

## Policy Statement

This policy acts to ensure that:

- Strict hand washing procedures are encouraged in order to minimise health risks to Educators, their families, children in care and their families

## Explanation

Hand hygiene is a very effective way to control the spread of infection. Hand hygiene is a general term that refers to washing hands with soap and water or using a hand sanitiser (or alcohol based hand rub). Hands can play an important part in the spread of infection; the best way to prevent the transmission of disease is through effective hand hygiene.

Liquid soap dispensers and disposable paper towels are the preferred option for hand washing. Anti -bacterial hand washes should not be used routinely as they may encourage the development of resistant bacteria.

Hand Sanitisers can be a fast and effective way to remove germs that may have been picked up by touching contaminated surfaces. Hand Sanitisers reduce the number of germs on your hands; they do not remove dirt from your hands. Hand Sanitisers are useful when performing multiple tasks in which hands can potentially become contaminated; for example, when assisting children with eating, when on excursions, in the playground, or in other situations where soap and water are not always available. Hand sanitisers are only to be used as an adjunct to hand washing, after several uses' hands will need to be washed in soap and running water.

Disposable wipes can be used to wipe the hands of babies and children who are unable to stand at a basin to wash their hands; hands must be patted dry after the use of wipes. Many Educators' have limited water supplies due to tank water supplies or town water restrictions due to drought conditions. It is each Educator's responsibility to establish a procedure that incorporates the economy of water usage without compromising the hygiene requirements outlined by the Health Authorities sourced for this policy.

## Goals

- To minimise risk and the spread of infectious diseases through the promotion of good hand hygiene, and thorough hand washing procedures.

## Strategies

### Hygiene and Eczema

People with eczema have dry, itchy and sensitive skin that is easily inflamed and made worse by rubbing and scratching. These people may find that frequent use of soap and water irritates their skin. One solution is to use sorbolene cream instead of soap— put the cream on and gently rub it off under running water. People with eczema should pat their hands dry rather than rub them and apply more sorbolene cream if needed.

Policy Created  
February 2016

Policy Last Updated  
May 2022

Policy Review Date  
May 2024

### **Wearing Gloves**

#### **It is important to wash your hands before putting on, and after taking off gloves**

- Wash your hands before putting on gloves so that you remove as many germs as possible from your hands, otherwise when you reach into the box of gloves, you can contaminate the other gloves in the box
- When changing a nappy, it is very important to wash your hands before you put on gloves, so that when you have finished changing the child, you can remove the dirty gloves and dress the child without needing to interrupt the nappy-changing procedure to wash your hands before dressing the child
- When you have finished a procedure that requires you to wear gloves, it is important to wash your hands thoroughly after removing the gloves, because any germs on your hands may have multiplied significantly while you were wearing the gloves, there may also be microscopic tears or holes in the gloves that can allow germs to contaminate your skin
- When taking off the gloves, you may contaminate your hands with the dirty gloves; therefore, it is essential that you wash your hands

#### **Resources:**

- Running water
- Liquid soap
- Paper towel
- Hand sanitiser (if required)
- Disposable wipes (if required)

As each Educator's home is different the hand washing arrangement will vary. It is recommended that the hand washing basins be in as close proximity to the play area as possible. Where a safe bathroom or laundry sink is not readily accessible Educators may use a second kitchen basin for hand washing. The selected basin must be cleaned and only be used for that purpose while children are in care, and must not be used for food preparation, or have dishes in it.

### **How to wash hands with Soap and Water**

The process of thoroughly washing, rinsing and drying your hands or a child's hands should take around 30 seconds.

There are six steps to washing hands:

1. Wet hands with running water (preferably warm water, for comfort)
2. Apply liquid soap
3. Lather soap and rub hands thoroughly, including the wrists, the back of your hands, the palms, between the fingers, around the thumbs and top of your fingers and under the nails. Rub hands together for at least 15 seconds (for about as long as it takes to sing 'Happy birthday' once)
4. Rinse thoroughly under running water to remove all suds and germs (remember – thorough rinsing will help prevent dermatitis from soap) while counting from 1 to 10
5. Turn the tap off with a piece of paper towel

6. Dry your hands thoroughly with a new piece of paper towel

- Supervise children when washing their hands and help them get into the habit of hand hygiene
- If you wear rings or other jewellery on your hands, move the jewellery around your finger while you lather the soap to ensure that the area underneath the jewellery is clean.
- Always wet hands first before applying soap. This helps the soap to lather more and prevents the skin from drying.

### **How to clean hands with Hand Sanitisers (Alcohol-Based Hand Rubs)**

Only use a Hand Sanitiser if your hands are not visibly dirty. The hand sanitiser should contain 60–80% alcohol. A hand rub should take about 20 – 30 seconds or until your hands are dry.

There are three steps to using Hand Sanitisers:

1. Apply the amount of hand rub recommended by the manufacturer to palms of dry hands
2. Rub hands together, including the wrists, the back of your hands, the palms, between the fingers, around the thumbs and top of your fingers and under the nails
3. Rub until hands are dry

## **Roles and Responsibilities**

### **Nominated Supervisor/Coordinator**

- Will provide current information regarding appropriate hand washing procedures to Educators and parents
- Will monitor the implementation of the Hand Washing Policy via observation during service visits
  
- Will wash their hands upon entering and leaving each service

### **Educators**

- All Educators will observe strict health and hygiene practices that comply with *Staying Healthy: Preventing Infectious Diseases in Early Childhood Education and Care Services*, NHMRC, 5<sup>th</sup> Edition
- Educators are required to establish hand washing practices in their services that are safe, practical and meet the requirements of this policy

- Educators will wash their hands at the following times and act as role models to the children:
  - Before starting and after finishing work
  - Before and after eating or handling food
  - After handling garbage
  - Before and after assisting a child to eat
  - After changing nappy or child's underpants
  - After cleaning the nappy change area
  - After toileting a child
  - After going to the toilet
  - After touching eyes, ears, nose, hair and mouth
  - Before putting on and after removing gloves
  - Before and after giving medication or first aid
  - Before and after applying sunscreen or other lotions to one or more children
  - After assisting a child when crying
  - After wiping a child's or your own nose
  - After contact with any bodily secretions
  - Between outside and inside sessions
  - After handling animals
  - At any other time when it is thought to be necessary
- Educators will use soap and water as the primary source for hand washing
- Hand Sanitiser can be used as a second source of cleaning hands

### **Family Day Care Educators**

- If Educators wish to use cloth handtowels to dry the children's hands with after handwashing they need to make sure that:
  - Each child has their own handtowel
  - Handtowels are hung up after each use to enable them to dry
  - Handtowels are laundered regularly, at the minimum when the child finishes care for the week, and at other times when deemed necessary
  - Handtowels are laundered in hot water and hung out to dry in the sun or dried in the clothes dryer

### **Children**

- Educators will model correct hand washing procedures and encourage each child's independence with hand washing in accordance with their developmental abilities
- Programs will encourage the children's awareness of the need for appropriate hygiene practices and will give them the opportunity to implement these practices as a part of their daily activities. This will happen through songs, stories, discussions and role modelling; teaching children that washing their hands will prevent the spreading of germs and illness

- Educators will encourage children to use soap and water as their primary choice for hand washing, especially prior to eating, hand sanitiser can be used as the second choice for hand washing
- Children will be supervised to ensure they develop good hand washing habits
- Where possible display a visual procedure for handwashing in the handwashing areas for children to refer to
- Children will be encouraged to wash their hands:
  - Upon entering the centre each day
  - Before leaving the centre each day
  - Before and after eating or handling food
  - After going to the toilet or having their nappy or pants changed
  - After blowing or wiping their noses
  - After playing outside
  - After handling pets or other animals
  - At any other time when it is thought to be necessary
  - Infant's hands will be wiped at these times with a warm soapy cloth

## **Families**

- Current information regarding hand washing procedures will be provided to parents to encourage their assistance in the continual review and implementation of this policy
- Family Day Care Parents are also asked:
  - To wash their child's and their own hands upon entering the Educator's home each day
  - To wash their child's and their own hands when leaving the Educator's home each day

## **Continual Monitoring and Improvement**

Continual improvement and monitoring will occur in the following ways:

- Incidental and planned consultation with families
- Approved Provider and Coordinators accessing current relevant information
- Approved Provider, Coordinators and Educators accessing current and relevant training
- Internal evaluation of incidences and the improvement of systems

# How to wash hands

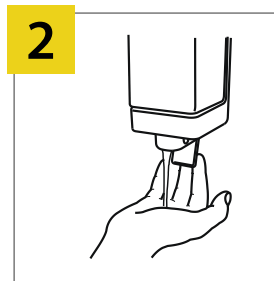
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A hand wash should take around 30 seconds.



1 Wet hands with running water (preferably warm, for comfort).



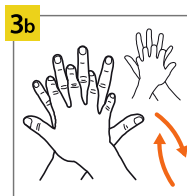
2 Apply soap to hands.



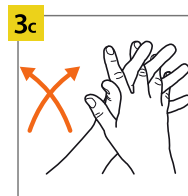
3 Lather soap and rub hands for at least 15 seconds, including:



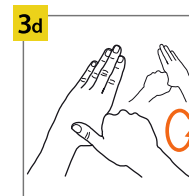
3a palm to palm,



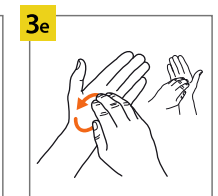
3b back of hands,



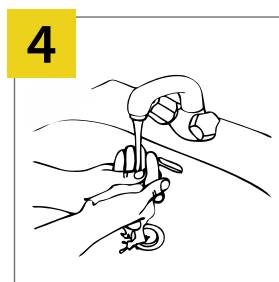
3c in between fingers and back of fingers,



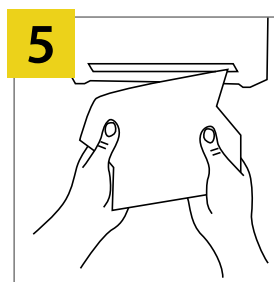
3d around thumbs and



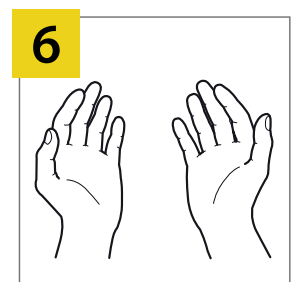
3e tips of fingers.



4 Rinse hands with water.



5 Dry hands thoroughly.



6 Your hands are clean.

THIS POSTER REFERENCES THE WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION'S 'HOW TO HANDWASH?' POSTER NHMRC Ref. CH55g Printed June 2013



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# How to use alcohol-based hand rub

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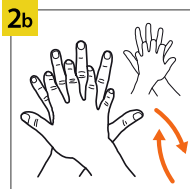
A hand rub should take 20–30 seconds or until your hands are dry.



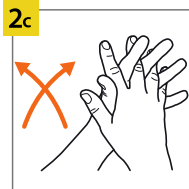
1 Apply alcohol-based hand rub to hands, then rub



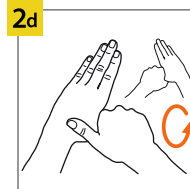
2a palm to palm,



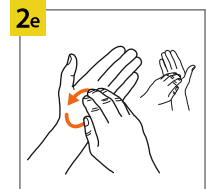
2b back of hands,



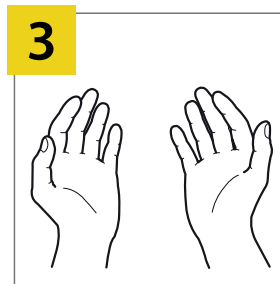
2c in between fingers and back of fingers,



2d around thumbs and



2e tips of fingers.



3 Once dry, your hands are clean.

**LINKS TO:**

- [Education & Care Services National Law Section 167](#)
- [Education & Care Services National Regulations 77, 78, 88, 89, 93, 95, 168, 169, 170, 171, 172](#)
- [National Quality Standards/Elements: 2.1, 2.2](#)
- [Child Safe Standards 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10](#)

THIS POSTER REFERENCES THE WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION'S 'HOW TO HANDRUB?' POSTER NHMRC Ref. CH55f Printed June 2013



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## SOURCES

- Education and Care Services National Regulations - December 2021
- Education and care Services National Law - January 2022
- Guide to the Education and Care Services National Law and the Education and Care Services National Regulations - October 2017
- Guide to the National Quality Standard - January 2020
- Implementing the Child Safe Standards: A Guide for Early Education and Outside School Hours Care Services, NSW Department of Education, 2021
- A Guide to the Child Safe Standards, NSW Office of the Children's Guardian, 2020
- ACECQA – FDC Approved Provider compliance responsibilities – October 2017
- Be You
- My Time Our Place: Framework for School Age Care in Australia
- ECA Code of Ethics
- United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
- Staying Healthy: Preventing Infectious Diseases in Early Childhood Education and Care Services, National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC), 5<sup>th</sup> Edition

## LINKS TO OTHER POLICIES:

- Administration of First Aid
- Administration of Medication
- Covid-19
- Incident, Injury, Trauma & Illness
- Infectious Diseases
- Management of Animals
- Nappy Changing
- Nutrition & Safe Food Handling
- Toilet Hygiene