

Health, Hygiene and Infection Control

Policy Statement

Meerilinga aims to promote and protect the health, safety and wellbeing of our Community members using processes and policies to maintain high standards of cleanliness, hygiene and safety. Through our WH&S standards and cleaning regimes, we will greatly reduce the risk of infection and illnesses from spreading. A holistic and consistent approach across the organisation ensures we effectively meet this aim.

Environmental responsibility also encompasses our practice in ways that are sustainable and environmentally friendly.

Policy Purpose

The health and safety of our Community will be priority. Actively promoting a healthy environment in which children will grow and learn about the world around them. We are committed to protecting our Community through the implementation and monitoring of effective hygiene practices and infection control strategies.

Scope

This policy applies to families, workers, students, volunteers and visitors engaged with Meerilinga.

Exclusions

Policy Review

Biennial or from time to time when the organisation may make changes to this policy to improve the effectiveness of its operations and customer service.

Policy Reviewed	5 July 2023	By	Advisor Policy & Compliance
Approved By	CEO		
Previous Review	15 February 2021		

Implementation

All Meerilinga community members will continuously promote healthy hygiene practices to minimise the risk of infection. Cleaning, hygiene and safety procedures will be followed at all times and in accordance with documented processes and schedules to ensure the premises, furniture and equipment are safe, clean and well maintained.

Effective hygiene strategies at the service include:

- Spot and routine scheduled cleaning.
- Effective hand washing practices.

- Safe and hygienic storage, handling, preparation and serving of all food and drinks, including food bought from home.
- Identifying and excluding sick children and adults.
- Maintaining immunisation records for children and informing adults on vaccine preventable diseases.

Refer to the Illness and Infectious Disease – Immunisation Policy and Process

- Supporting children to learn hygiene practices including handwashing, cough and sneeze etiquette and dental hygiene.
- Effective handling, storage and disposal or washing of soiled items which includes children's bedding.
- The use of personal protection equipment.
- Sharing hygiene routines and information with families for continued and reinforced personal health and hygiene.

Universal health and hygiene processes are implemented and must be consistently practiced across the Children and Community Services (CCS). Information from recognised authorities about current health, hygiene and safety guidelines is used to inform policies, procedures and practices within the organisation.

Review and amendments to policy and process is done in consultation with management, Educators, staff, children, families and visitors of the Service. Advance notice of the adjustments made to the policy and process will be given and necessary changes must be implemented.

Educators, staff, students and volunteers will be provided with training on the universal hygiene processes and infection control strategies.

In any instances where children display any signs of illness or injury, educators will refer to the Incident, Injury, Trauma, Illness and Infectious Diseases Policies and Processes.

Through curriculum planning and in accordance with the Early Years Learning Framework, Educators and staff will actively support children to learn hygiene practices and promote their personal health and hygiene.

Information on health, hygiene, safe food and dental care principles and practices will be shared with the Meerilinga community as well as displayed throughout the Service.

Refer to the Communication Plan in the Relationships and Partnerships with Families policy

Hand Hygiene

Hand hygiene is considered to be the most effective way of controlling the spread of infection. <https://nhmrc.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/reports/clinical%20guidelines/ch55-staying-healthy.pdf> 1.3.1 - Effective hand hygiene

We will provide adequate and age appropriate hand washing facilities that include suitable height basins, liquid hand soap and hand towels for all individuals to wash and dry their hands.

Individuals arriving or departing the Children and Family Centre are encouraged to clean their hands using the 'Hand Sanitiser' mounted on the wall at the entry of the Centre.

Individuals should wash their hands:

- Upon arrival to reduce the introduction of germs to prevent cross infection between the home and the service.
- Before and after handling food.
- Before and after doing any routine tasks such as cleaning, changing nappies etc.
- After wiping your nose or a child's nose.
- After coughing or sneezing.
- Before and after wearing gloves.
- Immediately after you may have accidentally been in contact with bodily fluids bodily fluids such as urine, vomit and faeces before you were able to put gloves on.
- After going to the toilet.
- After giving first aid.
- Before and after giving medication to a child.
- After handling animals.
- Before going home to prevent taking germs home.

There are numerous times throughout the day where educators and staff are able to model correct hand washing procedures. Hand washing procedures are displayed at hand washing facilities throughout the Centre.

Appropriate use of Gloves

Wearing gloves does not replace the need to wash your hands. Hand hygiene must be performed before and after using gloves.

Disposable gloves only need to be worn when a person is likely to come in contact with bodily fluids or excretions, such as when changing nappies, toileting a child or cleaning up urine, vomit or blood.

*Refer to the process section of this policy for the Bodily Fluids – Spills Management cleaning procedure.
Refer to the process section of the Toileting and Nappy Change policy for Nappy Change procedure.*

Hygiene

Individual cloths will be used to clean a child's face or to dry their hands after handwashing. If necessary, Educators and staff may assist a child. Cloths will be laundered after use.

Nasal Hygiene:

Adults and children will use Individual tissues to wipe their nose. If necessary, Educators and staff may assist a child. Tissues will be disposed of immediately and appropriately after use. Wash hands or use hand sanitiser until there's access hand washing facilities. It is not necessary to wear gloves when wiping a child's nose.

Cough and Sneeze Etiquette:

Individuals are encouraged to practice cough and sneeze etiquette by coughing or sneezing into their inner elbow. Covering the mouth and nose will reduce how far droplets travel and stop them from contaminating other surfaces.

Educators and staff will:

- Avoid coming to the Centre when they are unwell.
Refer to the Illness and Infectious Disease policy for exclusion periods.
- Maintain personal healthy and clean habits, including clean nails and hair, and fastening back long hair.
- Act as role models for children and help them to learn concepts of good personal hygiene, good habits when handling food, using the toilet and procedures for hand washing.

Dental Care

Meerilinga believes that it is important to establish and reinforce good dental health practices for each child. Meerilinga services will therefore provide a learning environment that raises dental health awareness, supports the development and practice of valuable life skills and habits for children.

Educators and staff will:

- Arrange for dental health professionals to attend the service to discuss good dental health practices guidelines with educators, staff, children and families.
- Integrate educative information and guidelines on good dental health practices into the daily routine and the children's program. This may include information on tooth brushing, tooth friendly healthy snacks and drinks and going to the dentist.
- Have a discussion with children and families about dental health practices used at home.
- Children encouraged to rinse their mouths with water after every snack and meal
- Be active role models for children and families at the service.
- Ensure information is available to families and where possible provided in a family's home language.
- Demonstrate "Swish Swish Swallow" after eating. Children have a drink of water after food, and before swallowing it, they swish swish it around their mouth, removing food particles from teeth, then swallowing. (Swish Swish Swallow).

Food Handling

Food safety is an important part of infection control at the Centre. The most effective ways to prevent diseases spreading through food are hand hygiene; not sharing food, plates or utensils; preparing and storing food properly; and keeping food preparation areas clean.

Hand hygiene must be performed by all individuals before and after handling food.

The CCS community kitchen area and surfaces will be cleaned with detergent and water before and after food preparation as well as at the end of each day.

To prevent food contamination, Educators, students and volunteers will have access to appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) such as gloves, apron and hair cover to use when preparing and serving food.

Families provide their child with sufficient healthy food for the duration of the day and their own water drink bottle. Children are encouraged not to share their drink bottles, food or eating utensils. Serving or eating utensils will be cleaned with detergent and water after use or if dropped on the floor.

The same infection control measures apply when children participate in planned cooking experiences. Choosing foods that require cooking are best suited for these experiences due to exposure to high temperatures and killing any bacteria that may be in the food.

Bottles and teats that may be used within our programs will be cleaned with detergent and water after each use.

Food will be stored and prepared safely in accordance with the Food Safety principles as outlined in the Food Safety Standards and our local authority. To keep food in the 'safe zone', hot food must be kept hot at more than 60°C or cold food at 5°C or less.

To prevent cross contamination with raw and cooked foods:

- Raw and cooked foods will stored separately in the fridge.
- Cooked food above uncooked food in the fridge.
- Use separate utensils and equipment for raw and cooked food eg: cutting boards and knives.

Place Administrators, Educators, staff and students will complete a recognised food safety training program during their orientation process and every 12 months thereafter.

Maintaining a Clean Environment

All Meerilinga community members engaged in our services and programs are responsible for maintaining a clean and hygienic environment. Adhering to policies and processes, their responsibilities include daily cleaning of equipment and facilities as well as the overall presentation of the environment.

The Service will use detergent and water to clean. Disinfectants will only be used as an additional control measure after cleaning equipment or the environment that may have come in contact with bodily fluids or during an outbreak of an infectious disease.

Chemicals will be prepared and used in accordance with the manufacturers instructions and centre processes. All Chemical must be locked away after use.

Refer to Section 7 Work Health and Safety Policies – Use and Storage of Dangerous Products Policy and procedure.

The service has a documented cleaning schedule that outlines all items to be cleaned along with the frequency of the cleaning. Members are required to initial the schedule as each task is completed.

To reduce the risk of cross contamination, colour coded cloths and cleaning equipment will be used for cleaning separate areas. The colour codes are displayed in the playroom, bathroom, kitchen and laundry areas.

• Toys and Equipment:

Children's toys and equipment using detergent and water or the dishwasher. Toys will be removed immediately if they have been sneezed on, mouthed, soiled or if it has been handled by a child who is unwell.

Refer to the process section of this policy for the Toy cleaning procedure.

- **Tables and Floors**

All tables and surfaces frequently used for children's activities will be cleaned throughout the day and before and after meal times. Children's chairs will be cleaned after use at mealtimes.

Floors swept after meals or messy activities and cleaned if required.

Refer to the process section of this policy for the Tables, General Surfaces and Floor cleaning procedures.

- **Bathroom and Nappy Change Facilities**

Adult and Children's bathrooms will be cleaned once during the day and periodically checked throughout the day to ensure cleanliness is maintained. Bathroom floors will be mopped when excessively wet or dirty in addition to the normal cleaning routine.

Refer to the process section of this policy for the Bathroom cleaning procedure.

Appropriate nappy changing facilities and stock will be provided where children in nappies are cared for and an approved procedure will be displayed in these areas.

Nappy change tables and areas will be cleaned after each use.

Refer to the process section of the Toileting and Nappy Change policy for Nappy Change procedure.

Restroom facilities used by community groups will be cleaned after each session, waste managed and stock maintained eg: hand towels and toilet roll.

Cleaning in accordance with the bathroom cleaning procedure.

- **Children's Bedding for Sleep and Rest**

Individual bed mat and linen will be provided for children.

Beds will be placed at least 5 cm apart to ensure they are not touching.

Children will rest 'head to toe' to avoid cross infection while resting or asleep.

After use, linen will be laundered and bed mat cleaned with detergent and water, left to air dry before storing away.

Refer to Bodily Fluids and Spills Management section below for management of soiled bedding and clothes.

- **Bodily Fluids and Spills Management**

Areas or equipment contaminated with body fluids or excretions, urine, vomit or blood (except small or large spills of blood) will be cleaned with detergent and water and left to air dry in direct sunlight where possible.

Disinfectants will only be used as an additional control measure after cleaning an area or equipment that may have come in contact with bodily fluids or during an outbreak of an infectious disease.

Diluted bleach should only be used when cleaning blood spill larger than the size of our palm, after the area has been cleaned with detergent and water first.

Soiled linen, cleaning cloths or clothes will be managed hygienically. Wear gloves when handling soiled items and if laundered at the Centre, wash separately and dry in the sunlight or hot cycle in clothes dryer (winter months only).

Children's soiled clothing will be placed in the child's re-usable wet bag, stored securely and returned to the child's home for laundering.

After cleaning, soiled bed mats will be sprayed with disinfectant and placed outside in direct sunlight for drying.

Refer to the process section of this policy for the Bodily Fluids and Spills Management cleaning procedure.

- ***Laundering and Facilities***

Laundry facilities are adequate and appropriate for the service in accordance with Regulation 106 and are located and maintained in a way that does not pose a risk to children.

The service will launder cloth towels, material based toys, cushion covers, soiled cloths and mop heads in accordance with the services internal cleaning schedule.

- ***Pets and Animals***

Animals visiting or residing on the premises will be kept in separate areas used by the children. Its environment will be maintained in a clean and healthy condition.

Children and adults will employ effective hand hygiene after touching or feeding animals, cleaning their care equipment or environment.

All environmental surfaces in areas where animals have been present will be cleaned with detergent and water.

Meerilinga premises or service venues housing an approved resident pet will require a 'pet spill kit' to be accessible at all times to clean up bodily fluids such as urine, faeces or vomit from the animal. The area or equipment must be contained and cleaned immediately.

- ***Sandpits***

Sandpits will be covered when the centre is closed to prevent contamination from animal faeces or inappropriately discarded sharp or dangerous objects such as broken glass.

Sand is raked over and screened for hazards when conducting the CFC Grounds check every morning before the children go outdoors.

Any contamination of the sand by animal or human bodily fluids or excretions will be removed using a shovel, disposed of in a waste bag and discarded appropriately. The area and the shovel are cleaned with detergent and water. Allow to air dry in the sunlight.

Children must wash their hands after playing in the sandpit.

- ***Disposal of Foreign and Sharp objects***

Refer to Section 7 – Workplace health and Safety Policy Manual – Use and Storage of Dangerous Products Policy - Safe Disposal of Syringes and Sharp Process.

The Co-ordinator / Nominated Supervisor will ensure:

- The implementation of recommendations from Staying Healthy in Child Care – Preventing the spread of Infectious Diseases in the early childhood environment.
- Children are protected from harm or hazard by ensuring Educators, staff, students and volunteers understand relevant policies and processes related to cleaning and maintaining safe environments for children.
- A hygienic environment is maintained at all times. The daily cleaning of the Children and Community Service is carried out to a satisfactory standard and in accordance with Meerilinga policy and processes.
- The cleaning, safety checks and risk assessments of the environment are documented in accordance with relevant schedules and audits of the organisation.
- Respond to any identified risks, repairs, cleaning or maintenance issues promptly.
- Educators, staff, children and families will have access to health information that may include organising professionals to visit the Service.

Educators will ensure:

- Meerilinga's policies and processes related to cleaning and maintaining safe environments for children are adhered to at all times.
- They proactively identify and manage risks and take precautions to protect children from harm or hazard.
- Responsibility for daily cleaning of the CCS to ensure cleanliness and hygiene standards are maintained throughout the day.
- Relevant cleaning, safety checks and risk assessments of the environment are conducted, documented and signed in accordance with relevant schedules and audits of the organisation.
- Cleaning duties do not compromise care and supervision of children at any time.
- They identify when the building, premises, furniture or equipment require cleaning or maintenance. The identified issue will be dealt with immediately. This will be done by cleaning as required, removing the damaged furniture or equipment to be repaired or discarded as decided by the Place Advisor. The educator will complete required documentation and refer this to the Place Administrator for attention.
- To provide diverse opportunities for children to participate in hygiene practices, including routine opportunities, and intentional practice.
- Children are involved in discussions about health and safety. Guidelines are developed in consultation with children to ensure a safe environment for all.
- Role model effective hygiene and good cleaning practices for the children. Encourage children to be involved in the cleaning of the environment where appropriate.
- Be aware of relevant immunisation guidelines for children and themselves.
- Trainee students engaged in practicum placements onsite in Meerilinga services are provided with ongoing training to guide practice and ensure compliance in the application of this policy and processes.