



Policy Name	Illness & Communicable Diseases Policy
Related Policies and Legislation	Anaphylaxis Management Policy & Procedure Asthma Policy Illness & Communicable Diseases Procedure First Aid Policy <i>Public Health Act 2016</i> <i>WA Dept. of Health – Communicable Disease Guidelines</i>
Policy Category	Student Wellbeing & Safety Staff Safety & Wellbeing Community
Relevant Audience	All Treetops Community
Date of Issue / Last Revision	25 October 2010, 23 July 2015 23 March 2017, 06 September 2018 28 March 2019, 16 June 2022 15 September 2022
Date Set for Review	September 2025
Person/s Responsible for Review	Treetops Administration

Illness & Communicable Diseases Policy

Purpose

This policy outlines the responsibilities of student illness for students, parents/guardians, and teachers.

This policy will assist the staff, parents, and associated members of Treetops Montessori School to identify infectious and communicable diseases within the school community.

By adhering to the measures outlined below, the school will be able to reduce the transmission of such diseases amongst its students, staff, and parents.

Student Illness:

It is preferable that any student who is unwell remain at home until fully recovered to prevent the spread of infection to other students, their families, and to the school staff.

It is a Department of Education requirement that parents of students who are absent for three or more consecutive days are to provide the school with a written explanation for the absence. A doctor's certificate is to be included if relevant.

Pandemic Management

In the event of declared pandemic, such as that with COVID-19, the Department of Health is the lead agency in WA and Treetops would formulate a Pandemic Management Plan in accordance with their advice. This plan may include elements of existing communicable disease control measures (outlined below) with the addition of pandemic specific measures as identified by the Department of Health.

Communicable Diseases

Preventing the transmission of infectious and communicable diseases in the school environment is a fundamental concern for Treetops Montessori School.

While it is often difficult to prevent the transmission of common respiratory illnesses (colds/flu) and gastroenteritis infections that occur, every effort should be made to minimise the spread of infection by encouraging:

- staff and students to stay at home in the early stages of illness as at this stage they can be infectious.
- staff and students who are ill should remain absent until they are symptom free if they have a cold or flu; and for at least 24 hours (48 hours for early childhood areas) if they have had gastroenteritis (diarrhoea and/or vomiting).
- parents to seek medical advice if their child has ongoing symptoms of illness.

Strategies to Prevent Transmission of Infection

The most important ways to break the chain of infection and stop the spread of diseases are:

- effective hand hygiene
- exclusion of ill children, educators, and other staff
- immunisation.

Other strategies to prevent infection include:

- cough and sneeze etiquette
- use of appropriate cleaning tools and use of protective personal equipment (eg. gloves, masks).
- effective environmental cleaning.

Immunisation

The World Health Organization considers immunisation to be the most effective medical intervention we have to prevent deaths and reduce disease in our communities.

Treetops Montessori School supports the full immunisation of its students (appropriate to their age and health status) and encourages parents/carers to have their children immunised. However, the school also recognises that some parents do not wish their children to be immunised.

On enrolment at Treetops Montessori School a current Vaccination Status Certificate (no more than 2 months old) for each child is required to be included with enrolment documents. This certificate can be obtained from the Australian Immunisation Register (AIR).

Under the *Public Health Act 2016* the school is required to share immunisation-related data with the WA Department of Health upon request.

Should an outbreak of a communicable disease occur, at the direction of the WA Department of Health, non-immunised students may be excluded from school. The student will be permitted to return to school at the discretion of the Principal.

Symptoms and Signs of Infection

A communicable disease may be suspected when one or more of the following symptoms are present:

- Abnormal or uncharacteristic behaviour such as lethargy or dizziness
- Elevated temperature/fever
- Vomiting
- Diarrhoea
- Headache
- Sore throat
- Cough
- Skin rash or eruptions
- Watery, inflamed eyes and nose
- Purulent nasal discharge

Exclusion

Many infectious diseases require student/staff to be excluded from school for a recommended period of time. Students with non-immunisation against specific diseases that are known to be highly transmissible will be excluded.

A student with symptoms or signs of infection should be kept at home.

In the event that parents/carers overlook these symptoms, a teacher may exclude a student from contact with other students. The student will be isolated from other students to minimise the risk of infection, made comfortable and kept under close observation. The parent/carer will be contacted as soon as possible for the student to be collected and taken home.

Exclusion Guidelines

The school may request that a student or staff member does not attend school if the student or staff member is suffering from a medical condition that is infectious, contagious or otherwise harmful to the health of persons at the school.

Recommended minimum periods of exclusion from school for contacts of and cases with infectious diseases:

For specific information regarding infectious and communicable diseases, refer to the WA Department of Health publication, at:

https://ww2.health.wa.gov.au/~/_media/Files/Corporate/general-documents/communicable-diseases/PDF/2101-communicable-disease-guidelines.pdf

Returning to School

Students are cleared to return to school once Department of Health requirements have been met. In some cases, the principal or class teacher may request that a child have a medical examination by a medical practitioner to determine readiness to recommence school.

Medication

If the need to administer medication at school arises a 'Medication Permission Form' must be completed with written instructions and consent to administer provided. Medications must be handed directly to the school administration. Medications must not be left in the student's bag.

Prescription medications will not be administered by staff without appropriate written instructions from the prescribing doctor or pharmacist. Homeopathic medications will not be administered by staff without appropriate written instructions from the prescribing homeopath.