

Policy on hand washing: HS 03

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Policy prepared by: EH Policy reference group

Background to the policy:

Thorough and routine washing of hands at specific times of the day ensures that diseases spread through the respiratory and intestinal tract, as well as diseases spread through direct contact with the skin are minimized. Germs are not visible to the naked eye, so a policy standard of regular washing enhances the well being of children and adults.

Aims and purposes of the policy:

This policy aims to minimize cross infection in the early childhood setting through acknowledged best practice in relation to hand washing.

Policy statement:

At EtonHouse schools and preschools, children, staff, and other adults present in the environment must adhere to the correct hand washing technique and hand washing schedule as outlined in the implementation procedures of this policy statement.

Staff must display a poster (both pictorial for young children as well as written text) of correct hand washing techniques in every washroom within the centre. There should also be a poster displayed in the adult bathrooms to serve as a reminder to staff of correct hand washing techniques.

On outings, staff must ensure that provision for both children and adults is made to ensure hand washing as per the policy schedule. This may involve the use of disinfectant wipes if no running water is available.

Implementation processes and procedures:

*The individual is to wet their hands. They must then apply **soap** (preferably liquid soap).*

Lather thoroughly all surfaces of the hands, between fingers and up to the wrist, as well as the back and front of the hands and tips of the fingers and thumbs.

Rub hands together for 15 seconds under running water. Dry hands with a disposable paper towel or single use towel. Discard towel in a bin fitted with a lid and lined with a plastic liner.

When assisting a child in hand washing, either hold the child or have the child stand on a safety step at a height that the child's hands can hang freely under the running water.

MCYS (2003 p 27).

No adult or child is to wash their hands in a shared facility e.g. a pail, or trough.

Young children will require supervision to ensure they follow the correct procedure

Staff responsibilities:

Staff must thoroughly wash their hands:

- When they arrive at the centre to ensure they do not bring infections in from outside of the centre;
- Before they prepare any food, or engage in meal/snack time procedures with children;
- After diaper change;
- After any contact with bodily fluid (blood, mucous, or vomit);
- After coughing or sneezing into the hands; **the use of a hand sanitizer is considered acceptable in both of the above two dot points, if/when adults are responsible for (groups of) children, however the adult should attempt to wash their hands as soon as possible after contact;**
- After they have been to the toilet, either to assist a child, or themselves;
- After handling any pets or animals;
- After cleaning procedures;
- After outdoor activities;
- Before applying medication/insect repellent or creams to a child;
- Before going home;

Young children may need support/reminders to roll up long sleeves when engaged in hand washing.

Adults must support children in developing an understanding of the reasoning behind correct hand washing, and in particular, the need to use liquid soap when engaged in washing their hands.

Curriculum content including stories, songs and rhymes reinforce correct hand washing procedures with young children. Children can also be involved in discussions and practices about issues of conservation/recycling relating to bathroom procedures e.g. analyzing how many towels are needed to dry hands; not leaving the tap running..

Child responsibilities:

Children must be encouraged to thoroughly wash their hands:

- When they arrive at the centre;
- Before any contact with food or drink (cooking; meal time);
- After toileting, including diaper change procedures. Children should be encouraged to turn off the tap with the paper towel before discarding;
- After coughing or sneezing into the hands; (again a hand sanitiser may be used);
- After playing in the playground;
- After handling any animals;
- Before going home;

Children are not to share paper towels

Evaluation of the policy:

A review of this policy and implementation procedures will be undertaken every two years. This review will be undertaken collaboratively between Principals and staff of the EtonHouse Education Centre. This policy was ratified April 2014. This policy will be reviewed April 2016.

References:

Aronson, S.S., (2002). *Healthy young children. A manual for programs*. Washington: NAEYC.
Ministry of Social and Family Developments. (2003). *Good practices handbook for child care centres*. Singapore: MCYS.