

2.1 Handwashing

Background

The most effective method of hand hygiene is using soap and water. Washing hands with soap and running water loosens, dilutes and flushes off dirt and germs. Soap alone cannot remove dirt or kill germs—it is the combination of running water, rubbing hands and the detergent in the soap that helps loosen the dirt, remove the germs and rinse them off skin. Handwashing is the most significant way to reduce the spread of communicable diseases and minimise cross infection.

Policy statement

This Policy details the Service's approach to handwashing.

Strategies and practices

- The Service has suitably sized handwashing facilities located throughout the building. Liquid soap/foam and paper towels are provided at each. QA 3.1.1
- Educators model good handwashing procedures at appropriate times to the children. In addition, they intentionally teach and encourage the children to use the correct handwashing procedure. Children who can stand at a sink but not wash their hands independently are assisted to do so. QA 2.1.3
- The Handwashing Poster – NHMRC is displayed in nappy change areas and food preparation and eating areas throughout the Service. QA 2.1.3
- All staff, students, volunteers and children should wash their hands:
 - On arrival at the Service.
 - When entering the kitchen
 - Before and after eating, or feeding a child;
 - Before and after handling food;
 - Before and after giving medication and providing medical procedures or first aid;
 - Before and after changing a nappy;
 - After using the toilet or helping a child use a toilet;
 - After cleaning up blood, faeces or vomit;
 - After wiping a nose (Alternatively, antibacterial hand gel may be used);
 - After touching pets and other animals;
 - After playing outside;
 - Before and after using gloves and when changing gloves;
 - After cleaning, gardening and handling garbage; and,
 - Before going home. QA 2.1.3

Effective handwashing procedures:

- Wet hands with running water;
- Apply liquid soap and spread over hands.
- Rub hands together while counting to ten slowly;
- Wash hands all over, including backs of hands, wrists, between fingers, under fingernails;
- Rinse hands thoroughly under clean, running water while counting to ten slowly;
- Turn tap off using a clean piece of paper towel;
- Pat hands dry using another clean piece of paper towel, or use the air dryer.

Washing and rinsing your hands should take about as long as singing Happy Birthday twice. QA 2.1.3

Additional safe practices for babies

- Babies need their hands washed as often and as thoroughly as older children. If the baby is unable to stand at a hand basin, wash their hands with either pre-moistened towelette or a wet disposable cloth, and then pat dry with paper towel. QA 2.1.3

Responsibilities of parents

- To wash their hands when they arrive at the Service and leave, and to help their child to do the same.

Links to other policies

- Administration of Medication Policy
- Food Preparation, Storage and Handling
- Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Policy
- Managing Infectious Diseases
- Nappy Change and Toileting Policy
- Nutrition, Food and Beverages Policy
- Supervision Policy

Sources, Further reading and useful websites

- Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011.
- Guide to the National Quality Standard 2011.
- National Health and Medical Research Council. (2012). Staying Healthy: Preventing infectious diseases in early childhood education and care services. 5th edition.
http://www.nhmrc.gov.au/files/nhmrc/publications/attachments/ch55_staying_healthy_cildcare_5th_edition_0.pdf accessed 23 November 2013
- National Health and Medical Research Council – <http://www.nhmrc.gov.au/>

- Tansey, S. (2009). *NCAC Factsheet: Hygiene in child care*. <http://ncac.acecqa.gov.au/family-resources/factsheets/hygiene.pdf> accessed 23 November 2013
- Queensland Health – <http://www.health.qld.gov.au/>

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