

QA2 – SERIOUS INCIDENT AND ILLNESS PROCEDURE

INFORMATION

Incidents and illness of a serious nature can occur in early childhood services, and it is critical that there are clear and specific processes for all stakeholders to follow to reduce the likelihood of such incidents occurring, and to manage them appropriately if they do happen to occur. We are committed to ensuring effective, research-based practices are in place to help prevent illness and to reduce the possibility of serious incidents taking place.

RESPONSIBILITIES

All team members, visitors, students and volunteers must comply with this procedure.

PROCEDURE

This procedure details:

- The definition of a serious incident or illness
- The roles and responsibilities of staff in relation to managing the occurrence of a serious incident/illness
- The roles and responsibilities of staff after a serious incident/illness has occurred

Please refer to "Unwell Children and Suspected Infectious Disease" and "Administration of First Aid" procedures for further related direction and advice.

WHAT IS A SERIOUS INCIDENT?

The definition of serious incidents as per the Regulations (Regulation 12) is defined as:

For the purposes of the definition of serious incident in section 5(1) of the Law, each of the following is prescribed as a serious incident—

(a) the death of a child—

- (i) while that child is being educated and cared for by an education and care service; or
- (ii) following an incident occurring while that child was being educated and cared for by an education and care service;

(b) any incident involving serious injury or trauma to a child occurring while that child is being educated and cared for by an education and care service—

(i) which a reasonable person would consider required urgent medical attention from a registered medical practitioner; or

- (ii) for which the child attended, or ought reasonably to have attended, a hospital;

Example— A broken limb.

(c) any incident involving serious illness of a child occurring while that child is being educated and cared for by an education and care service for which the child attended, or ought reasonably to have attended, a hospital; Example— Severe asthma attack, seizure or anaphylaxis reaction.

(d) any emergency for which emergency services attended;

(e) any circumstance where a child being educated and cared for by an education and care service—
(i) appears to be missing or cannot be accounted for; or
(ii) appears to have been taken or removed from the education and care service premises in a manner that contravenes these Regulations; or
(iii) is mistakenly locked in or locked out of the education and care service premises or any part of the premises.

DOCUMENTING AND REPORTING SERIOUS INCIDENTS

Regulations 174(2)(a) and 176(2)(a) require the Approved Provider or Nominated Supervisor to notify Regulatory Authorities within 24 hours of any serious incident occurring. All serious incidents should be documented using the "Incident, Injury, trauma and illness" form as soon as possible and within 24 hours of the incident. They must be reported to the regulatory authority using the [National Quality Agenda IT System](#) (NQA ITS).

All other incidents that do not meet the criteria of a "serious incident" still need to be documented using the "Incident, Injury, trauma and illness" form as soon as possible.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Nominated Supervisor/Responsible Person will ensure:

- Parents/guardians are notified as soon as practicable, and no later than within 24 hours, of the illness, accident or incident occurring
- Appropriate documentation and reporting is completed accurately and without deferral or delay
- Parents are notified of any infectious diseases circulating the service as soon as possible, and within 24 hours of detection
- The Public Health Unit are advised of the occurrence of a vaccine-preventable disease, or 3 or more cases of gastroenteritis
- Be aware of and use "[Staying Healthy in Child Care](#)" and the "Time Out" poster
- First aid kits are appropriately stocked, checked on a regular basis, and are easily accessible and recognised at the service and during excursions
- First aid, anaphylaxis management training and asthma management training is current and updated
- First aid qualified Educators are present at all times on the roster and in the service
- Adults or children who are ill are excluded for the appropriate period
- Staff and children always practice recommended hand hygiene
- Effective cleaning practices are followed, with extra cleaning conducted in the event of an outbreak of gastroenteritis - specific cleaning may be directed to be completed by the Public Health Unit
- Staff who have vomiting and / or diarrhoea will be sent home

- Cold food is kept cold (below 5 °C) and hot food hot (above 60°C) to discourage the growth of bacteria until point of food consumption.

After an incident/illness:

Review the situation that led to the incident and the way that staff responded to the event and determine if any further actions needs to take place. For example, if a child tripped over a tree root and cut their head open, requiring stitches, a plan will need to be determined to effectively deal with the tree root. Or if staff didn't know where to locate the First Aid Kit, then either a new place for the kit needs to be determined, or orientation and training practices need to be reviewed.

Educators will:

- Support and assist children to remain comfortable until their parent arrives to collect them
- Advise parents to keep their child home until they are feeling well, and they have not had any symptoms for the recommended time period
- Complete documentation and reporting as soon as possible and as required
- Practice effective hand hygiene techniques
- Ensure that effective cleaning practices are used, and documented where required
- Engage in a review of the incident with the Nominated Supervisor/Responsible Person in Charge

IMPORTANT TO NOTE

Even when an incident occurs that does not meet the definition of a "serious incident" the above roles and responsibilities still apply, with the only difference being you do not need to report it to the Regulatory Authority. If you are in doubt as to whether an incident meets the "serious incident" definition, call your Regulatory Authority and seek their advice.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS, REFERENCES AND RESOURCES

ACECQA. (2018). *Guide to the National Quality Framework*. Retrieved 24 April 2019 from <http://files.acecqa.gov.au/files/NQF/Guide-to-the-NQF.pdf>

Gibbs, L. (2008). *Policy Development in early childhood setting*. Jamberoo: Pademelon Press.

National Health and Medical Research Council. (2013). *Staying Healthy: Preventing infectious disease in early childhood education and care services, 5th edn*. Retrieved 24 April 2019 from <https://www.nhmrc.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/reports/clinical%20guidelines/ch55-staying-healthy.pdf>

Disease prevention in education and care services
<https://www.health.qld.gov.au/public-health/schools/prevention>

DOCUMENT CONTROL

Date Reviewed	Modifications
June 2019	Created new policy document and format.

8 February 2022	No changes
4 April 2023	Refreshed definition of Serious Incident; Updated reference to Qld Health