



StThomas's Church Hall, 75 Monsell Road, London, 2EF N4

TEL. 0207 354 9347



Immunisation Policy Statement

When groups of children are together, illness and disease can spread rapidly. Immunisable diseases such as measles and whooping cough (see list below) can have serious health consequences for children, especially young children. Staff who work in a child care setting are also at increased risk of certain infectious illnesses. The Heritage Immunisation Policy is an important strategy in infection control and protecting staff and children from illness.

The infectious diseases that can be immunised against are:

- Diphtheria
- Measles
- Mumps
- Rubella (German measles)
- Tetanus
- Pertussis (Whooping cough)
- Polio
- Haemophilus (HIB)
- Hepatitis B
- Meningococcus

Other recommended vaccines are available, though not yet on the schedule for all children:

- Pneumococcus (causes pneumonia, blood infections, meningitis and ear infection)
- Varicella (Chicken pox)
- Influenza

Due to the success of scheduled immunisation programs, many conditions are rarely seen today and it is argued that this has caused complacency in some sections of the community.

St Thomas' encourages parents to immunise their children fully (unless they have a pre-existing medical condition which makes this not possible) as non-immunised children help spread infection in the community. While there are common, usually mild side effects to the immunisation injection.

St Thomas' follows government health advice that the child is at far greater risk of harm from contracting one of the infections than from the immunisation itself.

Families who register a conscientious objection to immunisation are usually concerned with safety of vaccines, a specific risk/side effect, or have a child who has had an adverse reaction to a previous vaccination. St Thomas' respects their views while respectfully providing information on St Thomas' Immunisation Policy.

St Thomas playgroup informs parents that homeopathic immunisations are unproven and only conventional immunisation produces a measurable immune response, and as such children receiving homeopathic immunisations are not considered immunised for the purpose of the

Public Health Regulation (2000).

Immunisation Policy December (2009)

In addition to the Immunisation Policy, St Thomas' also minimises the spread of infections by strongly enforcing guidelines for the exclusion of children and adults with an infectious illness or disease and adhering to strict hygiene and infection control practices.

Policy Aim

St Thomas' Immunisation Policy and related procedures have been developed to manage and prevent the control of certain infectious diseases among the community.

Immunisation Policy aims to:

- ensure, as far as possible, that all St Thomas' children are age appropriately immunised as per the schedule set out by ACT Health (see end of document);
- ensure all staff have had their childhood immunisations and have boosters for tetanus and diphtheria;
- maintain up to date immunisation records of children
- encourage all families and staff to keep their immunisation status as comprehensive as possible by having new vaccines as they become available.

Rationale

St Thomas' recognises it has a duty of care to take all reasonable practicable steps to provide St Thomas' playgroup community with a safe and healthy work environment (Work Safety Act 2008).

In addition St Thomas' Immunisation Policy has been developed to comply with:

- ACT Childcare Services Standards, 2009 (required by the Children and Young People Act 2008).

- National Childcare Accreditation Council's Quality Improvement and Accreditation System

(QIAS), Quality Practices Guide (2005), Principles 5.5, 6.6, 7.2.

- National Health and Medical Research Council guidelines.

- ACT Public Health Regulations (2000).

It is understood that there is a shared responsibility and accountability between staff and parents/guardians to implement Immunisation Policy as a matter of high priority due to the potential health risks of not doing so.

Strategies and Practices

Responsibilities of Parents

On enrolment, a parent/guardian is required to sign an agreement on the Immunisation Register Form that:

- they will provide a photocopy of a confirmed record of their child's immunisation (such as the Red Book, or Immunisation History Statement), in accordance with the Public Health Regulation 2000

- they will inform St Thomas' when any updates to the record occur;

- it is the families' responsibility to ensure their child's immunisation is kept up to date;

- a child who is not immunised or whose immunisation is not up to date may be excluded during an outbreak of a vaccine preventable disease;

- children who have only received homeopathic immunisation are considered not to be protected against vaccine preventable infectious diseases, and are not considered immunised for the purposes of the Public Health Regulation 2000

Families opposed to immunisation are usually concerned with safety of vaccines, or are concerned about a specific risk/side effect, or have a child who has had an adverse reaction to a previous vaccination.

St Thomas' will:

- respect their views and acknowledge and listen to their concerns;
- refer them to their doctor for information on benefits and risks of immunisation;
- respectfully provide information from ACT Public Health on immunisation.

This policy was adopted by St Thomas' Playgroup in January 2021 and will be reviewed in January 2022.