

Infectious Diseases and Immunisation Policy

(Including exclusion procedures)

Policy No:	23 (2.10)	Version:	3 (August 2017)
Responsibility:	School Chair	Scheduled Review Date:	April 2022

1.0 Purpose

This policy is concerned with a whole school approach to the health and safety of all students attending Tarremah Steiner School and any affiliated programs or services.

2.0 Policy Statement

To minimise the risk to any student attending Tarremah Steiner School and any affiliated programs or services in regard to infectious diseases and to ensure effective hygienic and exclusion practices are implemented.

3.0 Policy Elements.

Tarremah's policy on vaccination is that we respect parents' right to exercise their discretion in consultation with their health professionals.

Like all schools, Tarremah collects vaccination documentation when children enrol following current requirements of the Tasmanian *Public Health Act 1997*.

Implementing appropriate hygiene practices may break the cycle of infection and infectious disease. Early exclusion of children and staff may reduce the spread of the infection and infectious disease. Parents and staff will be encouraged to watch for early signs and symptoms and implement appropriate exclusion periods.

Tarremah Steiner School and any affiliated programs or services will maintain relevant records in regard to cases of infectious disease, which require either exclusion and/or notification to relevant health authorities.

Tarremah Steiner School and any affiliated programs or services will ensure that staff and families are promptly informed about the occurrence of infectious diseases, in a manner that respects the rights of individual students or staff.

Staff, students and families are required to adhere to relevant policies and procedures to minimise the spread of infectious diseases.

4.0 Procedure

It is generally accepted that a clean and hygienic environment is desirable for the general health of students, staff and others.

Children are influenced by the behaviour of others around them. When staff role model positive health and hygiene practices, students are more likely to adopt appropriate health and hygiene practices. This may include discussions regarding not sharing drinking containers and eating utensils, in order to minimise the risk of infection such as meningococcal septicaemia.

A number of infectious diseases may be potentially transmitted through body contact (e.g. body fluids, mucous membranes) and the spread of infectious diseases may be minimised by breaking the cycle of infection. The most effective steps in breaking the chain of infection and minimising the spread of disease includes:

- Effective hand hygiene;
- Exclusion of ill students, teachers and other persons; and
- Immunisation.

Other strategies to prevent spread of infectious diseases include:

- Cough and sneeze etiquette;
- Appropriate use of gloves; and
- Effective environmental cleaning.

Where dealing with an infection control incident, Tarremah Steiner School staff will:

- Only treat students (and associated areas or items such as clothing) when wearing disposable gloves.
Note: wearing gloves does not replace the need to effectively wash hands, before and after using gloves.
- When cleaning the infected area:
 - Warm water and detergent will be used (follow manufacturer's instructions).
 - Rinse the surface with clean water.
 - Dry the surface.
 - Then use either disinfectant (for spot blood spills and other body substances) or bleach (for small and large blood spills). Where a disinfectant or bleach is used, allow sufficient time for the area or equipment to dry, at least 10 minutes.
- Infected items (e.g. clothing, disposable gloves) will be placed in a plastic bag and sealed for disposal.

The aim of environmental cleaning is to minimise the number of germs that survive on surfaces.

Where a student becomes unwell while attending Tarremah Steiner School or any affiliated program or service, the student's condition must be monitored, the student may be removed from the group

(without negatively excluding them i.e. in a quiet area that can be easily supervised) and arrangements must be made for the collection of the student by a parent or other person authorised to do as soon as possible.

Where practicable, staff may record the time they attempt to call the student's parent and/or emergency contacts. Any changes to the student's condition may also be recorded.

Parents are required to advise Tarremah Steiner School and any affiliated programs or services if their child is unwell or has been diagnosed with a notifiable disease (see table attached). Where a parent advises that their child has been diagnosed with a notifiable disease, the school must immediately notify the Director of Public Health, Department of Health (1800 671 738). An authorised officer will advise the service of any necessary further action. Current exclusion periods may be verified via Staying Healthy (available online) or the Tasmanian Department of Health website.

Where a record is kept in regard to a child attending the Tarremah Steiner School Early Childhood Centre, the record must include:

- The name and age of child;
- The symptoms, and the date and time symptoms were noticed;
- The room/area of school, or whether the school was notified by the parent; and
- Any action taken.

The record must be kept up to date, in a safe and secure place, in a confidential manner and retained for at least six years.

Where a record is kept in regard to a child attending the Tarremah Steiner School ECC, the record must be made in line with the relevant Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Policy.

- 1) Sick children are the parents' responsibility. A parent will be called if a child develops a fever or is too unwell to participate in class.
- 2) Parents are to advise the office or child's teacher of any contagious or transmittable illnesses.

Exclusion

On enrolment, parents must provide current proof of each student's vaccination records. A copy of these records and/or information in regard to each student's immunisation status will be stored confidentially with the student's enrolment record.

Where a student has not been vaccinated or only naturopathically or homeopathically vaccinated, and there is an outbreak of a known infectious disease, the student (or other relevant person) will be excluded in line with the exclusion periods contained within the NHMRC Staying Healthy – Preventing infectious diseases in early childhood education and care services (2013) (available online).

The aim of exclusion is to reduce the spread of infectious disease. The less contact there is between people who have an infectious disease and people who are at risk of catching the disease, the less

chance the disease has of spreading. The need for exclusion and the length of time a person is excluded depend on:

- How easily the infection can spread;
- How long the person is likely to be infectious;
- How severe the disease can be;
- The individual person's immunisation status.

5.0 Responsibilities

- School Chair
- Business Manager

6.0 Related Documents

- Accident, Injury and Incident Policy
- Medical Treatment of Sick or Injured Students Policy

7.0 Reference/Legislation

- Tasmanian Public Health Act 1997
- NHMRC Staying Healthy – Preventing infectious diseases in early childhood education and care services (2013)
- Guidelines for Notification of Notifiable Diseases, Human Pathogenic Organisms and Contaminants

8.0 Contact Point

- School Executive

9.0 Authorization

Executive:

Council:

Name:

Date:

