Infectious Diseases and Immunisation Policy

(Including exclusion procedures)

Policy No:	2.10	Version:	5 (April 2024)
Responsibility:	School Chair	Scheduled Review Date:	August 2026/29

1.0 Purpose

This policy outlines a whole school approach to the minimisation of the spread of infectious diseases to students at Tarremah Steiner School.

2.0 Policy Statement

Tarremah Steiner School endeavours to do all that is reasonable to minimise the risk of spreading infectious diseases, this includes isolating or excluding infected individuals and those at greater risk.

3.0 Policy Elements

With regard to vaccinations, we respect parents' right to exercise their discretion in consultation with their health professionals.

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

Implementing appropriate hygiene practices and early exclusion of infected students 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.

The School will maintain relevant records regarding cases of infectious disease, which require either exclusion and/or notification to relevant health authorities.

We 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 the, hence when staff role model positive health and hygiene practices, students may be more likely to adopt appropriate health and hygiene practices. This may include discussions regarding not sharing drinking containers and eating utensils, to minimise the risk of infection.

Several infectious diseases are 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 may include:

- Effective hand hygiene
- Exclusion of ill students, staff and other persons
- Immunisation
- Promoting good health habits – eg. Warmth, nutrition and sleep.

Other strategies to prevent the spread of infectious diseases may include:

- Respiratory hygiene (i.e. 'cover your cough and sneeze' and dispose of tissues in a bin).
- Appropriate use of gloves and masks; and
- Effective environmental cleaning to minimise the number of germs that survive on surfaces.

Where a student becomes unwell while attending Tarremah Steiner School, the student's condition must be monitored. The student may be isolated 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 so as soon as possible.

Staff will record the time they attempt to call the student's parent and/or emergency contacts, as well as any changes to the student's condition.

- Parents are required to advise Tarremah Steiner School if their child is unwell or has been diagnosed with a notifiable disease (see Tasmanian Government Department of Health website for up-to-date information -https://www.health.tas.gov.au/health-topics/infectious-diseases/infectious-diseases-guides-and-factsheets)

- 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 School 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 regarding a student, the record must include:

- The name, year level and age of the student
- The symptoms, and the date and time symptoms were noticed
- The room/area of the school,
- Whether the school was notified by the parent
- 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.

Exclusion

The aim of exclusion is to reduce the spread of infectious diseases. 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. Excluding ill students and staff is an effective way to limit the spread of infection.

If a student or staff member has not been medically vaccinated ('not medically vaccinated' includes those who may have been naturopathically or homoeopathically vaccinated), they will be excluded from care during outbreaks of some infectious diseases (such as measles and pertussis), even if the student or staff member is well. Exclusion periods are contained within the NHMRC Staying Healthy – Preventing infectious diseases in early childhood education and care services (2013) (https://www.nhmrc.gov.au/about-us/publications/staying-healthy-preventing-infectious-diseases-early-childhood-education-and-care-services).

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 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
- WHS 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 and Food Contaminants
- Health Direct
- Tasmanian Government Department of Health

8.0 Contact Point

- School Executive

9.0 Authorisation

Executive: Council:

Name:

Date: