



St John's Primary School

Mitcham

St John's Primary School – Infectious Diseases Policy

1. Rationale

St John's Primary School recognises that the prevention and control of infectious diseases is a shared responsibility between families, the school, and public health authorities. While parents/carers and health professionals manage diagnosis and treatment, schools play an essential role in reducing the spread of illness and maintaining a safe, healthy learning environment.

The school supports this responsibility through:

- Promoting immunisation in accordance with government guidelines
 - Responding promptly and consistently to suspected or confirmed cases of infectious disease
 - Following all requirements under the *Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008* and the *Public Health and Wellbeing Regulations 2019*
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2. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure St John's Primary School:

- Minimises the transmission of infectious diseases within the school community
 - Understands and complies with immunisation requirements and exclusion processes
 - Responds appropriately and safely to infectious disease cases or outbreaks
 - Meets obligations under Catholic Education Commission of Victoria (CECV) and Victorian Department of Education guidance and legislation
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3. Definitions

Exclusion:

A required period during which a child must not attend school because they are infected with, or have been in contact with, a person with a specified infectious disease.

Hand Hygiene:

Practices including washing with soap and water or using an alcohol-based sanitiser.

Immunisation:

A process by which a person becomes protected against an infectious disease through vaccination.

Infectious Diseases:

Conditions caused by bacteria, viruses, parasites or fungi that can spread directly or indirectly between individuals.

Respiratory Hygiene (Cough Etiquette):

Covering the mouth/nose when sneezing or coughing, using tissues appropriately, and performing hand hygiene immediately after.

Standard Precautions:

Minimum infection-control measures used at all times, including hand hygiene, use of personal protective equipment (PPE), safe disposal of sharps, and managing spills safely.

4. Implementation

4.1 Prevention of Infectious Diseases

St John's Primary School supports the prevention of infectious diseases by:

- Recording and verifying the immunisation status of all students prior to enrolment.
 - Supporting public health programs, including vaccination initiatives where appropriate.
 - Ensuring children who are unwell do not attend school.
 - Isolating any student who becomes unwell during the school day and contacting families for prompt collection.
 - Ensuring staff treat all blood and bodily fluids as potentially infectious and follow standard precautions at all times.
 - Teaching and promoting good hygiene practices including:
 - regular handwashing
 - respiratory hygiene and cough etiquette
 - Providing adequate supplies of hand soap, sanitiser, tissues and PPE (e.g., gloves and masks).
 - Incorporating hygiene routines and infection-prevention education into school life and curriculum where appropriate.
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4.2 Standard Precautions

Staff and students must follow standard precautions, which include:

- Hand hygiene
 - Use of personal protective equipment (e.g., gloves)
 - Safe handling and disposal of sharps (as per the school's Blood Spills Policy)
 - Respiratory hygiene (covering coughs/sneezes, using tissues, disposing of them safely)
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4.3 Responding to Infectious Disease Cases

St John's Primary School will take immediate action to reduce transmission when a confirmed or suspected infectious disease case occurs:

- Children who are unwell must not attend school and will be sent home if symptoms develop during the day.
- Any medically confirmed case of a notifiable disease (e.g., Pertussis, Measles, Mumps, Rubella, Meningococcal disease, Polio, or novel Coronavirus) will be reported to:
 - Catholic Education Commission of Victoria (CECV)
 - Department of Health (Communicable Disease Prevention and Control)
- Families will be advised to seek medical attention where needed.

In accordance with the Public Health and Wellbeing Regulations 2019, the school must exclude a child who:

- Has a confirmed infectious disease listed in the Department of Health's School Exclusion Table
- Has been in contact with someone with such a disease, where exclusion is required
- Is unimmunised during an outbreak of a vaccine-preventable disease and has been directed for exclusion by the Chief Health Officer

Additional measures for common illnesses:

- Students with cold/flu symptoms, vomiting or diarrhoea must remain home until symptoms have fully resolved.
 - Good general hygiene remains the strongest protection against common infections.
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4.4 Pandemic or Public Health Emergencies

In the event of an influenza pandemic or similar public health event:

- The school will follow Victorian Department of Health and CECV guidelines.
- Actions will be taken in accordance with the Pandemic Incident Response Plan.

- Families must promptly inform the school if a household member is medically diagnosed with a relevant infectious condition.
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4.5 Communication with the School Community

The school will communicate with families when required by health authorities or when necessary to support community health and safety.

Any communication will:

- Maintain student confidentiality
- Provide factual, calm, and clear information
- Name the specific condition (where required)
- Recommend that families seek medical advice if concerned

The school will consult the Department of Health for advice before issuing notices or alerts about notifiable conditions.

5. References

- Catholic Education Commission of Victoria (CECV) – Infection Control
 - Victorian Department of Education – Infectious Diseases Policy
 - Victorian Department of Health – Minimum Periods for Exclusion
 - *Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008*
 - *Public Health and Wellbeing Regulations 2019*
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6. Evaluation

This policy will be reviewed every three years or earlier if required due to updated health advice or legislative changes.

The policy was last updated and ratified in **2025**.