



# Child Immunisation Policy PP10V01

*Effective date of Policy: December 2020*

*Date of next review: December 2021*

## Be Heard Philosophy

To provide the highest quality 'Care', we strive to protect the health of every child and staff. We strive to prevent and manage the spread of infectious illnesses and diseases.

**AIM:** When groups of children play and learn together, illness and disease can spread from one child to another even when Be Heard Staff and management implement recommended hygiene and infection control practices. The wellbeing of children is our highest priority. The purpose of this policy is to support the Government's efforts to manage and prevent the spread of infectious illnesses and diseases through the NO JAB, NO PLAY legislation effective 1st January 2016.

## 1. Responsibility

- Management
- Staff
- Families
- Children

## 2. Implementation

### PRINCIPLES

Be Heard believes immunisation protects other people who are not immunised, such as children who are too young to be immunised, or people whose immune systems did not respond to the vaccine. This is because the more people who are immunised against a disease, the lower the chance that a person will ever come into contact with someone who has the disease. The chance of an infection spreading in a community decreases if a large proportion of people are immunised, as the immune people will not become infected and can protect the vulnerable people; this is known as 'herd immunity'. Immunisation is now compulsory for children enrolling in a registered children's service. Be Heard acknowledges that no child is able to enrol in a session or service without families providing required evidence of the child's current immunisation status. The Be Heard intake form is used to gather the required information and evidence.

If a child has a valid medical reason they cannot be vaccinated, a GP needs to complete and sign a [Medicare Immunisation Exemption Medical Contraindication Form](#) , and send it to the Australian Immunisation Register (AIR).

The family then needs to obtain an updated Immunisation History Statement from the AIR that indicates the child is up to date with all the vaccines that they can have, and listed the vaccines that they cannot have due to a medical contraindication.

As of January 2018, 'Conscientious Objection' is no longer an exemption under the 'No Jab No Play' legislation. Exclusion guidelines will apply where there is a confirmed case of a preventable disease which is outlined in the current National Immunisation Program Schedule (NIPS).

Under the No Jab No Play law, vulnerable and disadvantaged children will be eligible to enrol in a session or 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. The grace period is for 16 weeks commencing from the date that the child first attends 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.

Guidelines specifying additional groups eligible for the grace period are currently being developed. It is intended that they will include refugee and asylum seekers, children known to child protection and children referred to Child First.

<http://health.vic.gov.au/immunisation/factsheets/no-jab-no-play.htm>

In meeting Be Heard's duty of care, it is a requirement under the Occupational Health & Safety Act that management, staff, Students and any visitors implement and support the Be Heard Immunisation Policies and procedures.

**EXCLUSION GUIDELINES**

In the event that there is an outbreak of a preventable disease which are outlined in the current National Immunisation Program Schedule (NIPS), any child who is not immunised (due to medical reasons) regardless of whether or not they are infected will be excluded from a session until management deems it safe and that there no risk of cross infection. Any child displaying symptoms that are likened to those of any preventable disease which is outlined in the current National Immunisation Program Schedule will be excluded from the session.

## **FAMILY OBLIGATIONS**

- are required to provide a record of the child's current full immunisation status
- An Immunisation History Statement from the AIR is the only accepted document for proving a child's immunisation status, including that they are up to date with all vaccinations that are due for their age, or that they are able to receive, or have a medical condition that prevents them from being fully immunised for their age.
- Families of unimmunised children are informed they will be excluded from services and sessions during outbreaks of some infectious diseases in accordance with the National Health & Medical Research Council exclusion guidelines, even if their child is well

## **BE HEARD PROCEDURES**

- Upon intake Be Heard must ensure every family produces evidence of their child's immunisation details
- Must ensure if there is an outbreak of a preventable disease which is outlined in the current National Immunisation Program Schedule (NIPS), any child who is not immunised (due to medical reasons) is excluded from the session even if the child is well. Be Heard follows the exclusion times set in the Exclusion Guidelines as advised in the Australian Government's National Health & medical Research Council's Staying Healthy brochure.
- will ensure when an infectious illness or disease has been confirmed at Be Heard during a prior session, notices will be immediately released to families to let them know about the infectious disease and how many cases there have been and the signs and symptoms to look for.
- Management will ensure the names of non-immunised children will not be revealed as part of the Privacy and Confidentiality Policy unless requested by the Department of Health and Human Services.

## **STAFF PROCEDURES**

- Have a full understanding of the Be Heard policies and procedures
- Attend training if required
- Keep up to date with information on infectious diseases and immunisations

## **3. Sources and References**

- Occupational Health & Safety Act
- Immunise Australia Program [www.immunise.health.gov.au](http://www.immunise.health.gov.au)
- Australia Immunisation Registration
- Australian Government - Department of Human Services
- Department of Health, Victoria Immunisation Program - children

#### 4. Review

Date Reviewed	Modifications	Next Policy Review Date
December 2020	Creation of Policy	December 2021

#### IMPORTANT NOTICE AND DISCLAIMER

This is an important notice to all Families, staff, contractors, and other users of this Policy.

1. This Policy has been prepared by Be Heard based on the information available as at the issue date. Be Heard reserves the right to vary this Policy at any time, including to take into account any changes to the legislation and legislative instruments that may apply from time to time.
  
2. While all reasonable care is taken in preparing this Policy, Be Heard does not make any warranty about or accept any responsibility for whether the Policy complies with, accurately interprets or adequately implements all legislation and legislative instruments that may apply from time to time.
  
3. To the greatest extent permitted by law, Be Heard disclaims all liability to any person in respect of anything, and of the consequences of anything, done or omitted to be done by any such person in reliance, whether wholly or partially, upon any information presented in this Policy.