UNOW ILLNESS POLICY AND MANAGEMENT OF COMMUNICABLE DISEASES

A copy of this policy is provided to new families at the new family orientation and additional copies may be provided upon request. This policy is effective December 15, 2023 and supersedes any illness policy prior.

UNOW Day Nursery promotes the protection of children by preventing illness and promoting safety and general wellbeing. We encourage children to develop good health practices including daily handwashing, understanding and encouraging good nutrition, exercise and proper rest for the development of healthy bodies. In addition, all staff practice proper hand washing, sanitation and safe food service throughout all daily routines. All full time and regular part time staff maintain certification in Infant/Child/Adult CPR and First Aid. Health and Safety policies are reviewed and shared with all staff and families annually.

Immunizations and Health Records are required to ensure the safety of staff and children:

In accordance with the State of New Jersey health regulations, families are required to provide a copy of their up-to-date immunizations record, including an annual flu shot for children over 6 months of age to be given between the months of September 1 and December 1. Along with a copy of the immunization records, families must provide a copy of a completed Universal Health Record prior to enrollment and then annually. Universal Health Records may be based on the child’s most recent physical if it is within the previous year from point of the first day of attendance. New families enrolling from different states or from out of the country have up to 30 days to submit immunizations records.

All Staff prior to working must provide current TB test results and a Staff Health Record completed by a licensed physician and indicating good health and pose no health risk to persons at the center. Staff Health Records may be completed by a physician based on a previous health wellness exam from no more than one year of hire date.

Procedures at the onset of illness symptoms at home or at school:

AT HOME: If your child exhibits any signs of being unwell at home, please follow the policy below as it pertains to the symptoms you are observing. The amount of time your child must be excluded from care is based on the particular symptoms your child is exhibiting. Please do also reach out to your child’s teacher to let them know of your child’s absence as well as the symptoms you are seeing. It is important for teachers to know as it allows them to notify families and monitor the other children for symptoms. While we recognize the difficulties inherent in keeping a sick child home, it is our strongest line of defense in keeping the rest of the group as healthy as possible.

AT SCHOOL: If teachers observe any of the symptoms below at school, the following guidelines will be followed and the family will be called to come pick up their child. If a parent/guardian is not reached within 30 minutes, the emergency contact person will be notified and expected to pick-up. It is important that the parent/guardian/emergency contact respond and pick up their child within an hour. Immediate pick up ensures the continued care needed for the ill child and the prevention of infection to other children and staff. If it is safer to the other children in the group for the sick child to be isolated immediately, they will be brought up to the front of the school, given a quiet place to rest and supervised by the administration. Upon picking up your child, an Illness Report with the specific symptoms observed will be signed by the parent and teacher. This Illness Report will also give the date the child can return to school after taking into consideration best practices for limiting contagiousness for specific symptoms as well as the teacher’s discretion about when the schedule of the classroom can best support a child arriving for the day (for instance, it can be very disruptive for a child to arrive for the day during naptime).

THE FOLLOWING GUIDELINES SERVE AS A FRAMEWORK OF SPECIFIC SYMPTOMS FOR WHICH THE CHILD WILL BE EVALUATED FOR TEMPORARY EXCLUSION (For COVID specific symptoms and protocols, please see separate document under parent resources on UNOW website)

- Fever – If your child exhibits a fever of 100.4° F or higher he or she will be removed from the group and kept comfortable until you are notified and take your child home. They can return to school when they have been
fever-free for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medication. A child sent home with a fever can not return to school until one full day of school has passed.

- **Gastro-Intestinal Illness (e.g. Diarrhea and/or Vomiting)** – If a child vomits or has diarrhea that is excessively watery or outside what is considered normal for them and no other explanation (such as the introduction of a new food or medication) seems clear, the teacher will contact the parent to pick up their child. The child should not return to school the full next day or for 24 hours from the last incidence of vomiting or diarrhea unless there is a doctor’s note indicating the child is not contagious.

- **Unidentified Rash** – If a child is sent home with an unidentified skin condition or rash, the child may not return without a physician’s note stating they are not contagious to others.

- **Upper respiratory complications (e.g. Cough, Runny Nose)** – Children do contract upper respiratory symptoms during cold and allergy seasons but if the symptoms are worsening, interfering with normal daily behaviors or cause concern of contagion for other children, teachers will ask a family to come pick up their child and/or provide a doctor’s note saying they are not contagious to others. During times of high transmission of serious pediatric respiratory viruses such as RSV, even more vigilant attention will be paid to the youngest members of our community.

- **Conjunctivitis** – Unless the symptoms are due to a known allergy or irritant, children exhibiting a discharge around the eye or redness and itchiness the child should be seen by a doctor. If the child is diagnosed with bacterial or viral conjunctivitis, the child must remain at home the full day following the onset of the symptoms or provide a doctor’s note they no longer pose a health risk to others. If bacterial conjunctivitis is diagnosed and the child begins a course of antibiotics, the doctor’s note should indicate when they can return to school.

- **Unexplained Change in Behavior/Unable to Participate in Normal Daily Activities** – Teachers know children well and can often tell when there has been a change in a child’s behavior that means they are not well. If a child is unable to participate in the day’s activities because of persistent symptoms, it is good for a family to be aware of how they are doing. Often, if a teacher observes this they will call a family to update them on what they are observing, even if it is not yet at the level of needing to be sent home. If the listlessness, malaise or changes in behavior worsen, new symptoms emerge or teachers are unable to tend to the needs of a single child while also caring for the rest of the group, the family will be asked to come pick up their child.

- **Head Lice:** In a child care setting where children are in such close proximity, the chances of lice spreading increase even though it is not an illness. For that reason, **UNOW is a nit free environment. Children who contract head lice should not return to UNOW until they are free of nits.** If there is an incident of head lice; information will be distributed to all families in the group letting them know the necessary steps to rid the child and the environment of lice.

- **Coxsackie (Hand, Foot and Mouth Disease):** If a child is diagnosed with this common childhood virus, they must be fever free for 24 hours without the use of fever reducing medication and have no open or oozing sores anywhere on their body. If the sores have blistered but not yet burst and dried, they must remain at home until the blisters have crusted over.

- **Impetigo:** Impetigo is a highly contagious rash that often starts with reddish sores around the mouth and nose of infants and toddlers and return with a doctor’s note saying when they can return to school.

**Policy about Doctor’s Notes:** Doctor’s notes must be the result of an in-person examination and come on stationary from the practice and/or imprinted with the doctor’s stamp. Notes from family members that are physicians will not be accepted.

**NOTIFICATION OF EXPOSURE TO CONTAGIOUS ILLNESS:** Classroom families will receive a health alert notice any time their child may have been exposed to a communicable illness. The health alert notice will include the name of the diagnosed illness along with possible symptoms and remedies. The names of children with the diagnosed illness will remain confidential. Any health information that pertains to the whole community will be communicated in the weekly newsletter from the administration that is distributed on Fridays.