

NO JAB, NO PLAY POLICY

Mandatory – Quality Area 2

PURPOSE This policy will outline the details of Thomastown West Kindergarten's No Jab, No Play Policy.

POLICY STATEMENT

1. VALUES

Thomastown West Kindergarten is committed to:

- providing maximum protection for children from vaccine-preventable diseases
- ensuring all families are aware of what is required in order to adhere to this policy.

2. SCOPE

This policy applies to the Approved Provider, Nominated Supervisor, Certified Supervisor, educators, staff and parents/guardians who wish to enrol their child at Thomastown West Kindergarten.

3. BACKGROUND AND LEGISLATION

Background

Under the Public Health and Wellbeing Amendment (No Jab, No Play) Act 2015, before enrolling a child at this service, Thomastown West Kindergarten will have to first obtain evidence that the child is:

- fully immunised for their age OR
- on a vaccination catch-up program OR
- unable to be fully immunised for medical reasons.

Information on the immunisation schedule for vaccines, including what vaccines are required and when they should be received, is available from the National Immunisation Schedule. This information is available from your doctor, immunisation nurse or online.

Conscientious objection is not an exemption under the No Jab, No Play legislation.

Vaccination is one of the most effective interventions to prevent disease worldwide. Modern vaccines provide high levels of protection against an increasing number of diseases which, in some cases, can be fatal. Worldwide, it is estimated that immunisation programs prevent approximately 2.5 million deaths each year.

The current immunisation rate in Victoria for children under 5 years of age is around 92 per cent; however immunisation coverage of 95 per cent is necessary to halt the spread of particularly virulent diseases such as measles.

Immunisation not only protects those people who have been vaccinated, it also protects those in our community who may be unable to receive vaccines themselves, by reducing the prevalence and spread of disease.

The scientific evidence supporting vaccination is overwhelming, and the benefits far outweigh the very small risks.

All vaccines currently available in Australia must pass stringent safety testing before being approved for use by the Therapeutic Goods Administration, Australia's regulatory authority for therapeutic goods. Safety testing is required by law and is usually done over many years during the vaccine's development.

Once vaccines are in use, their safety is continually monitored by the Therapeutic Goods Administration and other organisations.

Legislation and standards

Relevant legislation and standards include but are not limited to:

- A New Tax (Family Assistance) Act 1999
- Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010
- Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011
- Health Records Act 2001 (Vic)
- National Quality Standard, Quality Area 2: Children's Health and Safety

Standard 2.1: Each child's health is promoted

Element 2.1.1: Each child's health needs are supported

Element 2.1.4: Steps are taken to control the spread of infectious diseases and to manage injuries and illness, in accordance with recognised guidelines

Standard 2.3: Each child is protected

Element 2.3.3: Plans to effectively manage incidents and emergencies are developed in consultation with relevant authorities, practised and implemented

- Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014 (Vic)
- Privacy Act 1988 (Cth)
- Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008 (Vic)
- Public Health and Wellbeing Amendment (No Jab, No Play) Act 2015
- Public Health and Wellbeing Regulations 2009 (Vic)

The most current amendments to listed legislation can be found at:

- Victorian Legislation – Victorian Law Today: <http://www.legislation.vic.gov.au/>
- Commonwealth Legislation – ComLaw: <http://www.comlaw.gov.au/>

4. DEFINITIONS

The terms defined in this section relate specifically to this policy. For commonly used terms e.g. Approved Provider, Nominated Supervisor, Regulatory Authority etc. refer to the General Definitions section of this manual.

Age appropriately immunised: in relation to a child means that the child is immunised in accordance with the relevant standard vaccination schedule or the relevant catch up vaccination schedule determined under section 4 of the A New Tax (Family Assistance) Act 1999 of the Commonwealth.

5. SOURCES AND RELATED POLICIES

Sources

- No Jab, No Play Frequently Asked Questions, 20 October 2015, www.vic.gov.au/news/no-jab-no-play-a.html, accessed 30 November 2015.
- Public Health and Wellbeing Amendment (No Jab, No Play) Act 2015

Service policies

- Complaints and Grievances Policy
- Enrolment and Orientation Policy
- Inclusion and Equity **Policy**
- Privacy and Confidentiality Policy.

6. PROCEDURES

The Approved Provider is responsible for:

- ensuring that all families are aware of the service's No Jab, No Play Policy
- responding to parent/guardian enquiries in relation to this policy

- complying with the Inclusion and Equity Policy • during the 16 week grace period (where applicable), assisting families to take reasonable steps to obtain the required immunisation documentation
- ensuring families have access to the necessary information to assist them in adhering to this policy.

The Nominated Supervisor, Certified Supervisor and other educators are responsible for:

- responding to parent/guardian enquiries in relation to this policy
- discussing support services for families to assist them in adhering to this policy
- complying with the service's Privacy and Confidentiality Policy in relation to the collection and management of a child's immunisation information.

Parents/guardians are responsible for:

- reading and complying with this No Jab, No Play Policy
- ensuring that all required immunisation information is provided to the service
- during the 16 week grace period (if applicable), parents should endeavour to have their child vaccinated if required, and/or obtain the necessary immunisation documentation and provide it to the service
- updating information by notifying the service of any changes as they occur.

EVALUATION

In order to assess whether the values and purposes of the policy have been achieved, the Approved Provider will:

- regularly seek feedback from everyone affected by the policy regarding its effectiveness
- monitor the implementation, compliance, complaints and incidents in relation to this policy
- keep the policy up to date with current legislation, research, policy and best practice
- revise the policy and procedures as part of the service's policy review cycle, or as required
- notify parents/guardians at least 14 days before making any changes to this policy or its procedures.

ATTACHMENTS

- Attachment 1: Access to Immunisation Services
- Attachment 2: Required Documentation
- Attachment 3: Medical Exemptions
- Attachment 4: Steps to Obtain Acceptable Documentation If Immunisations Are Not Up-To-Date
- Attachment 5: Children Vaccinated Overseas
- Attachment 6: Grace Periods

AUTHORISATION

This policy was adopted by the Approved Provider of Thomastown West Kindergarten on 04/05/2018

REVIEW DATE: 04/05/2020

ATTACHMENT 1: ACCESS TO IMMUNISATION SERVICES

Doctors also known as General Practitioners (GPs), immunisation nurses at local councils and health clinics can provide immunisation services.

The Better Health Channel website (www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au) has a health service locator that can assist families to find their nearest immunisation provider.

The City of Whittlesea has information regarding locations and times for free vaccinations. Please contact the Council's Immunisation Team on 9217 2170 for enquiries.

Further information can be located at www.whittlesea.vic.gov.au

<https://www.whittlesea.vic.gov.au/community-services-and-health/health-and-safety/immunisation/>

ATTACHMENT 2: REQUIRED DOCUMENTATION

In order to finalise enrolment of a child at Thomastown West Kindergarten, parents/carers must provide the service with an immunisation status certificate that shows their child:

- is up to date with vaccinations for their age OR
- is on a vaccine catch-up schedule OR
- has a medical condition preventing them from being fully vaccinated.

An immunisation status certificate is a statement showing the vaccines a child has received. The most common type of immunisation status certificate is an Immunisation History Statement from the Australian Childhood Immunisation Register (ACIR).

Immunisation History Statements can be requested at any time by contacting Medicare:

- phone 1800 653 809
- email acir@medicareaustralia.gov.au
- Medicare website
- Medicare office

If the child does not have an immunisation status certificate, parents/carers must provide documentation to the service that shows:

- what vaccines the child has had
- what date the vaccine is due, if applicable
- any medical contraindications (i.e. any medical condition preventing the child from being fully vaccinated).

ATTACHMENT 3: MEDICAL EXEMPTIONS

Some children may be exempt from the requirement to be fully vaccinated on medical grounds.

Examples of valid medical reasons that a child could not be fully vaccinated include:

- an anaphylactic reaction to a previous dose of a particular vaccine, or
- an anaphylactic reaction to any vaccine component
- has a disease which lowers immunity (such as leukaemia, cancer, HIV/AIDS, SCID), or
- is having treatment which lowers immunity (such as chemotherapy).

Parents/carers who think their child may require a medical exemption to one or more vaccines should consult their doctor.

If a child had a medical reason they cannot be vaccinated, a doctor needs to complete and sign a Medicare Immunisation Exemption Medical Contraindication Form, and send it to ACIR.

The parent then needs to obtain an updated Immunisation History Statement from ACIR that indicates the child was up-to-date with all the vaccines that they can have, and listed the vaccines that they cannot have due to a medical contraindication. This statement needs to be provided by the parent/carer to Thomastown West Kindergarten to finalise enrolment.

Alternatively, parents/carers can obtain documentation from their doctors that meets the requirements for enrolment.

ATTACHMENT 4: STEPS TO OBTAIN ACCEPTABLE DOCUMENTATION IF IMMUNISATIONS ARE NOT UP-TO-DATE

If a child's vaccinations are not up-to-date the parents/carers should consult their doctor or immunisation nurse about bringing the child's vaccinations up to date.

If a child has missed the last due vaccine their doctor or immunisation nurse needs to give the overdue vaccine and inform ACIR. The parent/carer then needs to request an updated Immunisation History Statement from ACIR.

The updated ACIR Immunisation History Statement showing that vaccines are up-to-date needs to be provided by the parent to Thomastown West Kindergarten to finalise enrolment.

If a child has missed all or several vaccines their doctor or immunisation nurse needs to develop an approved vaccination catch-up schedule.

The child has to start the catch-up schedule and be on track with their vaccinations according to that schedule. They do not need to have completed the schedule before enrolment can be confirmed by Thomastown West Kindergarten. The immunisation provider can provide documentation about the catch up schedule that the parent can then provide to Thomastown West Kindergarten service to finalise enrolment.

ATTACHMENT 5: CHILDREN VACCINATED OVERSEAS

Families whose children were vaccinated overseas should consult their doctor or immunisation nurse. Overseas vaccination schedules may differ from the Australian schedule and need to be checked by a doctor/nurse who will transfer the information to ACIR.

If/once the child is up-to-date with the Australian schedule, ACIR can issue the parent with an Immunisation History Statement that shows they are up-to-date.

For families that do not have a Medicare card, vaccines recorded and provided in Australia can still be recorded on ACIR. The parent/carer can contact ACIR and request a copy of the Immunisation History Statement.

The parent has to provide the statement to Thomastown West Kindergarten to finalise enrolment.

If the child is not up-to-date with the Australian schedule, and requires a number of vaccines, a catchup schedule needs to be developed by the immunisation provider.

The immunisation provider can provide documentation about the catch up schedule that the parent/carer should then provide to Thomastown West Kindergarten to finalise enrolment.

ATTACHMENT 6: GRACE PERIODS

There are some children in the community whose families face difficulties accessing vaccinations and/or the required documentation to prove immunisation status.

Under the legislation, some families (such as those who are eligible for kindergarten subsidies) would be eligible to enrol and commence at the childcare/kindergarten service, under a 'grace period' provision, while they bring their children's vaccinations up-to-date.

Thomastown West Kindergarten will support families of children who are not up-to-date with their vaccinations and provide them with information as to where they can access vaccinations.

Under the No Jab No Play law, vulnerable and disadvantaged children will be eligible to enrol in a service under a grace period, without having provided proof of up to date immunisation. The grace period provisions allow the family to continue to access early childhood education and care services while receiving information and assistance to get their child's immunisations up to date and to obtain the required immunisation documentation that needs to be provided to the service.

Children eligible to be enrolled under the grace period include:

- children evacuated from their place of residence due to an emergency such as a flood or bushfire
- children in emergency care within the meaning of section 3(1) of the Children, Youth and Families Act 2005
- children in the care of an adult who are not the child's parent due to exceptional circumstances such as illness or incapacity
- children identified as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander
- children whose parents hold a health care card, a pensioner concession card, a Veterans Affairs Gold or White card
- children from a multiple birth of triplets or more
- any other circumstance specified in the guidelines made by the Secretary to the Department of Health and Human Services.

The grace period is for 16 weeks commencing from the date that the child first attends the service.

During the 16 week grace period, the service will take reasonable steps to obtain the required immunisation documentation.

During the 16 week grace period parents should endeavour to have their child vaccinated if required, and/or obtain the necessary immunisation documentation and provide it to the service.

If the parents do not receive the required immunisations and/or obtain the necessary immunisation documentation, the child may be asked to leave the service, unless a medical exemption applies.