



Hand Washing Policy and Procedure

Policy Statement

Staff at Mark Oliphant College Children's Centre aim to protect the health, safety and wellbeing of each child at all times in relation to hand hygiene. To minimise the spread of infection educators follow the hand washing procedure outlined in 'Staying Healthy in Childcare 6th Edition'.

Supporting Evidence

See https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK144035/figure/partii_ranking.f2/?report=objectonly poster (Staying Healthy in Child Care, 6th edition, 2024).

Implementation

When to wash hands:

Who	Before	After
Educators and other staff	- Starting work, so harmful germs are not introduced into the service - Eating or handling food - Giving medication - Putting on gloves - Applying sunscreen or other lotions to children - Going home, so harmful germs are not taken home with you	- Eating or handling food - Using the toilet - Helping children use the toilet - Taking off gloves - Changing a nappy (see section 2.5 Nappy changing and toileting) - Cleaning the nappy change area - Wiping a child's nose or your own nose - Cleaning up body fluids such as faeces, urine, vomit or blood - Handling garbage - Coming in from outside play - Applying sunscreen or other lotions to children - Touching animals
Children	- Starting the day at the service; parents and carers can help with this - Eating or handling food - Going home, so harmful germs are not taken home with them	- Eating or handling food - Using the toilet - Touching mucus (snot) - Coming in from outside play - Touching animals

How to do hand hygiene

Hand hygiene can be done using soap and water, or hand sanitiser.

With soap and water





Washing hands with soap and water is the best option if you have visible dirt, grease or food on your hands. Washing your 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 your hands and the detergent in the soap that helps loosen the dirt, remove the germs and rinse them off your skin.

Warm water is recommended because soap lathers (soaps up) better with warm water. However, soap and cold water can be used if warm water is not available.

You do not need to use antibacterial soap – any soap is effective for hand hygiene if used properly.

There are 5 steps to washing hands:

1. Wet hands with running warm water.
2. Apply soap to hands.
3. Lather soap and rub hands thoroughly, including the wrists, the palms, between the fingers, around the thumbs and under the nails. If you wear rings or other jewellery on your hands, sing 'Happy birthday' twice). move the jewellery around your finger while you rub to ensure that the area underneath the jewellery is clean. Rub hands together for at least 20 seconds (for about as long as it takes to
4. Rinse hands thoroughly under running water.
5. Dry hands thoroughly (see Hand drying).

Hand drying

Effective hand drying after washing your hands with soap and water is just as important as thorough hand washing. Damp hands pick up and transfer more bacteria than dry hands. Drying your hands thoroughly also helps remove any germs that may not have been rinsed off. Make sure you dry under any rings or other jewellery, because they can be sources of future contamination if they remain moist.

Using disposable paper towel is preferable for hand drying in education and care services.

With hand sanitiser

Hand sanitisers (also known as alcohol-based hand rubs, antiseptic hand rubs or waterless hand cleaners) can reduce the number of harmful germs on your hands and should contain 60–80% alcohol.

Hand sanitisers are recommended when your hands are not visibly dirty. Hand sanitisers are also useful when soap and water are not available, such as when in the playground or on excursion. However, even if your hands are visibly dirty, using hand sanitiser is better than not cleaning your hands at all.

There are 3 steps to using hand sanitiser:

1. Apply the amount of hand sanitiser recommended by the manufacturer to palms of dry hands.
2. Rub hands together, making sure you cover in between fingers, around thumbs and under nails.
3. Rub until hands are dry (alcohol-based sanitisers are self-drying, so you do not need a paper towel or hand towel). This should take about 20 seconds.





Hand sanitisers are safe to use as directed, but children may be at risk if they eat or drink the cleaner, inhale it or splash it into their eyes or mouth. Hand sanitisers should be kept well out of reach of children and only used with adult supervision.

Do I really need to wear gloves?

Gloves provide a protective barrier against germs. Using gloves correctly reduces the spread of harmful germs, but does not eliminate it completely. If gloves are not used correctly, they can spread germs and put others at risk. When a person wears gloves, they may come into contact with germs which can then be transferred to other objects or their face.

Wearing gloves does not replace the need to clean your hands, and you should do hand hygiene before putting gloves on and after taking them off.

Wear disposable gloves if you are likely to come in contact with body fluids – for example, when changing wet or dirty nappies or cleaning up vomit or blood. However, it is not necessary to wear gloves when wiping noses.

Working with families, health services & industry

Our Centre:

- Will display relevant information including handwashing procedures in handwashing areas

Related Legislation

- [Education and Care Services National Regulation](#)
 - Regulation 77 – Health, hygiene and safe food practices
- [Education and Early Childhood Services \(Registration and Standards\) Act 2011, Schedule 1 Education and Care Services National Law \(South Australia\)](#)

Sources

- [National Quality Standards](#)
 - Element 2.1.2
- [‘Staying Healthy in Childcare 6th Edition’ \(National Research and Medical Council 2024\)](#)

Revision Register

Version Number	Details of Changes Made	Date Issued
1	Policy review (no previous revisions documented)	April 2020
2	Nil	April 2022
3	Nil	May 2024
4	Updated resources	May 2026

