

IMMUNISATION POLICY – STAFF & CHILDREN

Policy Statement:

When groups of children play and learn together, illness and disease can spread from one child to another even when the setting implement recommended hygiene and infection control practices. Staff/carers and often contract the same illnesses as children due to the close human contacts that develop in the setting. This can place additional pressure on settings when staff/carers are unable to work, which often increases the need for relief staff/carers. Consistent and clear communication between staff and an effective employee induction procedure can assist services to strengthen the implementation of recommended practices and reduce levels.

Immunisation is the safest and most effective way of providing protection against early child diseases. After immunisation, children are far less likely to catch the diseases if there are cases within the community. The benefit of protection against the diseases far outweighs the very small risks of immunisation.

If enough people in the community are immunised, the infections can no longer be spread from person to person and the disease dies out altogether. This is how Smallpox was eliminated from the world, and Polio has disappeared from many countries.

There is increasing evidence to suggest staff working in a childcare environment is at a greater risk of catching and/or transmitting infectious diseases.

Early years practitioners should be up-to-date with all the vaccinations that are recommended for adults, including vaccinations recommended due to increased risk of exposure in the workplace, for example; Hepatitis A & B, HIB, annual flu vaccines, etc.

Aims:

- To provide protection to the children and staff attending the setting against diseases within the community.
- To ensure pregnant members of staff are knowledgeable in the risks of particular early childhood diseases to their unborn child.

Rationale:

‘The most effective method of preventing certain infections is immunisation. Immunisation protects the person who has been immunised. The principle of immunisation is simple: it gives the body a memory of infection without the risk of natural infection.’ (Staying Healthy)

Under the Workplace Health and Safety Act 1995, it is the obligation of the Manager of a child care setting to ensure that staff is not exposed to risks to their health and safety arising from exposure to vaccine preventable diseases.

Vaccination of staff is not compulsory however it is highly recommended, as child care workers have an obligation to prevent and minimise their exposure to diseases that are prevented by

vaccination. Unvaccinated staff are not only at risk of catching these diseases, but also being excluded from their child care setting should an outbreak of disease occur.

Under the Workplace Health and Safety Act 1995, it is the obligation of the Manager of a child care setting to ensure that pregnant members of staff are not exposed to risks to their health and safety arising from infectious diseases.

Strategies/Practices/Procedures:

For Children:

- Upon enrolment, all families will be required to provide a copy of their child's immunisation details to the settings manager.
- The setting will distribute reminders annually to those families whose children are due for their next immunisation and current copies will be collected after the vaccine is given.
- Any child who is not up to date with their immunisation will be considered not immunised. Non-immunised children will be excluded from the setting if an incidence of any communicable disease occurs for the period of time as recommended by the health department.
- Families who do not immunise their child/ren, through conscious objection or for medical reasons, are still able to attend the setting. However, if an incidence occurs where a child/ren contract a communicable disease all children deemed not immunised will be excluded from the setting for the period of time recommended by the health department.

For Staff: - Manager will as follows

- Maintain a current record of vaccination status of all employees. All information will be kept confidential.
- Provide current information on vaccine-preventable diseases to employees and parents. Refer to the - (Policy & procedure)

Georgie Porgy's Pre-school Ltd

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