Sickness and Illness Policy

Purpose
This policy is designed to ensure that Early Explorers maintains a healthy and safe environment for all children, staff, and families by:

- Promoting children's physical and emotional well-being
- Reducing the spread of infectious illness
- Meeting statutory EYFS and health protection obligations

Policy Statement
At Early Explorers, we promote the good health of all children attending, including oral and mental health, by:

- Asking parents to keep children at home when they are unwell
- Ensuring that unwell staff and visitors do not attend the setting
- Encouraging healthy lifestyle habits including balanced meals, sleep, outdoor play, and hand hygiene
- Supporting national and local vaccination and vitamin guidance
- Maintaining excellent ventilation and regular access to fresh air

Key Procedures
1. Unwell Children at Nursery

- If a child becomes ill during the nursery day, their parent/carer will be contacted to collect them immediately.
- The child will be cared for in a calm, comfortable space, with supervision from a designated staff member wearing PPE.
- Staff will monitor the child and document symptoms while awaiting collection.

2. Infectious Illness & Exclusion

- We follow **UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA)** guidelines on exclusion periods for common infectious diseases.
- Children with diarrhoea and/or vomiting must not return until **48 hours symptom-free**.
- In the case of contagious illnesses (e.g. chickenpox, impetigo, COVID-19), exclusion periods apply as per UKHSA advice.
- Parents will be informed of outbreaks or specific cases within the nursery.

3. Antibiotics & Returning After Illness

- Children starting a new course of antibiotics should remain at home for the **first 48 hours** of treatment (unless part of a care plan and the child is otherwise well).
- A child should be **fit to participate in group life** at nursery before returning.

4. Right to Refuse Admission

- The **nursery manager or duty manager** reserves the right to refuse entry if a child appears unwell. This decision is final and prioritises the welfare of all children.

Communication with Parents

- We communicate clearly with families about:
  - Common symptoms to watch for
  - The importance of vaccinations and vitamin supplements for children aged 6 months to 5 years
  - The importance of regular sleep and oral health
  - Reporting head lice and carrying out checks at home
- Visual guides and leaflets on infection prevention and exclusion times are displayed at the nursery and available in our welcome packs.

In Case of Serious Illness or Emergency
We follow the **Transporting Children to Hospital** procedure in the event of serious illness or medical emergency:
Steps:

1. Notify a senior staff member immediately
2. **Call 999** for emergency assistance
3. Do **not transport a seriously ill child** in a staff vehicle
4. Contact the child's parent/carer to meet at the hospital
5. Send a staff member (preferably the key person or most familiar adult) with the child and necessary documentation
6. Reassign staff as needed to ensure continued supervision of remaining children
7. Remain calm and reassure other children and staff present
8. Complete an incident report and notify Ofsted if applicable (see below)

Reporting and Notifications

- Ofsted must be notified **within 14 days** if **two or more children** suffer **food poisoning** while in our care.
- Any outbreak of notifiable disease (e.g. meningitis, measles, whooping cough) must be reported to the **Local Health Protection Team**.
- We will cooperate with local authorities and follow any further public health advice.

Meningitis Protocol

- If a case of **meningitis** is confirmed, we will:
  - Notify the Local Area **Infection Control (IC) Nurse**
  - Follow all official guidance
  - Notify parents, Ofsted, and any other relevant bodies if advised

Use of Staff Vehicles in Emergencies (Only When Absolutely Necessary)
If transporting a child to hospital in a **non-emergency situation** (e.g. minor injury) is necessary, the following conditions must be met:

- Parental **written consent** is obtained
- The child is of appropriate **age/weight for a car seat**, and one is available
- The vehicle has **business insurance**
- A trained staff member escorts the child alongside the driver

- Transport arrangements and the child's condition are continuously monitored
- **Safeguarding is prioritised** – no child will be left alone at any time

This policy was adopted on	Signed on behalf of the nursery	Date for review
Aug 2025	Early Explorers Day Nursery	*Aug 2027*