

# Protecting children against vaccine preventable diseases procedure

This is a mandated procedure under the operational policy framework. Any edits to this procedure must follow the process outlined on the [creating, updating and deleting operational policies](#) page.

## Overview

This procedure outlines the processes for managing and recording the immunisation and infectious diseases requirements in accordance with the *South Australian Public Health Act 2011* (the Act) and the *Education and Care Services National Regulations* (the Regulations) for children attending a Department for Education (the department) early childhood service.

## Scope

This procedure outlines:

- the requirements, under the Act, that an early childhood service not enrol a child or provide a service to a child unless all immunisation requirements are met. This is known as the no jab no play policy
- processes for recording and managing the current immunisation status of children enrolling in and attending an early childhood service
- the requirement for an early childhood service to take reasonable steps to prevent the spread of an infectious disease and to exclude certain children in the event of an occurrence of an infectious disease in line with the National Health Medical Research Council (NHMRC) guidelines - [staying healthy-preventing infectious diseases in early childhood education and care services](#).

This procedure applies to the following department early childhood services:

- childcare
- preschools
- rural care
- occasional care
- family day care
- respite care program
- playcentres and preschool supported programs (where a parent does not remain at the service).

This procedure does not apply to:

- a service providing primary education at or in connection with a primary school
- a service comprising out of school hours care (OSHC)
- a service where a parent of each child remains on site and is available to care for their child if required (eg a crèche, playgroup or parenting program).



# Contents

Protecting children against vaccine preventable diseases procedure .....	1
Overview.....	1
Scope .....	1
Detail .....	3
Recording immunisation status.....	5
Ongoing management - immunisation requirements flow chart .....	5
Management of immunisation records on site.....	6
Roles and responsibilities .....	7
Early Childhood Services and Strategy Directorate.....	7
Site leader.....	8
Family day care educator .....	8
Family day care Scheme Manager and respite care Program Manager .....	8
Family day care and respite care program coordinators .....	8
Ensuring compliance with the procedure is effectively managed and implemented. ....	8
Respite care program care provider.....	8
FDC Business Manager .....	8
Rural care Administration Coordinator .....	8
Definitions .....	9
Australian Immunisation Register (AIR) .....	9
Department .....	9
Early childhood service.....	9
Supporting information.....	9
References.....	10
Related policies .....	10
Record history .....	10
Revision record.....	11
Keywords .....	11
Contact .....	12

# Detail

Immunisation is a safe and effective way of protecting children and people in the community from vaccine preventable diseases. Immunisation not only protects individuals, but also others in the community, by reducing the spread of disease.

While the responsibility for the prevention and control of infectious diseases is primarily with individuals, families and public health authorities, education and care services have an important role to play in supporting immunisation and preventing the spread of infectious diseases.

The department recognises the importance of immunisation to:

- protect children from certain diseases that can be prevented by immunisation, and
- protect children who cannot be immunised for medical reasons from being exposed to certain diseases.

## Immunisation requirements for early childhood services

Under Part 12A of the Act, children are not able to enrol in or attend early childhood services unless all immunisation requirements are met.

Early childhood services must not enrol a child in their service without a current approved immunisation record or an approved exemption and must keep copies of the immunisation records while the child is attending the service.

Parents of children must provide a current approved immunisation record when enrolling their child in an early childhood service. When a child is enrolled in and attending an early childhood service, parents are required to provide an updated immunisation record after their child receives a scheduled immunisation, within specific age ranges in accordance with the [National Immunisation Program - South Australian Schedule](#) ([see timing of immunisation records](#)).

Vaccines that are administered under the National Immunisation Program are recorded on the [Australian Immunisation Register](#).

In accordance with the *Education and Care Services National Regulations*, a record of each child's current immunisation status must be kept in their enrolment record. Education and care services are also required to take reasonable steps to prevent the spread of infectious diseases that occur and display notices of instances where there has been an occurrence of an infectious disease at the premises in line with regulation 173 of the Regulations.

## Approved immunisation records

For most children an approved immunisation record is an extract from the [Australian Immunisation Register](#) called an immunisation history statement. This statement provides a record of immunisations given to a child, and details whether the child is up to date with their immunisations. It also provides information about any approved exemptions.

The immunisation status will indicate:

- Up to date; or
- Not up to date; or
- On a catch-up schedule.

A child on a catch-up schedule is able to enrol in and attend an early childhood service.

A child is not able to enrol in or attend an early childhood service if an immunisation history statement has a status of 'not up to date'.

Information for parents on how to obtain an immunisation history statement can be found on the [SA Health website](#).

A child's South Australian Child Health and Development Record (known as the 'Blue Book'), a letter from the child's doctor, or an overseas immunisation record are not approved immunisation records.

If families have an overseas immunisation record, they can take their record to an immunisation service provider, who will assess if this meets the Australian requirements and enter all doses into the Australian Immunisation Register. Refer to [SA Health website](#) for information on overseas immunisation records and translation services.

## Exemptions from meeting immunisation requirements

There are two processes that enable exemption from meeting immunisation requirements. Exemptions can be approved through:

- the Commonwealth Government's legislation, *A New Tax System (Family Assistance) Act 1999*. Further information regarding exemptions and the process to apply for exemptions is detailed on the Commonwealth Government's Department of Social Services [Family Assistance Guide, Immunisation - approved exemptions](#)
- the *South Australian Public Health Act 2011* by a class or individual exemption issued by the South Australian Chief Public Health Officer:
  - in relation to a specified child or a group of children
  - in relation to specified early childhood services or early childhood services of a specified group.

Further information regarding exemptions including a list of current class exemptions can be found on the [SA Health website](#) and [department intranet page](#). Families can seek support with exemptions by speaking to their family medical practitioner or immunisation provider.

Evidence of an approved exemption, or when a child meets the criteria of a CPHO approved class exemption, must be provided to the early childhood service so that a child can enrol in and attend an early childhood service.

## Timing of immunisation records

A parent must supply the early childhood service with a current approved immunisation record at the time of enrolment.

An updated immunisation record is required within the stated timeframes below:

- After a child turns 7 months and before they turn 9 months. The immunisation record is due before the child turns 9 months of age.
- After a child turns 13 months and before they turn 15 months. The immunisation record is due before the child turns 15 months of age.
- After a child turns 19 months and before they turn 21 months. The immunisation record is due before the child turns 21 months of age.
- After a child turns 4 years and 2 months and before they turn 4 years 8 months. The immunisation record is due before the child turns 4 years 8 months of age.

Records must be provided at these times to show the child is up to date with all immunisations and the immunisations have been provided at the correct schedule points. When a record is to be provided at the time of enrolment, it must be downloaded from the Australian Immunisation Register no earlier than one month prior to the child's enrolment. When a record is to be provided whilst the child is enrolled in and attending the service, the record must be downloaded within the specified age range listed above.

An early childhood service is able to check the currency of a child's immunisation record by checking the date the immunisation history statement was downloaded, which is recorded as the 'as at' date on the statement. A current approved immunisation record will list all the immunisations a child has received, so there is no need to ask for evidence of a child's previous immunisations.

Under Part 12A of the Act, a child cannot continue to attend an early childhood services if all immunisation requirements are not met.

## Recording immunisation status

At enrolment, a child's parent must provide the early childhood service their child's current approved immunisation history statement.

The immunisation status or exemption **must** be recorded on the Early Years System (EYS) or Education Management System (EMS) (preschool, occasional care) or Harmony (family day care, rural care, respite care). Information on how to enter an immunisation statement in EYS can be found on the [how to enter and maintain immunisation records in EYS for preschool and occasional care](#) on the intranet.

The immunisation status on Harmony will be managed by the Family Day Care Business and Customer Support Centre and Rural Care by the Administration Coordinator.

The reporting functionality of EYS will monitor currency of records entered into each system. Alerts will be triggered by the key dates identified on the current approved immunisation record as well as the age of the child. The alert system will involve an:

- SMS text sent to the parent and, an email sent to the site leader (from EYS).

To monitor currency of records in EMS, the site leader will receive an alert in EMS, enabling the site to notify the parent through the EMS SMS text function.

To monitor currency of records in Harmony, request your relevant business unit run an immunisation due/overdue report.

## Ongoing management - immunisation requirements flow chart

An immunisation requirements [flow chart](#) has been developed to support early childhood services meet the immunisation requirements, and ensure current immunisation history statements are obtained by the services. The [flow chart](#) outlines the process of obtaining records from parents commencing at enrolment, and as key dates are identified where updated records are required, including for children on a catch-up schedule.

The [flow chart](#) also provides links to appropriate reminder notice templates that early childhood services can provide to parents when requesting updated records.

When a child, who is enrolled in and attending an early childhood service no longer meets the immunisation requirements, they cannot attend the service until a current approved immunisation record has been provided. In these circumstances the child will not be unenrolled from the service but rather the

enrolment will still be active. The child can recommence attendance at the service when their parent provides a current approved immunisation history statement or evidence of an approved exemption.

There is no requirement for the parent to formally withdraw their child's enrolment if they choose not to provide an updated immunisation record.

## Management of immunisation records on site

To enable copies of children's immunisation records to be promptly provided to the Chief Public Health Officer on request (see records to be provided to the Chief Public Health Officer below), it is recommended that services keep all immunisation records on site in a single hard copy file, in alphabetical order.

When a child leaves the service, their immunisation records must be placed with and archived with their enrolment record.

Family day care and rural care immunisation records are uploaded and saved in the Harmony program electronically under each child's enrolment information. When a child leaves these services, Harmony will archive the child's records that will be kept with the child's enrolment details.

## Preventing the spread of an infectious disease - exclusion requirements

In accordance with the Education and Care Services National Regulations, early childhood education and care services must take reasonable steps to prevent the spread of an infectious disease and to exclude certain children in the event of an occurrence of an infectious disease in line with the National Health Medical Research Council (NHMRC) guidelines - [staying healthy-preventing infectious diseases in early childhood education and care services](#).

The spread of certain infectious diseases can be reduced by excluding a person, known to be infectious, from contact with others who are at risk of catching the infection. Excluding ill children, educators and other staff is an effective way to limit the spread of infection in education and care services. The decision to exclude a child is to be made in consultation with your local public health unit.

In the event of an occurrence of a vaccine preventable disease in an early childhood service, SA Health recommends minimum periods of exclusion based on guidelines issued by the NHMRC - [staying healthy: preventing infectious diseases in early childhood education and care services](#). To make a decision on the response to an illness, refer to the [NHMRC list of recommended minimum exclusion periods](#).

For a vaccine preventable disease, parents or guardians will need to be informed that their child is to be excluded if they have not been immunised for that particular vaccine preventable disease. For example, a child who is exempt from meeting the immunisation requirements or on a catch-up schedule may be required to be excluded from the service. In these circumstances, the early childhood service leader or educator may receive direction from SA Health.

The early childhood service leader or educator must ensure that reasonable steps are taken to prevent the spread of the vaccine preventable disease at the service. This includes ensuring:

- a parent, guardian or an emergency contact of each child at the service is notified of the occurrence as soon as practicable. The [prescribed information to be displayed procedure](#) provides a template notice that early childhood services can use. The notice will state that there has been an occurrence of an infectious disease at the service. The notice must indicate the type of infectious disease that has occurred

- children are excluded from the service in accordance with the [SA Health exclusion periods](#) for infectious diseases based on the NHMRC guidelines. These guidelines specify the periods when a child with an infection disease should be excluded from the service and any child who is in contact with that child
- effective hygiene practices to control the spread of infectious diseases are implemented. Refer to the [first aid and infection control standard](#) for more information.

For further advice about the exclusion periods, contact [SA Health Communicable Disease Control Branch](#) on 1300 232 272 or email [HealthCommunicableDiseases@sa.gov.au](mailto:HealthCommunicableDiseases@sa.gov.au) or visit the [SA Health website](#).

### Records to be provided to the Chief Public Health Officer

In the event of an outbreak of a [vaccine preventable disease](#), or the risk of a vaccine preventable disease, under Section 96C of the *South Australian Public Health Act 2011* the SA Health Chief Public Health Officer (or delegate) may request the early childhood service provider to:

- provide the names and date of birth of children enrolled, or children who routinely attend the service
- provide immunisation records relating to each child
- provide parent contact details for each child.

Early childhood service providers must provide the above details to the Chief Public Health Officer within 24 hours of receipt of the request. This will enable the Chief Public Health Officer (or delegate) to review the immunisation status of children at the service and to exclude any child at risk of contracting the vaccine preventable disease. The Child immunisation report available in EYS will provide a summary of this information.

The site leader must notify Regulation and Compliance on 8226 1646 or email [education.ngfenquiries@sa.gov.au](mailto:education.ngfenquiries@sa.gov.au) if they receive a request from the Chief Public Health Officer (or delegate) for the service to provide copies of a child's immunisation records.

### Reporting requirements

All services are required to lodge a report of an occurrence of a vaccine preventable disease on the Incident and Response Management System (IRMS) in accordance with the [critical incidents, injury and hazard reporting procedure](#).

Site leaders are not required to report a notifiable disease directly to SA Health. This is the responsibility of the medical practitioners and health laboratories.

Refer to the [first aid and infection control standard](#) and [infection control and employee immunisation programs](#) intranet page for more information.

## Roles and responsibilities

### Early Childhood Services and Strategy Directorate

This procedure will be reviewed at least every year by the Early Childhood Services and Strategy Directorate in consultation with the Partnerships, Schools and Preschools, Health and Safety Services and department

early childhood services. Reviews may also be undertaken at other times if there has been a change in legislation, Australian Immunisation Register (AIR) or department specifications.

## Site leader

Implementation and compliance with this procedure.

Ensuring that the early childhood service does not enrol a child or provide a service to a child unless all immunisation requirements are met.

Recording and maintaining the immunisation status of all children enrolled and attending in such a way that the service has immediate access to the information in the event of an occurrence of a vaccine preventable disease.

Implementing the exclusion requirements in the event of an occurrence of a vaccine preventable disease.

Reporting occurrence of vaccine preventable disease on IRMS.

## Family day care educator

Implementation and compliance with the procedure.

Ensuring that the early childhood service does not enrol a child or provide a service to a child unless all immunisation requirements are met.

## Family day care Scheme Manager and respite care Program Manager

Ensuring compliance with the procedure is effectively managed and implemented.

## Family day care and respite care program coordinators

Ensuring compliance with the procedure is effectively managed and implemented.

## Respite care program care provider

Implementation and compliance with the procedure.

## FDC Business Manager

Ensuring compliance with the procedure is effectively managed.

Recording and maintaining the immunisation status of all children enrolled and attending in such a way that the service has immediate access to the information in the event of an occurrence of a vaccine preventable disease.

## Rural care Administration Coordinator

Ensuring compliance with the procedure is effectively managed.

Recording and maintaining the immunisation status of all children enrolled and attending in such a way that the service has immediate access to the information in the event of an occurrence of a vaccine preventable disease.

## Definitions

### Australian Immunisation Register (AIR)

Collects all immunisation records for children up until their seventh birthday.

### Department

Department for Education.

### Early childhood service

Preschools, children's centres, centre-based childcare facilities, rural care, occasional care, respite care, approved family day care educators, and playcentres or preschool supported programs (where a parent does not remain at the service).

### Immune deficiency

Immunodeficiency (or immune deficiency) is a state in which the immune system's ability to fight infectious disease and cancer is compromised or entirely absent. Most cases of immunodeficiency are acquired ("secondary") due to extrinsic factors that affect the patient's immune system.

### Catch up schedule

A child is registered for a catch-up schedule on the Australian Immunisation Register (AIR) when they have missed some vaccines as per the National Immunisation Program (NIP) schedule.

### Site leader

Any person who has the responsibility, management or control of a departmental workplace or work unit. This includes, but is not limited to executive directors, education directors, directors, principals, preschool directors, managers, family day care managers, respite care Program Manager and supervisors.

## Supporting information

[Australian Immunisation Register](#)

Department of the Premier and Cabinet Circular [PC012 Information Privacy Principles Instruction 20 June 2016](#)

[Immunisation requirements and early childhood services](#)

National Health Medical Research Council (NHMRC) guidelines - [Staying healthy-preventing infectious](#)

[diseases in early childhood education and care services](#)

[National Immunisation Program - South Australian Schedule](#)

[SA Health Communicable Disease Control Branch](#)

[SA Health Website](#)

SA Health [You've Got What?](#)

[The Australian Immunisation Handbook](#)

The Department of Health: [Series of National Guidelines](#)

## References

[Education and Care Services National Regulations](#)

[Education and Early Childhood Services \(Registration and Standards\) Act 2011, Schedule 1, Education and Care Services National Law \(South Australia\)](#)

[South Australian Public Health Act 2011](#)

[Work Health and Safety Act 2012](#)

[Work Health and Safety Regulations 2012](#)

## Related policies

[Admission procedure](#)

[Educators, families and community in family day care standard](#)

[Children's health and safety in family day care standard](#)

[First aid and infection Control control standard](#)

[Critical incidents, injury and hazard reporting procedure](#)

[Occasional care program procedure](#)

[Playcentre program procedure](#)

[Rural care program procedure](#)

[School and preschool enrolment policy](#)

[Work health and safety policy](#)

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Vaccination, immunisation status, immunisation record, exclude, exclusion.

# Contact

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