



3.13 Immunisations

Purpose

To provide a policy relating to immunisations, including their relevance to enrolment at John Street.

Objective

Immunisation is particularly important for children in childcare as pre-schoolers have the highest age-specific incidence of measles, pertussis, rubella and Hib disease. Younger children are at higher risk than older children for complications of such illnesses, which can be extreme: for instance, encephalitis, an infection of the brain, is a rare complication of measles.

This policy aims to ensure:

- that families are informed about the Victorian 'No Jab No Play' legislation and how it affects their child's access to the centre's services;
- that the John Street community (families and Educators) are provided with information on immunisation, including the benefits;
- that the spread of infectious diseases within the centre is effectively managed through immunisation.

Definitions

Chemoprophylaxis - the administration of a medication for the purpose of preventing disease or infection.

Immunisation - the term used for the process of both getting the vaccine and becoming immune to the disease as a result of the vaccine.

Vaccination - is the term used for giving a vaccine.

** Vaccination and immunisation are often used interchangeably, but their meanings are not exactly the same – generally immunity follows vaccination.*

Scope of Policy

This policy applies to children and families, and all Educators at John Street.

This policy should be read in conjunction with John Street's *Dealing with Illness & Infection Policy*.

Policy Statement

Immunisation, or vaccination, is a safe and effective way of protecting against certain diseases. The risks of these diseases are far greater than the very small risk associated with immunisation.

In line with the requirements under the *Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008*, to have an enrolment confirmed for a child at John Street, parents/carers have to provide the service with:

- a current Immunisation History Statement from the Australian Immunisation Register (AIR); AND
- the statement must show that the child is up to date with all vaccinations that are due for their age, or that they are able to receive.

In addition, a child must be up to date with its immunisations in order for a family to receive the Child Care Subsidy.

Information

Information about immunisation and infectious diseases is available at John Street and can be translated into several different languages for families and Educators if required, and signs are posted in the foyer to alert families if there is an outbreak of a vaccine-preventable disease present at the centre.

The current routine schedule of vaccines provided free under the National Immunisation Program in Victoria can be found online at: <https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/public-health/immunisation/immunisation-schedule-vaccine-eligibility-criteria/immunisation-schedule-victoria>.

Procedures

John Street's procedures in connection with this policy are as follows:

- In advance of accepting an enrolment, John Street will require a statement from the Australian Immunisation Register (AIR) that shows what vaccines a child has received and, if applicable, which vaccines are due in the future and when.
- Enrolment will not be accepted unless the AIR record indicates the child's immunisations are up to date (unless a medical exemption applies and has been endorsed by the child's GP using the *Medicare Immunisation Exemption Medical Contraindication Form*; grounds for exemption are very limited and do not include conscientious objection).
- John Street will keep the children's enrolment records up-to-date; including the immunisation status of each child, by ensuring an enrolment form is completed EACH calendar year for every child.
- Centrelink is notified of each child's vaccination status and Childcare Subsidy will be withheld if immunisation is not up to date.
- John Street provides up-to-date information for families and Educators regarding immunisation and the protection of all children from infectious diseases.

- John Street keeps Educator records to include immunisation status of all Educators employed.

Family responsibilities

Families are obliged to:

- Keep their child's immunisations up-to-date.
- Provide John Street with up to date records of their child's immunisation status when requested to do so, including prior to enrolment.
- Take responsibility for the care of their child following immunisation, including the decision as to whether the child is well enough to attend the centre. Generally, it is advisable for children to be kept at home for the remainder of the day after receiving immunisation injections because some may suffer an adverse reaction.
- As with any case of illness, if a child returned to the centre following immunisation becomes unwell, families will be contacted immediately to take their child home.

Educator Immunisation

- The Board, through the Centre Director, will encourage those non-immune Educators to be vaccinated.
- In recognition of duty of care responsibilities, Educators will be required to complete an Immunisation Record and keep this up-to-date. This information will remain confidential and will be kept in the Educator's file at John Street. Educators are responsible for updating this record, as their immunisations are updated.
- Information on adult immunisation is made available to Educators through the induction process and Educators handbook.
- The Educator will be responsible for the upfront costs associated with the visit to their local General Practitioner and the administration of any of the above vaccinations.
- Educators who do not take up the offer to have vaccinations will be required to sign a statement to this effect.
- Educators that contract a communicable disease will be excluded from John Street until they are pronounced non-infectious by their General Practitioner.
- During outbreaks of measles and whooping cough non-immune Educators will be excluded from John Street for the period recommended by the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC).
- Specific extra procedures will be put in place for:
 - non-immune Educators during outbreaks of other vaccine-preventable diseases such as rubella, Hepatitis A and varicella (e.g. adoption of hygiene practices, work restrictions (if relevant) during an outbreak at John Street, referral for chemoprophylaxis/vaccination (if available) during an outbreak; and

- children during such outbreaks if Educators do not receive DTPa (e.g work restrictions on working with infants).
- Educators with an immune deficiency or receiving medical treatment that causes immunosuppression, such as chemotherapy, will be excluded from the centre **on full pay** during outbreaks of measles, whooping cough or chicken pox for the recommended period. Confirmation of the Educator's medical condition is required from their General Practitioner or Specialist Physician.
- Educators are required to inform the Director as soon as possible if they are pregnant, and follow procedures as outlined in John Street's staffing policies.
- Vaccine-preventable diseases that pose risks to non-immune pregnant Educators are **varicella** and **rubella**, and to the reproductive health of non-immune male Educators/Educators members is **mumps**.

Responsibility

The *Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010* requires that the Board, through the Director take reasonable care to protect children from foreseeable risk of infection.

Families and Educators at John Street have responsibilities for immunisation and their own and their child's immunisation status, including not posing a risk to others, and of their overall health and wellbeing.

General Information

The Victorian Government Department of Health advise that the immunisations you may need are decided by your health, age, lifestyle and occupation. Together, these factors are referred to as **HALO**, defined as:

- **Health** – some health conditions or factors may make you more vulnerable to vaccine-preventable diseases. For example, premature birth, asthma, diabetes, heart, lung, spleen or kidney conditions, Down syndrome and HIV will mean you may benefit from additional or more frequent immunisations.
- **Age** – at different ages you need protection from different vaccine-preventable diseases. Australia's National Immunisation Program sets out recommended immunisations for babies, children, older people and other people at risk, such as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders. Most recommended vaccines are available at no cost to these groups.
- **Lifestyle** – lifestyle choices can have an impact on your immunisation needs. Travelling overseas to certain locations, planning a family, sexual activity, smoking, and playing contact sport that may expose you directly to someone else's blood, will mean you may benefit from additional or more frequent immunisations.
- **Occupation** – you are likely to require additional or more frequent immunisations if you work in an occupation that exposes you to vaccine-preventable diseases or puts you into contact with people who are more susceptible to problems from vaccine-preventable diseases such as babies or young children, pregnant women, the elderly, and people with chronic or acute health conditions. Workers in aged care, childcare, healthcare, emergency service or

sewerage repair and maintenance need to discuss their immunisation needs with their doctor. Some employers help with the cost of relevant vaccinations for their employees.

Talk to your doctor or immunisation provider if you think you or someone in your care has health, age, lifestyle or occupation factors that could mean immunisation is necessary.

More information at www.health.vic.gov.au

Vaccine Preventable Diseases	Non-Vaccine Preventable Diseases
Diphtheria Haemophilus influenzae type b Hepatitis A, B, Human Papillomavirus Measles Mumps Tetanus Rubella Pertussis (Whooping Cough) Pneumococcal Poliomyelitis Rotavirus Varicella (Chicken Pox)	Cytomegalovirus (CMV) Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) Parvovirus B19 Hepatitis C

Legislative Provisions

Education and Care Services National Law Act 2011 – Section 2 (2)(a); 167 (1)(2) and (3)

Education and Care services National Regulations 2012:

R.4	<i>Definitions -infectious disease</i>
r.161	<i>Authorisations to be kept in enrolment record</i>
r.162	<i>Health information to be kept in enrolment record</i>
R.168	<i>Education and Care Services Must have policies and procedures (2) Policies and procedure to be kept in relation to the following: (b) – incident, injury, trauma and illness procedures complying with regulation 88 (c) dealing with infectious diseases, including procedures complying with regulation 88 (d) – policies and procedures are required in relation to dealing with medical conditions in children, including matters set out in regulation 90 (m)- the acceptance and refusal of authorisations</i>
r.170	<i>Policies and procedures to be followed</i>
r.171	<i>Policies and procedures to be kept available</i>
r.172	<i>Notification of change to policies or procedures</i>
r.173	<i>Prescribed information to be displayed</i>

Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008, section 143B

National Quality Standard for Early Childhood Education and Care & School Age Care:

Element 2.1	<i>Each child's health and physical activity is supported and promoted</i>
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Element 2.1.2	<i>Effective illness and injury management and hygiene practices are promoted and implemented.</i>
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Background Legislation

Occupational Health & Safety Act 2004 (Vic)	<i>Providing a safe work environment</i>
A New Tax System Act 2000 (Cth.)	<i>Family Assistance Administration</i>
Public Health & Wellbeing Regulations 2009	<i>National Immunisation Program</i>
Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008	<i>'No Jab No Play' legislation</i>

Sources

Victorian Government, Health.vic website, *Frequently Asked Questions: No Jab No Play*; accessed August 2018 at <https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/public-health/immunisation/vaccination-children/no-jab-no-play/frequently-asked-questions>

Victorian Government Department of Health *Immunisation Schedule and vaccine eligibility criteria* – Retrieved August 2018 <https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/public-health/immunisation/immunisation-schedule-vaccine-eligibility-criteria/immunisation-schedule-victoria>

Worksafe www.workcover.vic.gov.au

Department of Human Services, *Medicare Immunisation Exemption Medical Contraindication Form*, found at <https://www.humanservices.gov.au/organisations/health-professionals/forms/im011>

Related John Street Policies, Procedures and Guidelines

Policies	<i>Administration of First Aid; Dealing with Illness & Infection; Dealing with Medical Conditions and Medication; Occupational Health & Safety; Providing a Child Safe Environment.</i>
Appendices	<i>Enrolment Form; National Immunisation Program Schedule.</i>

Authorisation & Review

This policy was approved by the John Street Board in December 2018.