immunisation status.
- Supporting the service's infection prevention and control measures to protect the health and wellbeing of all children and staff.

Information Sharing

- The Nominated Supervisor is the primary contact for communicating information relating to infectious diseases, outbreaks, exclusion requirements, and return-to-care arrangements.
- Information will be provided to families in a timely, respectful, and confidential manner.
- Families will be notified of infectious disease outbreaks within the service in accordance with public health and privacy requirements.

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Monitoring Infectious Diseases

The Nominated Supervisor will:

- Monitor updates from [Queensland Health](#), the Australian Government Department of Health, and the NHMRC [Staying Healthy](#) resource
- Refer to Queensland Health [Time Out guidelines](#) and relevant fact sheets when determining exclusion periods and infection control responses.

Reporting an Infectious Disease:

When a child, employee, or member of their immediate household is suspected or confirmed to have an infectious disease:

- The parent/guardian or employee must notify the Nominated Supervisor as soon as possible.
- The Nominated Supervisor notifies the Operations Managers of the suspected/confirmation of an infectious disease.

The Nominated Supervisor must assess the situation and consider:

- The nature of the illness or infectious disease.
- The potential risk of exposure to children, employees, and visitors.
- Required infection prevention and control measures.
- Any exclusion requirements in accordance with relevant health guidelines.

Where necessary, the Nominated Supervisor must seek advice from appropriate authorities, including:

- Queensland Health
- Cairns Tropical Public Health Unit
- WHS Advisor
- Other relevant regulatory or health authorities

The Nominated Supervisor must record all relevant details, actions taken, and advice received in the **Illness and Infectious Disease Register** maintained by the service.

Managing an Unwell Child:

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If a child becomes unwell while at the service, employees must:

- Follow the CELC's **Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Policy**.
- Provide appropriate care and comfort to the child.
- Closely monitor the child's condition and symptoms.

Separate and supervise the child:

Where practicable, the child should be cared for in a separate area away from other children while remaining under adequate supervision until collected.

Notify the Parent/Guardian:

The Nominated Supervisor or delegated employee must:

- Contact the child's parent/guardian as soon as possible.
- Provide details of the child's symptoms and condition.
- Request that the child be collected from the service promptly.

Arrange collection:

The child must remain supervised until collected by a parent/guardian or authorised nominee. If the child's condition worsens, seek medical assistance in accordance with the Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Policy.

Implement infection control measures:

Employees must implement appropriate infection prevention and control measures, including:

- Performing effective hand hygiene.
- Cleaning and disinfecting any affected areas, equipment, or materials.
- Using personal protective equipment (PPE) where required.
- Minimising the risk of exposure to other children, employees, and visitors.

Record and report:

The Nominated Supervisor must ensure all relevant information, actions taken, and communications with the parent/guardian are documented in accordance with service procedures.

Managing an unwell employee

If an employee is unwell:

- The employee must notify the Nominated Supervisor immediately.
- The Nominated Supervisor will assess whether exclusion from the workplace is required.
- The employee will not attend, or will leave, the workplace if there is a risk of spreading infection.

Communication and Notifications

Where a person/child has attended the Service while infectious and others may have been exposed, the Nominated Supervisor will:

- Display a health notice in a prominent location.
- Notify families via email, OWNA, Xplor or other approved communication channels.
- Provide relevant [Queensland Health](#) or [Staying Healthy](#) fact sheets.

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- Maintain the confidentiality of affected individuals at all times.

Exclusion Requirements and Outbreak Management

CELC follows Queensland Health [Time Out guidelines](#) and the NHMRC [Staying Healthy](#) In Child Care resource when managing infectious diseases and exclusion periods. These requirements apply to all children, staff, volunteers, students, contractors, and visitors.

Exclusion Requirements

Any person who is suspected of having, or has been diagnosed with, an infectious disease may be excluded from the service to prevent the spread of infection.

- Parents/Guardians will be asked to collect any unwell child and seek medical advice.
- Staff and other adults who are unwell must leave the service premises and seek appropriate medical advice.
- Children and staff diagnosed with an infectious disease must remain away from the service for the recommended exclusion period.
- A medical clearance certificate may be required before returning to the service.
- Relevant [Queensland Health](#) and [Staying Healthy](#) fact sheets will be provided to families when required.

Consistent with the NHMRC guidelines, people with the following symptoms must not attend the service for at least the relevant exclusion period (may be longer if multiple cases)-

Vomiting	24 hours without symptoms.
Diarrhoea	24 hours without symptoms (or 48 hours where confirmed norovirus).
Influenza and influenza-like illness	Until symptoms have resolved, normally 5–7 days.

Medical Clearance (Early Learning):

The Nominated Supervisor, in consultation with Operations Managers where required, may request a medical clearance certificate from a Medical Professional before a child or employee returns to CELC.

Medical clearance may be required when:

- Recommended by Queensland Health;
- Required under exclusion guidelines; or
- Considered necessary to protect others from infection.

The Service reserves the right to decline a medical clearance provided for a child or staff member and may require further medical advice or assessment before attendance or return to the Service is approved.

Record Keeping and Reporting

The Nominated Supervisor will:

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- Record all relevant infectious disease incidents in the Illness and Infectious Disease Register and any other required Service records, ensuring the records include:
 - Child's name
 - Child's age
 - Symptoms observed
 - Date and time educators first noticed the illness
 - Date and time the record was completed
 - Actions taken by the service
 - Details of notifications provided to parents/guardians.
- Maintain records of exclusion periods, medical clearances, communications, and management actions taken.
- Notify the Approved Provider of any significant infectious disease occurrence.
- Report infectious disease incidents to Queensland Health and/or the Regulatory Authority when required under public health or regulatory obligations, including circumstances outlined in the Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Policy.
- Ensure all records and reports are stored securely and confidentially in accordance with the Privacy and Confidentiality Policy.

Outbreak and Pandemic Management

The Nominated Supervisor will:

- Maintain the Illness and Infectious Disease Register in the Child Care Management System (CCM) or, where applicable, through a documented Infectious Disease Register maintained at the service.
- Record illnesses and symptoms reported by children and employees.
- Monitor the register for signs of a possible outbreak.

If multiple children or employees develop similar symptoms, CELC will:

- Review infection control, hygiene and cleaning practices.
- Contact the Cairns Tropical Public Health Unit or relevant health authority for advice.
- Follow all directions provided by Health Authorities.
- Display a health alert at the centre while maintaining confidentiality.
- Provide families with relevant information, including exclusion requirements
- Notify the school and Parish, where applicable.

During an outbreak, epidemic or pandemic, the Approved Provider will:

- Exclude children, employees and visitors who are unwell or diagnosed with the infectious disease.
- Promote good hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette.
- Ensure adequate supplies of soap, paper towels and hand sanitiser are available.
- Increase cleaning and disinfecting of frequently touched surfaces, equipment and play items.
- Use outdoor areas and natural ventilation where practical.
- Follow enhanced food safety and hygiene practices
- Implement any additional measures required by health authorities.

All outbreak management decisions will be guided by current public health advice and will prioritise the health, safety and wellbeing of children, families and employees.

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Immunisation

Children's Immunisation

All children must meet Australian Government immunisation requirements or hold a valid exemption to be eligible for Child Care Subsidy (CCS). Parents/guardians are required to provide evidence of their child's immunisation status when enrolling.

Children who are not immunised may attend CELC; however, they may be excluded during an outbreak of a vaccine-preventable disease. Exclusion periods will be determined in accordance with Queensland Health and National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) guidelines.

Vaccine-Preventable Diseases

Where a child or employee is diagnosed with a vaccine-preventable disease, non-immunised children and employees may be required to stay away from CELC for a period determined by Queensland Health.

The Nominated Supervisor will:

- Consult with Queensland Health and relevant management;
- Implement any exclusion requirements; and
- Maintain records of advice received and actions taken.

Families and employees must notify the Service if they, or their child, have been diagnosed with, or exposed to, a vaccine-preventable disease.

Employee Immunisation

Employees working with children are at greater risk of exposure to infectious diseases and are strongly encouraged to keep their vaccinations up to date.

Queensland Health recommends vaccinations for:

- Influenza
- Measles
- Mumps
- Rubella
- Whooping cough (Pertussis)
- Chickenpox (Varicella)
- Hepatitis A

Additional vaccinations, such as Hepatitis B, may be recommended for some employees.

Employees who are unsure of their immunisation status should seek advice from their healthcare professional.

Non-Immunised Employees and Pregnant Employees

To ensure the health, safety and wellbeing of children, families, visitors and employees, additional precautions may be implemented when a vaccine-preventable disease outbreak occurs within the service or the local community.

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Employees who are not fully immunised against the relevant disease, or who are unable to provide evidence of immunity, may be required to comply with risk-management measures determined by the service and relevant public health authorities. These measures may include:

- Temporary exclusion from the workplace for all or part of the outbreak period;
- Redeployment to alternative duties or work locations where exposure risks can be minimised;
- Modifications to work practices or responsibilities;
- Use of additional infection prevention and control measures; and/or
- Compliance with any directions, recommendations or public health orders issued by Queensland Health or other relevant authorities.

Pregnant employees should advise the Nominated Supervisor as soon as practicable if they become aware of a vaccine-preventable disease outbreak. Certain infectious diseases may pose an increased risk to pregnant women and their unborn child.

These measures may include temporary modification of duties, relocation to a lower-risk environment, leave arrangements, or other reasonable adjustments based on medical advice and public health recommendations.

CELC is committed to meeting its work health and safety obligations and will take all reasonable steps to minimise the risk of infectious disease transmission while maintaining a safe environment for children and employees.

Hygiene Practices

CELC will implement consistent and culturally responsive hygiene practices to help prevent the spread of infectious diseases. This includes thorough handwashing, covering cuts and abrasions with waterproof dressings, and wearing gloves when handling bodily fluids or mucus. These practices support a safe, clean and healthy environment for children, employees and visitors, for further information please refer to CELC's Hygiene, Health and Wellbeing Practices Policy and Procedures.

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

- CELC 2.8.1 Infectious Diseases Procedure
- CELC 2.8.2 Infectious Diseases Work Instruction
- CELC 2.9 Hygiene, Health and Wellbeing Practices Policy
- CELC 2.9.1 Hygiene, Health and Wellbeing Practices Procedure
- CELC 2.9.2 Hygiene, Health and Wellbeing Practices Work Instruction
- CELC 6.9 Childhood Immunisation Policy
- CELC 6.9.1 Childhood Immunisation Procedure
- CELC 6.9.2 Agreement to withdraw a non-immunised child
- CELC 6.12 Staff Immunisation Policy
- CELC 6.12.1 Staff Immunisation Procedure
- CELC 2.5 Incident, Illness, Injury or Trauma Policy
- CELC 2.5.1 Incident, Illness, Injury or Trauma Procedure
- CELC 2.10 Medical Conditions in Children Policy
- CELC 2.10.1 Medical Conditions in Children Procedure

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- CELC 7.6 Privacy Record Management Policy
- CELC 7.6.1 Privacy Record Management Procedure
- CELC 2.13 Safe Food Handling, Preparation and Storage Policy
- CELC 2.13.1 Safe Food Handling, Preparation and Storage Procedure
- CELC 2.6 Administration of First Aid Policy
- CELC 2.6.1 Administration of First Aid Procedure
- CELC 2.2 Supervision and Educator Ratios Policy
- CELC 2.2.1 Supervision and Educator Ratios Procedure
- CELC 7.18 Risk Management Policy
- CELC 7.18.1 Risk Management Procedure
- CELC 2.1 Providing a Child Safe Environment Policy
- CELC 2.1.1 Providing a Child Safe Environment Procedure

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