

Policy on control and prevention of infection HS 08

Date of issue: May 2014

Date of Review: May 2016

Policy Number: HS 08

Policy prepared by: EH Policy reference group

Background to the policy statement:

EtonHouse believes that all children and staff in our International schools and early childhood settings have a right to be cared for and work in safe and healthy environments. Staff and children grouped together for care and education purposes are in close contact with each other for long periods of the day and are therefore particularly vulnerable to infectious disease.

EtonHouse acknowledges that effective control and prevention of transmission of infection is based on the premise that anyone in the setting could have an infectious condition at any one time i.e.:

- Be infectious and show signs/symptoms of an infectious disease;
- Be infectious and show no signs/symptoms;
- Appear unwell (recovering) but no longer be infectious;

Aims/purpose of the policy statement:

- To ensure the overall health and well being of all children and staff attending EtonHouse schools and preschools;
- To ensure heightened awareness of individual responsibilities as well as collective action in maintaining/enhancing healthy environments;

Policy statement:

All contact staff in EtonHouse settings must be familiar with the steps to be taken in the event of an infectious disease.

All settings must have and make available to staff a current distribution of an approved early childhood health guideline e.g. ECDA (Singapore) *Infection Control Guideline* https://www.childcarelink.gov.sg/ccls/uploads/Infection_Control_Guidelines_for_Schools_and_CCCs.pdf

When there is an occurrence of an infectious disease, the centre supervisor is to follow the standard operating procedures (SOP) as outlined by the relevant government department and to work in collaboration with relevant health authorities to further control any spread of the disease (attached).

Staff must be provided with (in writing) the contact details of resource personnel who can be contacted for additional information/assistance e.g. poison centre.

All EtonHouse settings must develop, implement and make available a setting specific policy which aims to reduce the risks of infectious disease transmission. This setting specific policy must address how the setting manages:

Education and professional learning:

During staff orientation/welcome sessions all staff (including staff not involved in the direct provision of services/teaching), must receive training in infection control and basic first aid to allow them to deal with minor accidents.

Staff members who do not hold a current certificate in **Child First Aid** training must undertake a training course in **Child First Aid** as soon as possible after commencing employment. In addition, staff and caregivers should be familiar with the signs/symptoms of infectious disease as well as the provision of appropriate care for the unwell child before he/she is taken home. All such illnesses in the centre must be recorded in the **first aid book** to be maintained by the centre supervisor/ principal.

Minimising risk:

All staff/caregivers must comply with standard precautions for the control and spread of infection as prescribed by health authorities and the relevant ministries. For example, staff must be familiar with disease specific exclusion periods; correct hand washing procedures (please refer to EH policy statement HS 03); use of disposable gloves and any additional procedures which offer protection from bodily fluid transmission; the need for regular sterilization of equipment/ use of hot water, and the need to use **clean** cloths/towels daily when cleaning. **A pregnant staff member must aim to minimize infectious risk to herself as well as her unborn child.**

Exclusion criteria:

Exclusion criteria relating to infectious disease must apply to both children and adults and be based on information available from relevant health authorities. Settings should invest in relevant publications (e.g. Oberklaid, F. 2004. *Health in early childhood settings*. Australia: Pademelon Press) to support all staff in controlling infection spread.

If there is a concern about exclusion, a doctor's opinion should be sought. Children of staff with transmissible infections should be excluded from the setting until deemed non infectious by a medical doctor.

Child to child transmission:

All children from a very early age should participate in experiences such as hand washing to establish a relationship between toileting/diaper change and hygiene/eating.

Confidentiality:

Children/students and staff have a right to confidentiality in relation to their health and medical history.

Carriers of HIV/Hepatitis B and C:

Children/staff known to be infected with the Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) or hepatitis carriers are NOT to be excluded from the setting based on their infection status and their

infection status is NOT to be disclosed to others. (A person's infection status is private and confidential information and need not be disclosed unless required by an authorized health officer). **All adults must strictly adhere to best practice guidelines when dealing with bodily fluids i.e. use of disposable gloves; thorough hand washing and sanitizing of all surfaces in contact with bodily fluid. This is for the protection of both children and adults. Pregnant women are again advised to be specifically diligent in use of disposable gloves when handling bodily fluids.**

Children at heightened risk of infection:

Certain children may be immune suppressed and therefore at greater risk of infection than other children. They may also experience a more severe form of illness than other children. Such individuals who are receiving treatment for e.g. cancer or other major diseases such as AIDS may require specific handling to ensure minimum exposure of these children to infection.

Immunization:

EtonHouse supports the age appropriate childhood immunization program as outlined by MOH (Singapore) and other relevant health authorities and recommends that children/staff be appropriately immunized.

Information about immunization schedules is available within *Guidelines for the prevention and control of infectious diseases in child care centres/kindergartens and preschool*; or from KK Women and Children's hospital, (Singapore). EH schools and preschools in other countries should follow the guidelines established by their own country specific health authorities.

Implementation practices and procedures:

All EtonHouse settings must have and make available to staff easily understood and **written guidelines** for maintaining health and infection control in that specific setting:

- Health plans for specific individuals who may require specific care and attention e.g. immune suppressed infections;
- Toileting and diaper change procedures (EH policy statement HS 06);
- Attending to injuries;
- Use of appropriate disinfectants and storage of disinfectants/chemicals in appropriate lockable storage;
- Guides to first aid and access to first aid kits (the contents of first aid kits must be kept up to date and fully stocked);
- Hand washing procedures (EH policy statement HS 03);
- Management and clearing of blood and bodily fluid spills;
- Use of protective barriers including gloves and masks;
- Safe handling and disposal of sharp objects (syringes and broken glass);
- Regular (ongoing) cleaning of surfaces and toys using disinfectants; regular sterilizing of equipment/ utensils;

- Children must be discouraged from sharing eating utensils/ towels; separate serving utensils should be used;
- Laundry procedures;
- Disposal of waste in waste containers (e.g. paper tissues should be disposed of in bins fitted with plastic liners);
- Environmental cleaning of sand pits and placement of animal covers to keep animals from fouling the sand pit;
- Appropriate food preparation, storage and handling techniques;
- Handling, cleaning and safety of pets;
- Cleaning of water troughs/tables (EH policy statement HS 05);
- **As with the EH HS14 policy on sick children 'Parent's responsibilities' and 'school/staff responsibilities' must be adhered to.**

Evaluation of this policy

A review of this policy and implementation procedures will be conducted every two years. This review will be undertaken collaboratively between school/preschool Principals and staff of the EtonHouse Education Centre (the policy reference group).

Reference List:

Aronsen, S. (2002). *Healthy young children*. Washington: NAEYC.

ECA Policy statement (2006). *Control of infection in early childhood settings*. Canberra: Australia. Early Childhood Australia.

MOH Guidelines for the prevention and control of infectious diseases in child care centres/kindergartens/ preschools. Singapore. Ministry of Health.

Oberklaid, F. (2004). *Health in early childhood settings*. Australia: Pademelon Press.