

IMMUNISATION POLICY

Date: 1995, Revised 15/09/2004, Revised 5/03/08, Reviewed 7/02/11, Revised 18/02/15, Reviewed 9/07/18

Adopted by Management Committee _____ **Date** _____

AIM:

This Policy and related procedures has been developed to manage and prevent the control of certain infectious diseases among the University Preschool & Child Care (UPCCC) community. The Immunisation Policy aims to:

- ensure, as far as possible, that all UPCCC children are age appropriately immunised as per the schedule set out by ACT Health (see end of document);
- ensure all staff have had their childhood immunisations and have boosters for tetanus and diphtheria;
- maintain up to date immunisation records of children and staff;
- encourage all families and staff to keep their immunisation status as comprehensive as possible by having new vaccines as they become available.

EXPLANATION:

Children in child care settings are at increased risk of infectious diseases compared to children cared for at home. Vaccine-preventable diseases such as measles and whooping cough can have serious health side effects, especially in younger children. Children in child care settings should be age-appropriately immunised. Child care staff also appear to be at greater risk of some infections than most occupational groups and need protection against infectious diseases.

Scheduled immunisation programs have proved to be very successful and many conditions are rarely seen today and it is argued that this has caused complacency in some sections of the community. UPCCC encourages parents to immunise their children fully (unless they have a pre-existing medical condition which makes this not possible) as non-immunised children may spread infection in the community. While there are common, usually mild side effects to the immunisation injections, UPCCC follows government health advice that the child is at far greater risk of harm from contracting one of the infections than from the immunisation itself.

Families who register a conscientious objection to immunisation are usually concerned with safety of vaccines, a specific risk/side effect, or have a child who has had an adverse reaction to a previous vaccination. UPCCC respects their views while respectfully providing information on our Immunisation Policy.

IMPLEMENTATION:

Parent Responsibilities

The UPCCC enrolment form requires a parent/guardian to indicate whether or not their child is immunised and to acknowledge that they agree to:

1. provide a photocopy of a confirmed record of their child's immunisation (such as the Blue Book, or Immunisation History Statement), in accordance with the Public Health Regulation 2000;
2. inform UPCCC when any updates to the record occur;
3. ensure their child's immunisation is kept up to date;
4. the possible exclusion of their child if they are not immunised, or their immunisations are not up to date during an outbreak of a vaccine preventable disease;

Where a parent/guardian indicates that they are opposed to immunisation and that their child is not immunised they will be required to acknowledge that

1. They will supply the UPCCC with documentary evidence of medical or other reasons for non-immunisation.
2. They understand that their child will be excluded from the Centre in the event of an outbreak of a vaccine preventable disease; and,
3. That they agree to pay fees during the period of exclusion or will relinquish their child's place.

Director Responsibilities

Maintaining an Immunisation Record

The Director is responsible for maintaining an Immunisation Register containing a form for each child with the following details:

1. name, date of birth;
2. age at which immunisation is due and date given;
3. date vaccination record was sighted;
4. where/by whom it was given;
5. whether the child is up to date with immunisations;
6. if the child has not been immunised, the reasons why, eg, parental choice/underlying medical condition.

The Director is responsible for ensuring the register is reviewed monthly to find which children are behind on their schedule and respectfully encouraging families to quickly rectify the situation.

The Director is also responsible for ensuring that the Management Committee is notified in the monthly report if there are any unimmunised children attending the Centre.

Disease Notification and Exclusion Requirements

If any UPCCC child, staff member or visitor has a vaccine preventable disease, eg measles/whooping cough, the Director will follow the requirements of the Public Health Regulation 2000 and:

1. inform ACT Health directly and ask for advice;
2. inform in writing all families, staff and persons normally working or visiting the premises that an outbreak of the particular infectious disease has occurred;
3. contact ACT Public Health Unit to seek advice about exclusion of children and staff who are not immunised or do not have up to date immunisation until the outbreak has resolved;
4. ask the Public Health Unit for advice on exclusion of children too young to be immunised for that particular disease;
5. on instruction of ACT Public Health Unit, inform in writing any staff member or family of any child who is excluded, giving the reason and length of exclusion period.

Full fees are payable for excluded children unless the Management Committee determines otherwise.

Staff Immunisations

On employment the director will request a copy of all childhood immunisations that the staff member has had and will recommend that unimmunised staff complete the courses of required vaccines for measles, mumps, rubella, polio, pertussis, diphtheria and tetanus.

In addition:

1. All staff are strongly encouraged to have current immunisation against tetanus and diphtheria, ie a booster of ADT every 10 years. (*Except in cases where a staff member has a pre-existing medical condition which prevents immunisation*)
All staff employed by University Preschool & Childcare Centre are strongly encouraged to be immunised against Hepatitis A & B.
2. The Centre Management Committee has agreed to reimburse staff for the cost of any immunisations recommended in the "Australian Immunisation Handbook" for staff at risk of occupationally-acquired vaccine preventable diseases. (Refer The Australian Immunisation Handbook 10th Edition, table 2.3.2)

3. Unimmunised staff will be excluded from the centre when there is a confirmed outbreak of a vaccine preventable disease present at the centre. This leave will be deducted from the staff members' personal leave or recreation leave. If the leave period extends beyond the leave entitlement available it will be taken as leave without pay.
4. Staff who choose not to be immunised need to provide the centre with a statutory declaration stating that they are aware of the risks associated with not being immunised and the consequences of this decision should an outbreak of a vaccine preventable outbreak occur at the centre.

Communication

The Director is responsible for providing all UPCCC families and staff with a copy of the Immunisation Policy on enrolment.

In addition:

1. Information/factsheets about immunisations and vaccine preventable diseases and the Australian Standard Vaccination Schedule will be regularly circulated to families and staff.
2. Local nurses and doctors will be encouraged to visit and talk about immunisation.
3. Information / wall charts will be displayed in children's rooms

Children Returning to Care after Receiving Immunisation

UPCCC recommends that parents have children immunised at the end of the day or keep children, particularly babies, at home following immunisations early in the day as side effects are common. If parents insist they return to UPCCC on medication such as panadol/paracetamol, staff will respectfully communicate with parents and refer them to the guidelines in the Illness Policy if the child is not coping in the care setting. In accordance with the Illness Policy, any child who has been given medication to manage a temperature (e.g. paracetamol/nurofen) should not be brought to the Centre

Privacy and Confidentiality Privacy and Confidentiality

The right of children, families and staff to be afforded a level of privacy and confidentiality with regard to their immunisation status is respected by UPCCC. UPCCC ensures the confidentiality of any personal identifying information of any staff member or child who is not immunised for any reason. (*Refer Privacy and Confidentiality Policy*).

Sources:

ACT Government, *Education and Care Services National Law (ACT) Act 2011*, and the Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011 (available from <http://www.legislation.nsw.gov.au/>)

ACT Health. (2018). *ACT Immunisation Requirements for entry into school, preschool and childcare 2018 – Parent Guide*. Retrieved from:

<http://www.health.act.gov.au/sites/default/files//ACT%20Immunisation%20Requirements%20for%20entry%20into%20school%2C%20preschool%20and%20child%20care%20Parents%20Guide%20Booklet%202018.pdf> on 9/07/18

ACT Health (2018) ACT Health Immunisation Schedule. Retrieved from:

<http://health.act.gov.au/sites/default/files//ACT%20Health%20Immunisation%20Schedule.pdf> on 9/07/2018

Childcare and Children's Health. (2005). *Infection control and some common infections in young children*. Childcare and Children's Health, 8 (3), 1-4.

Department of Health. (2017). *Immunisation*. Retrieved from <https://beta.health.gov.au/health-topics/immunisation> on 9/07/18

National Health Medical Research Council. (2006). *Staying Healthy in Child Care – Preventing Infectious Diseases in Child Care*, 5th Edition. Retrieved 9/07/18, from

<http://www.nhmrc.gov.au/files/nhmrc/file/publications/synopses/ch43.pdf>

National Health Medical Research Council. (2017). *Australian Immunisation Handbook*, 10th Edition. 2017 update. Retrieved 9/07/18 from, <http://www.immunise.health.gov.au/internet/immunise/publishing.nsf/Content/Handbook10-home>

Date for Review: July 2020