



Infection Control Policy

Policy Statement

It is the priority of **Riverside Childcare** to protect all children attending our service and all persons working in our service from the transmission of infections. The health and well-being of all children, staff and visitors to our service is paramount and our aim is to prevent and manage any infection which may be present in the service. This policy is available and communicated to all parents, children (in an age appropriate manner) and staff.

This policy has been updated in line with current guidance the HSPC Infection Prevention and Control guidance for services providing childcare during the COVID-19 Pandemic, the DCYA's Return to Work Safely Protocol and Tusla's Children Services Regulations Guidance Document for Early Years Services: COVID-19

Principle

This policy is underwritten by the the Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016 and the Child Care Regulations (The Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services)(Amendments) Regulations 2016. and the Tusla Quality and Regulatory Framework.

Rationale

Infection can lead to serious ill-health among children. Infection control procedures seek to reduce the risk of children getting sick in a service by ensuring good hygiene is followed and the risk of infection is minimised. This will be communicated with parents, so good hygiene and infection control practices will be carried over from the service to home and vice versa.

Definitions/Glossary

Infectious disease	An illness in which the symptoms and signs of illness are caused by germs. These germs can be any of a number of different types - bacteria, viruses, fungi, protozoa and parasites. For example, strep throat is caused by a bacteria called 'group A streptococcus' and impetigo, a common bacterial skin infection in children, can be caused by this or other bacteria, whereas measles, mumps and chickenpox are all caused by viruses.
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Contagious disease	Any illness caused by germs is an infectious illness, but that which can pass from one person to another is contagious. Not all infectious diseases are contagious. Ear infections are caused by germs, but are not passed from child to child. Thus, although an ear infection is an infectious disease it is not a contagious disease. On the other hand, chickenpox rapidly spreads from person to person and is an example of a highly contagious infectious disease.
Standard precautions	Basic good hygiene measures (e.g. handwashing, appropriate use of protective clothing, environmental cleaning etc.) that should be practiced by all caregivers at all times and with all children. It is not always possible to tell who has an infectious disease, infection can be spread by a person who has no signs and symptoms of illness or is incubating an infection e.g. flu, Chickenpox. For this reason, it is essential that good hygiene practices are applied routinely in all early years settings. (HPSC, 2012)
Cleaning	The removal of food residues, dirt and grease using a detergent.
Disinfection	A process that reduces the numbers of bacteria to a safe level.
Disinfectant	A chemical that will reduce the number of germs to a level at which they are not harmful.
Detergent	An artificial cleansing agent capable of breaking down oils and fats.
Sanitisers	A combined detergent and disinfectant.
Normal Temperature	A normal temperature for a child is between 36 and 36.8 degrees Celsius.
Mild temperature / Mild fever	A temperature between 37.5°C and 37.9°C (Using ear thermometer)
High temperature / High fever	A temperature of 38°C or above (Using ear thermometer). It is usually a sign of an infection such as a cold. But it can also be due to more serious infections, so it's important to look at all your child's symptoms.



Risk Assessments

- Risk assessments will always be undertaken by staff to assess if activities, actions or environments pose risks from an infection control standpoint to the children and staff of Riverside Childcare.

Hand washing

- Riverside Childcare has a **hand washing policy** which all staff promote and model for children, after using the toilet, before eating/preparing food, after wiping noses, waste disposal and mopping up spills.

- Staff must wash their hands, before preparing or serving food, before eating or drinking, after going to the toilet, assisting children going to the toilet, dealing with bodily fluids, cleaning procedures, caring for sick children, handling soiled clothing, dealing with waste and after removing disposable gloves.

- A wash hand basin is provided in each room with a constant supply of hot (no greater than 43c) and cold running water, liquid antibacterial soap and paper towels. A wash hand basin is also available in all bathrooms and kitchens.

- Children are encouraged to wash their hands with warm water and liquid soap under supervision after visiting the toilet, before eating, after sneezing, coughing or blowing noses, after handling animals, after touching a cut or sore and after outside play and activities. Clear guidance on handwashing is outlined for children and staff alike in our service.

- Staff will supervise and assist children to encourage effective handwashing, appropriate to their age.

- Riverside Childcare has 5 hand washing stations, and 4 hand sanitiser stations – all staff are encouraged to use and to follow our handwashing policy.

- Children and staff are encouraged to cover their nose and mouth with a tissue before sneezing or coughing. Hands are washed after blowing noses, sneezing or coughing.

- Additional hand washing is required when caring for babies or children who are teething or dribbling.

Personal hygiene

- Particular attention should be paid to personal hygiene when caring for babies and young children who require close physical contact and comfort. Contact points such as the neck or arms may become contaminated with secretions or mucous, and these should be washed immediately.



Visibly soiled clothing of staff or children should be changed, and hands washed. Children's faces, particularly infants and toddlers, must be kept clean of secretions by careful and gentle washing.

- Staff must ensure they have an adequate quantity of additional clean clothes to change into if required throughout the day. Each child should also have an adequate supply of additional clean clothes available to them in the service.

Respiratory etiquette

- Children should be taught the required steps for handwashing and respiratory etiquette appropriate to their stage of development

(see: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Mcpm-HCIW9Q>).

- Staff and children should avoid touching their eyes, nose or mouth. Games, songs and rhymes can be used to make practices as messaging as child friendly as possible.

- Cover your mouth and nose with a clean tissue when coughing and sneezing and then promptly dispose of the tissue in a foot-operated pedal bin—hands to be washed or sanitised immediately after. A supply of tissues should be available in each care room. If tissues are not available, best practice is to cough or sneeze into the bend of the elbow, not into the hands.

Food preparation

- Staff **always wear gloves when preparing and serving food and wash hands after removing gloves.**

- Staff always wash their hands after prepping food and removing waste food and materials.
- Perishable food is kept in a refrigerator, between temperatures of 0 and 5 Celsius. Any perishable food left at room temperature for more than 2 hours will be discarded safely.
- **Staff involved in helping children with toileting are not involved in preparing food.**

Sterilising babies' bottles

At Riverside childcare we do not have a separate bottle kitchen, therefore parents are reminded that all bottle feeding equipment will not be supplied and/or sterilised by us. Bottles are to be brought from home if needed following adequate formula preparation and transportation to our setting. Bottles will be kept refrigerated and reheated following our infant formula policy.



Sterilising babies' soothers

Riverside Childcare aims to ensure a high standard of hygiene is promoted at all times around the use of soothers.

- Soothers will be used predominantly during sleep time.
- Soothers will be labelled and stored in individual named containers while not in use.
- Soothers will be washed and sterilised as required in sterilising liquid or using sterilising equipment (microwave steriliser / steam steriliser) following manufacturers instructions .

Sterilising feeding equipment

As **we do not cater for children under 1 year old** at Riverside Childcare Rathdrum, we will not necessarily sterilise feeding equipment. Families will be informed of this and arrangements will be made if a child has specific needs for sterilising their feeding equipment.

All food equipment will be washed in a dishwasher which will be set at a high temperature and will clean and sanitise the equipment.

Cleaning and the premises

- All staff are aware of their role in maintaining high standards of hygiene.
- Riverside Childcare reinforces good practice regarding keeping the environment and premises clean and safe.
- Spillages of blood, faeces, urine, vomit or other bodily fluids or secretions are cleaned immediately and with priority. **Mops are not to be used for these** and extreme caution is exercised at all times.
- **Daily, weekly and monthly cleaning schedules** are in place and records kept.
- A bin removal company has been contracted by us which includes the removal and disposal of all waste at Riverside Childcare.
- Our premises are free from pests and rodents and a Pest Control company has been contracted to proceed with regular checks.
- All staff receive regular support & supervision in relation to infection control and training is provided.



- We carry and maintain a good stock of cleaning products and tools to ensure that hygiene practices can be carried out at all times. Adequate supplies for cleaning are provided to be used, like clean cloths, gloves, aprons, mops, buckets and detergents.

- **Toys and play materials are cleaned daily**, with attention placed on especially soiled items. They are not brought into the toilet.

- **Toilets, floors, shelves storing bags, tables and chairs and other areas are cleaned daily** to help decrease the spread of infection, cleaning agents used are detailed on our cleaning schedules.

- Children have individual clothing. These items are not shared. Any soiled clothes are placed in a plastic bag, sealed and sent home with parents/guardians.

- Individual combs, hairbrushes, toothbrushes, personal clothing, bedding and towels are labelled and not shared.

- Sleeping mats and beds are at least 50 cm apart.

- At least once a day, even in winter, all rooms in the service are aired out.

- Our cleaning schedules are located in the kitchen area.

- Master cleaning schedule located in the office and cleaning schedule for each room is on the walls in each care room.

- Toys that children put in their mouths are washed after use or before use by another child.

- Personal soft toys and items like blankets are not shared.



Cleaning Schedule

General Environment Cleaning Program		
Area/Item	Method	Frequency/Comments
Tables/ window sills / door and cabinet handles	Clean with neutral detergent, warm water and clean cloth	Daily and immediately if soiled i.e. if soiled with blood or body fluids, following cleaning, disinfect, rinse and dry
High chairs/dining tables	Clean with neutral detergent, warm water and clean cloth and dry with disposable paper towels	Before and after use; if soiled with blood or body fluids, following cleaning, disinfect, rinse and dry
Washable floor covering	Wash with detergent, warm water and clean utensils Vacuum clean to remove dirt when children are not present.	Daily and immediately if soiled e.g. spillage Vacuum daily
Carpets	Clean with an approved carpet cleaning method Vacuum	Clean carpets only when children will not be present to ensure the carpet is dry before next use Clean carpets at least monthly in infant areas, at least every 3 months in other areas or immediately when soiled Daily
Small rugs	Laundry	Weekly
Walls/ Ceilings / Skirting boards	Clean with warm water and general purpose detergent. If soiled with blood or body fluids, following cleaning, disinfect	Routine cleaning not required except in areas of frequent hand contact, such as lower wall/door frames in areas occupied by toddlers
Waste bins	Empty	Daily



	Clean with neutral detergent and warm water	Weekly and immediately if soiled
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Mops and cleaning cloths	Mop heads should be washed in warm water and detergent, rinsed and air dried	After daily use
	Reusable cloths must be laundered daily on a hot wash cycle (at least 60oC) in a washing machine and then tumble dried	After daily use

Toilet Area Cleaning Program		
Area/Item	Method	Frequency / Comments
Wash hand basins, taps, surrounding counters, soap dispensers.	Clean with detergent and warm water.	At least daily and immediately if soiled. If soiled with blood or body fluids, following cleaning, disinfecting, rinse and dry.
Both sides of the toilet seat, toilet handles, door knobs or cubicle handles.	Clean with detergent and warm water.	At least daily and immediately if soiled. If soiled with blood or body fluids, following cleaning, disinfecting, rinse and dry.
Toilet bowls	Use toilet cleaner as per manufacturer's instructions.	At least daily and immediately if soiled.
Potties	Clean with detergent and warm water and if soiled, disinfect with a chlorine based disinfectant with 1000 ppm available chlorine.	Immediately after each use.

Toy Cleaning Program		
Item	Method	Frequency / Comments



Soft toys – if shared.	Machine washed in a hot cycle according to the manufacturer's instructions.	Daily. If soiled, take it out of use immediately.
Hard toys/items that go into the mouth or have been in contact with saliva or other body fluids.	Clean with warm water and detergent, rinsed and dried thoroughly. Alternatively, they may be washed in a dishwasher.	After each child's use.
Other hard toys e.g. dolls house, cosy area frame.	Clean with warm water and detergent, rinsed and dried thoroughly.	Weekly or immediately if soiled.

Nappy Changing and Toileting

- The nappy changing rooms and toilets are adequately ventilated.
- A wash basin is included in the nappy changing room and has hot and cold running water and access to liquid soap and paper towels. **Staff must wash and dry their hands before and after nappy changing.**
- Children's hands will be washed and dried after nappy changing.
- Staff that are changing nappies use disposable gloves that are removed **before re-dressing the child.**
- All nappy changing mats used are waterproof, in good condition i.e. no exposed stuffing or foam and have an easily cleanable cover. Nappy changing mats are wiped down by staff **after each nappy change.**
- Children are never left unattended while having their nappy changed.
- All nappies are **disposed of in a way which will not risk infection.** Soiled nappies are disposed of in a foot operated, lined and lidded bin. The bag with the soiled nappies is removed from the premises after all nappy changes are finished. Nappy disposal containers are kept away from children and out of their reach (at the back if it is not possible to remove the bag from the premises immediately). Nappy changing units are cleaned thoroughly after every nappy change and on a regular basis.
- All staff are fully trained and briefed in nappy changing and infection control.

Nappy changing should be a pleasant experience for the child and staff members should use this opportunity to interact with the child and provide one to one attention.



Immunisation

- Children's immunisation records are obtained when children begin in Riverside Childcare. Parents are asked to update Riverside Childcare when children receive additional immunisations.

- If a child is not immunised, for their own safety they may be excluded from Riverside Childcare if an infectious disease that they are not immunised against is circulating. Parents will always be consulted on this. We always work in the best interests of children's health.

- Parents have a right to choose whether to immunise their child or not.

- We provide information leaflets on immunisation schedules, oral hygiene and prevention of infection to parents.

Animals and pets

- Handwashing and drying procedures are followed before and after handling any animals and pets that are present in Riverside Childcare.

- All animals and pets are managed in accordance with required and appropriate instructions for their care.

- Children are supervised with animals at all times.

- All our animals are regularly checked with vets.

Zoo and Farm visits

- Handwashing and drying procedures are followed before and after handling any animals.

- Children are supervised at all times during their visit

- All guidance and information found in the "Open Farms and Pet Farms" document by the HPSC will be followed, paying special attention to the Appendix 6: Information Sheet for The Public, Education and Childcare Services and Community Organisations. This will be made available to parents also.

<https://www.hpsc.ie/a-z/gastroenteric/pettingfarms/File,15817,en.pdf>



Procedure for Managing an infectious illness

- Children and staff are encouraged to cover their nose and mouth with a tissue before sneezing or coughing. Hands are washed after blowing noses, sneezing or coughing.
- Staff will report any illness to the manager/designated person in charge.
- Good ventilation of shared spaces, good cough etiquette (coughing into tissue or elbow rather than on hands) and good hand hygiene / cleaning of surfaces, all really help in preventing spread.
- Unwell children, with a **high temperature** and/or specific signs and symptoms, will be excluded from the service until a diagnosis can be made. Children can return following the exclusion periods corresponding to the diagnosed illness. A child who presents at a high temperature, both at home or at Riverside, must not return until diagnosis and until **48 hours after the last temperature without using temperature reducing medication** (for example no calpol or nurofen has been given for the last 48 hours). Staff can and will use their discretion when admitting a child back into Riverside Childcare, if they believe the child is still ill and cannot take part in their usual activities.
- At some times of the year, children may have a runny nose or slight cough, and **they should not be prevented from attending if they are feeling well with one mild symptom**. However, if a child is feeling unwell with more significant symptoms, or **combination of symptoms** (cough, runny nose and mild fever) then they should be at home **until they have a normal temperature for 48 hours and their symptoms have gone too** (no new symptoms). Children may have a persistent cough after infection for a few weeks so once the fever and other symptoms have gone, they should not be excluded for the cough alone.
- **Teething:** A high temperature of 38 degrees celsius or above is **not a symptom of teething** and a diagnosis must be obtained. Some of the symptoms of teething are red, flushed cheeks, dribble, chew on their fists or on their toys more than usual, have sore and tender gums and cry more and have a nappy rash. **Children must always follow our policy of 48h with no temperature before returning.**
- Any child displaying symptoms of respiratory illness or any **symptoms of COVID-19 should not attend** the service and should follow guidance advised by HSE. Any child who has **tested positive for COVID-19** should follow the guidance advised by HSE.
- Children should remain at home if they are suffering from general **diarrhoea or vomiting**, and should not return until they have been for at least **48 hours symptom free** (48h without diarrhoea or vomiting).
- A plan will be drawn up to help prevent the spread of the illness and the HSE guidelines: Managing an infectious disease in childcare settings will be followed.
- Communication will be issued to parents if there is an infectious disease circulating in Riverside Childcare.



Exclusion table:

Children are excluded only if they are actually ill, present a danger or a risk to others (children or adults) or are unable to benefit from the service's normal activities.

There are some particular illnesses where exclusion is necessary. In general, parents/guardians are asked to keep their child away from the service, and staff members are required to follow this guideline too if suffering any of the following:

- Diarrhoea and vomiting.
- A temperature of 101°F / 38°C or above.
- Eye discharge.
- Rash or skin disorder.
- Strep throat.
- An earache or a bad cough.

This list applies to symptoms seen before any GP visit or diagnosis. Specific exclusion periods are necessary, and are applied, for particular diagnosed illnesses as outlined in Management of Infectious Disease in Childcare Facilities and Other Childcare Settings (2012) Preschool and Childcare Facility Subcommittee Health Protection Surveillance Centre (HPSC).

The following exclusion periods are followed in Riverside Childcare. In certain instances, the exclusion period may be longer than outlined below:

WHEN SHOULD MY CHILD RETURN TO SCHOOL/ CHILDCARE?				
Chicken Pox When scabs are dry	Conjunctivitis No need to stay out*	Diarrhoea or Vomiting 48 hours after the last episode	Flu 5 days after start of illness	Glandular Fever No need to stay out*
Hand, foot & mouth No need to stay out*	Head Lice No need to stay out*	Impetigo When scabs are dry or 24 hours after starting antibiotics	Measles 4 days after rash appears	Mumps 5 days after swelling appears
Scabies After first treatment	Scarlet Fever 24 hours after starting antibiotics	Stapped Cheek No need to stay out*	Threadworms No need to stay out*	Whooping Cough 5 days after starting antibiotics or 21 days after start of illness
This information is based on the Management of Infectious Diseases in Schools guidance document.			*No need to stay out if child is well but school or childcare provider should be informed.	



Notifiable disease:

- A list of notifiable diseases is available from the HSE. In the case of notified diseases or if the illness spreads **the manager will notify the Tusla Early Years Inspectorate by filling out the Notification of Incidents Form and the HSE Public Health Department.**

- When we have been contacted by the Department of Public Health, HSE, in our area and have been advised that we have a confirmed case as listed we will contact Tusla, Early Years Inspectorate. The Department of Public Health Medicine will advise as to the next steps regarding precautions to be taken in our premises and follow up of contacts and procedures.

- **Parents will be informed verbally and in writing if an outbreak has occurred** – all reasonable information on the outbreak will be provided to them.

COVID-19 Infection Control Guidelines in Riverside Childcare

- Tusla does not need to be notified of any incidence of COVID-19 in the setting anymore as advised by Early Childhood Ireland.

Dealing with Suspected COVID-19 Cases in Riverside Childcare

If a child or staff member in Riverside Childcare feels unwell and develops symptoms:

- If a child develops any symptoms of acute respiratory infection including cough, fever, or shortness of breath while in Riverside Childcare, a staff member will take the child to an area where the child can be isolated from other children. This should be a room if possible but if that is not possible it should be in a place 2m away from others in the room.
 - o Parents/guardians will be called and asked to collect their child as soon as possible.
 - o A staff member will remain with the child at all times until parent/guardian arrives. Due to the nature of COVID-19 physical distance will need to be retained as much as possible, and the staff member will need to wear a facemask and gloves.
- If a staff member develops symptoms of acute respiratory infection including cough, fever or shortness of breath while in the care facility, ask them to go home without delay and contact their GP by telephone.
- They will be located 2 m away from others as much as possible.
 - o They will be asked to avoid touching people, surfaces and objects and be advised to cover their mouth and nose with disposable tissue when they cough or sneeze and put the tissue in the bin. .
 - o They will be asked to wear a mask.



- If there is an emergency, staff will call an ambulance, and explain that the child or staff member is unwell with symptoms of COVID-19.
- Any rooms where children or staff need to be isolated are cleaned and contact surfaces disinfected once they leave.

What we do when there is a confirmed case of COVID-19 in Riverside Childcare

- We advise all individuals with symptoms of COVID-19 to contact their GP for further advice.
- Riverside Childcare will liaise with local Public Health staff of the HSE to discuss the case if needed or required.
- Riverside Childcare does not need to notify Tusla anymore in regards to Covid 19 cases.
- Adequate cleaning of Riverside Childcare will commence following a confirmed case of COVID-19.
- Symptoms are advised to self-isolate and to contact their GP for advice.
- We will advise confirmed COVID-19 cases to continue to self-isolate for as long as the HSE current recommendations and not return to Riverside Childcare until they are advised that it is safe to do so.



This policy links with our -

- Administration of Medication Policy
- Hand Washing Policy
- Immunisation Policy
- Health & Safety Policy
- Staff absence Policy
- Risk management Policy
- Staff training and supervision Policy

This policy was adopted by Riverside Childcare on Date: 23/07/22

Last Reviewed on: 20/08/24

Signed by: Michael Dunster On behalf of Management (Manager, Owner, Chairperson)

Relevant links:

Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) (Registration of School Age Services) Regulations 2018

Management of Infectious Disease in Childcare Facilities and Other Childcare Settings (2012) and Appendices

Guidance on Infection Control in Schools and other Childcare Settings (2016) Public Health England produced with the assistance of the Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health.

Infection Prevention and Control in Childcare Settings (Day Care and Childminding Settings) October 2016 Health Protection Scotland NHS National Services Scotland

A Guide to The Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act, 2005 Health and Safety Authority

A Guide to Risk Assessments and Safety Statements (updated 2016) Health and Safety Authority