

**HYGIENE POLICY****WHY?**

Thrive Group Tasmania is committed to providing safe and healthy early childhood education and care environments for children and staff/Educators.

Effective hygiene practices minimise the risk of infection and illness and are an important means of controlling their spread in early childhood settings.

Thrive is also committed to supporting children in learning vital self-care skills and fostering their confidence, independence and responsibility in this area.

**WHO?**

This policy applies to families, staff and Educators enrolled with, or working in the following Thrive Children's Services:

- Early Learning Services
- Outside School Hours Care Services
- Family Day Care Services

**WHAT?**

This Policy is to be read in conjunction with Dealing with Infectious Diseases Policy and Procedure, Exclusion Policy and Procedure and the Immunisation Policy and Procedure.

**Guide for Practice**

The National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) 'Staying Healthy – Preventing Infectious Diseases in Early Childhood Education and Care Services' Fifth Edition 2012 will serve as a guide to Thrive hygiene practices.

**Hygiene Areas**

Procedures relating to:

- Personal hygiene
- Nappy changing and toileting
- Safely dealing with spillages
- Environmental hygiene
- Food hygiene

All of which play a critical importance in maintaining a safe and healthy child care setting.

**Role Modelling/Education and Promotion**

Role modelling hygiene practices and supporting children's learning about their importance as part of individual service programs is crucial, given that so many habits are developed during childhood and will continue throughout life.

Maintaining and sharing up to date information at service level and with families will support best practice hygiene standards in Thrive services.

**HOW?**

Please refer to the Hygiene Procedure (following this Policy).

### WHEN?

All services are to:

- Follow hygiene procedures, as described at all times.
- Promote hygiene awareness and children's learning via discussion, visual supports and program activities, on an ongoing basis.
- Promote Thrive's approach and procedures with families at all times of enrolment and on an ongoing basis.
- Participate in training opportunities and maintain own knowledge base on an ongoing basis.

Thrive will provide all employees covered by this Policy with the appropriate training, so they are made aware of their responsibilities and obligations.

Thrive retains the sole discretion to reasonably vary, terminate or replace this policy from time to time. Thrive will consult before any amendments are made and will notify and train those that the amendments apply to.

All persons covered under the paragraph 'Who' who breach this policy may be subject to the appropriate disciplinary action in accordance with the Disciplinary Policy and Procedure or removal from the workplace or termination of services (workers, other than employees and other persons in the workplace).

**HYGIENE PROCEDURE****HOW?****Personal Hygiene****Hand Hygiene**

Thrive recommends staff/Educators:

- Wash their hands and support children in washing their hands before either touch anything that should stay clean and after touching anything that might contaminate the hands.
- Wash own hands and children's hands with soapy warm water when dirty; otherwise alcohol based hand rubs may be utilised, as may waterless hand cleaners and gel or hand sanitisers.
- Follow the process detailed in the 'Staying Healthy' manual, for washing hands in warm soapy water – see Appendix A.
- Use either paper towelling or hand towels for drying hands. If hand towels are used, each child needs to have his/her own and towels need to be laundered at the end of every day.
- Supervision is recommended.

**Oral Hygiene**

Thrive promotes positive oral hygiene habits through a combination of sound dietary practices and opportunities for children to rinse/wash their mouth out with water after meals and snacks.

Thrive encourages healthy foods as per the Nutrition and Food Safety Policy and Procedure.

Water being available throughout the day; Dental health information/experiences being offered as part of each service program; and resource information being made available to all families.

**Using Gloves**

Thrive recommends the use of gloves when there is a likelihood of a staff/Educator coming in to contact with bodily fluids such as faeces, urine, saliva, vomit and blood.

**Nappy Changing & Toileting**

Thrive supports an approach to nappy changing and toilet training that is flexible and responsive to children's individual needs.

The nappy changing area is to be kept hygienic and fully stocked at all times. Staff/Educators are to directly supervise children during nappy change routines i.e. never leave a child alone a nappy change mat/table.

Thrive recommends the following practices when changing a nappy:

- Staff/Educator to wash their hands using warm and soapy water or a hand sanitiser
- Prepare the nappy area
- Staff/Educator to inform child of their intention to change nappy

- Place child on change table or mat (paper towelling may be used as an additional surface between mat and child if preferred)
- If using gloves, put on before undressing the child
- Remove the nappy and clean child's nappy change area
- Dispose of nappy hygienically i.e. nappy sack or accessible bin with a lid
- Place clean nappy on child and dress the child
- Clean child's hands if they have come in to contact with bodily fluids
- Clean nappy change surface
- Staff/Educator to wash their hands using warm soapy water or hand sanitiser.

See visual nappy changing procedure at Appendix B.

Thrive recommends services display this procedure in their nappy changing area.

Thrive services are to provide assistance to children in learning toileting skills by:

- Being available, supportive and adopting an unhurried approach
- Using visual aids such as step-by-step charts/photos
- Responding calmly to accidents
- Providing physical aids such as steps to help children access toilets and hand washing basins.

With older aged children, respecting their privacy and independence needs is critical.

### **Safely Dealing with Spills**

Thrive recommends each service make up its own spill kit which contains disposable gloves, disposable cloths or sponges, paper towels, detergent, disposable scraper and disinfectant.

Staff/Educators are to use standard precautions when handling bodily fluids i.e. wash hands before and after contact; use gloves or other protective barriers; clean spills with paper towel and dispose of by sealing in a plastic bag or alternative; wash or mop the area with disinfectant; follow instructions on the container; safely dispose of needles e.g. Epi Pens or other sharp objects which may be contaminated.

For more detailed information about dealing with spills of blood, faeces, vomit, urine and nasal discharge, see Appendix C – National Health and Medical Research Council recommendations.

If the staff member/Educator is accidentally exposed to blood or bodily fluids:

- On the skin – wash off as soon as possible with liquid soap or alcohol wash
- On/in the mouth – rinse thoroughly with water – Do Not Swallow
- In eyes – wash out immediately with copious amounts of water or saline or salt water solution
- Cuts – encourage bleeding, wash with soap and water.

### **Environmental Hygiene**

Thrive recommends:

- Each service establishes a regular cleaning schedule or routine which takes into account areas of the service to be cleaned (indoors and outdoors), frequency of cleaning (daily/weekly) and a method of cleaning (detergent and warm water/other).

- Each service is to document the cleaning schedule as e.g. checklist which readily identifies above information plus the individuals responsible i.e. staff members and/or cleaner.
- Each service to post/display the schedule in an easily accessible location – this way it becomes a visual communication tool for all staff.

All services must adopt the following basic steps for effective routine cleaning:

- Remove physical dirt
- Wash with warm soapy water or sanitiser
- For hand stains or contaminated areas (i.e. faeces, allergens) with disinfectant – per instructions and then wipe them down
- Wash with warm soapy water or sanitiser again.

### Food Hygiene

Thrive recommends:

- Staff/Educators wash and dry their hands thoroughly before preparing and serving food
- Encourage and support children to wash their hands before and after eating or handling food
- Staff/Educators should avoid handling food if they have symptoms of diarrhoea, vomiting, fever, sore throat with a fever or jaundice
- Wounds are always covered with a waterproof dressing
- The kitchen is kept clean at all times i.e. washing benches with hot soapy water and/or sanitiser, leaving to dry, cleaning food contact surfaces such as cutlery, chopping boards, plates, glasses, cups, food storage containers, thermometers etc.
- All surfaces are cleaned with a sponge or the appropriate wipes
- Use plates and cups for each child
- Eating surfaces are cleaned after meals/snacks and the floor surface is cleaned of any food that has been dropped
- Children are supervised during meal/snack times.

For information relating to food safety practices, please refer to the Nutrition and Food Safety Policy and Procedure.

### Supporting Children's Learning

Providing opportunities for children to learn self-care skills is important in building self-esteem, confidence and independence. Thrive encourages each service to:

- Integrate hygiene experiences into their program and make self-care fun and relaxing through play and the use of books, posters, songs and rhymes
- Regularly discuss how and why hygiene is important with children
- Display visual information for children i.e. about handwashing
- Invite children to be a part of toy washing and cleaning up after messy activities
- Consistently role model positive hygiene practices

### Promotion

Thrive will make copies of the 'Staying Healthy' manual on USB for each Centre Based Service and Family Day Care Educators.

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## THRIVE GROUP TASMANIA POLICIES AND PROCEDURES Children's Services

Services will work in partnership with families to ensure they are aware of Thrive's approach and practices regarding hygiene at the time of enrolment.

Information sharing will be priority and include discussions as well as visual and written evidence of hygiene procedures and the way in which children's learning and self-care skills are an integral part of the program.

### Training

Staff/Educators are encouraged to attend in-house and external training on hygiene related topics such as infectious control and prevention and supporting children's self-care skills.

Thrive will make up-to-date resource information available to all services.

These Procedures relate to legislation as detailed in the Exclusion Policy.

### BREACH OF THE PROCEDURE

Any breach of this procedure may result in disciplinary action including, but not limited to, termination of employment.

Thrive retains the sole discretion to reasonably vary, terminate or replace this procedure from time to time. Thrive will consult before any amendments are made and will notify and train those to whom the amendments apply.