Sickness and Illness Policy

September 2026-September 2027

1. Introduction

1.1 Here at Acorn Childcare Centre, we are committed to protecting the health, safety and wellbeing of all children, their families and practitioners.

1.2 This policy outlines the procedures to be followed when a child or member of staff becomes unwell, has an infectious illness, or develops symptoms while attending the centre. It aims to reduce the spread of infection while ensuring children receive appropriate care and support.

1.3 The setting will follow current guidance from the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA), NHS and the Department for Education, alongside the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS).

1.4 We recognise that young children can become unwell quickly and that some illnesses are contagious and that some children and adults within our Nursery community may be more vulnerable to illnesses and infections.

1.5 Practitioners will:

- Monitor children's health and wellbeing throughout the day.
- Respond promptly to signs of illness.
- Maintain good standards of hand hygiene and infection control.
- Keep children who are unwell comfortable while appropriate arrangements are made for them to go home.
- Maintain appropriate communication with parents/carers.
- Protect the confidentiality and dignity of children and families.
- Follow the setting's procedures for recording illness, accidents and medication.

1.6 If Children are unwell before attending Acorn Childcare Centre, we ask that parents/carers do not bring their child to Nursery if they are too unwell to comfortably participate in the normal activities of the Centre or if they have an illness or infection requiring a period of exclusion.

1.7 Parents/carers should inform the setting if their child:

- Has been diagnosed with an infectious illness.
- Has developed symptoms of an illness that may be contagious.
- Has been advised by a healthcare professional to remain at home.
- Requires medication or additional care because of illness.
- Has been absent due to sickness.

1.8 Parents/carers are requested to follow the Centre exclusion guidance and any specific guidance provided by a doctor or nurse

1.9 If a child becomes unwell whilst attending Acorn Childcare Centre, Practitioners will assess their condition and use an unwell child form to record welfare checks. Practitioners will consider whether the child is able to comfortably participate in normal Nursery routines and activities.

1.10 Signs that a child may be becoming unwell include

- A raised temperature
- Vomiting or diarrhoea
- Unusual tiredness, lethargy or irritability
- Persistent coughing
- Difficulty breathing
- Unexplained rash
- Significant changes in behaviour
- Refusal of fluids or foods
- Complaints of pain or discomfort

2. Our procedures

2.1 To take appropriate action of children who become ill and to minimise the spread of infection we implement the following procedures:

- If a child becomes ill during the nursery day, we start an unwell child form to monitor their temperature and observe their state of health.
- The child's temperature will be taken; a high temperature or fever is usually considered to be a temperature of 38C or above and a normal temperature in babies and children is about 36.4C, but this can vary slightly. The child's temperature is recorded each 10 mins for half an hour. If the child's temperature has not reduced after offering water and cooling them by removing clothing or with cool flannel parents will be called.
- If given permission, and where appropriate (judgment will be made by senior staff on child's health) we can give the child Calpol (paracetamol suspension) to help reduce the child's temperature and/or ease pain and discomfort. The administration of Calpol will be recorded on the unwell form and be signed by L3 staff administering, a witness and then parent upon collection. Observation of the child will continue for another half an hour, monitoring their temperature and health.
- Should the child remain too unwell to be at setting, or their high temperature remains, we contact their parent(s) and ask them to pick up their child as soon as possible.

During this time, we care for the child in a quiet, calm area with their key person (wearing PPE), wherever possible

- We follow the guidance published by Public Health England (Health Protection in Schools and other childcare facilities) and advice from our local health protection unit on exclusion times for specific illnesses, e.g. sickness and diarrhoea, measles and chicken pox, to protect other children in the nursery[1]
- Should a child have an infectious disease, such as sickness and diarrhoea, they must not return to nursery until they have been clear for at least 48 hours
- We inform all parents if there is a contagious infection identified in the nursery, to enable them to spot the early signs of this illness. We thoroughly clean and sterilise all equipment and resources that may have encounter a contagious child to reduce the spread of infection
- We notify Ofsted as soon as is reasonably practical, but in any event within 14 days of the incident of any food poisoning affecting two or more children cared for on the premises.
- We suggest to parents that they keep children on antibiotics at home for the first 48 hours of the course (unless this is part of an ongoing care plan to treat individual medical conditions e.g. asthma and the child is not unwell) This is because it is important that children are not subjected to the rigours of the nursery day, which requires socialising with other children and being part of a group setting, when they have first become ill and require a course of antibiotics
- We have the right to refuse admission to a child who is unwell. This decision will be taken by the manager on duty and is non-negotiable
- We make information and posters about head lice readily available, and all parents are requested to regularly check their children's hair. If a parent finds that their child has head lice, we would be grateful if they could inform the nursery so that other parents can be alerted to check their child's hair.

3. Infectious illnesses

3.1 When a child within our Acorn community is diagnosed with an infectious illness, parents must inform the Centre manager. Members of the senior lead team will refer to current UKHSA regarding:

- Whether exclusion from Nursery is required
- The recommended exclusion period
- Additional infection-control measures
- Whether parents need to be informed

3.2 Acorn Childcare Centre will not disclose the identity of affected children when communicating information on infectious illnesses to other families. Where necessary, parents may be provided with general information about symptoms, precautions and recommended actions.

4. Medication

[1] https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/health-protection-in-schools-and-other-childcarefacilities

4.1 Where a child requires prescribed medication whilst attending Acorn Childcare Centre, medication will only be administered in accordance with the settings medication policy.

5. Meningitis procedure

5.1 If a parent informs the nursery that their child has meningitis, the nursery manager will contact the Local Area Infection Control (IC) Nurse. The IC Nurse will give guidance and support in each individual case. If parents do not inform the nursery, we may be contacted directly by the IC Nurse and the appropriate support given. We will follow all guidance given and notify any of the appropriate authorities including Ofsted where necessary.

We will follow the transporting children to hospital procedure in any cases where children may need hospital treatment. The nursery manager/staff member must:

- Inform a member of the management team immediately
- Call 999 for an ambulance immediately if the illness is severe. DO NOT attempt to transport the unwell child in your own vehicle
- Follow the instructions from the 999 call handler
- Whilst waiting for the ambulance, a member of staff must contact the parent(s) and arrange to meet them at the hospital
- Redeploy staff if necessary to ensure there is adequate staff deployment to care for the remaining children. This may mean temporarily grouping the children together
- Arrange for the most appropriate member of staff to accompany the child taking with them any relevant information such as registration forms, relevant medication sheets, medication and the child's comforter
- Always remain calm. Children who witness an incident may well be affected by it and may need lots of cuddles and reassurance. Staff may also require additional support following the accident.

This policy will be reviewed at least annually in consultation with staff and parents and/or after a significant incident, e.g. serious illness/hospital visit required.

* For the purpose of this publication the term 'parents' will be used to describe all types of primary caregivers, such as biological and adoptive parents, foster carers and guardians.

This policy was adopted on	**Signed on behalf of nursery the**	**Date for review**

September 24 *Reviewed September 2025 - SK* *Reviewed September 2026 - SK*	*Lorna Hodgett*	*September 27*