This policy will provide clear guidelines and procedures to follow when:

1. a child attending Mansfield Rudolf Steiner School & Kindergarten shows symptoms of an infectious disease
2. a child at Mansfield Rudolf Steiner School & Kindergarten has been diagnosed with an infectious disease
3. managing and minimising the spread of infectious diseases, illnesses and infestations (including head lice).

Mansfield Rudolf Steiner School & Kindergarten is committed to:

1. providing a safe and healthy environment for all children, staff and any other persons attending the service
2. responding to the needs of the child or adult who presents with symptoms of an infectious disease or infestation while attending the service
3. complying with current exclusion schedules and guidelines set by the Department of Health
4. providing up-to-date information and resources for families and staff regarding protection of all children from infectious diseases, immunisation programs and management of infestations.
5. All educators/staff at Mansfield Rudolf Steiner School & Kindergarten are committed to preventing the spread of vaccine-preventable diseases through simple hygiene practices such as handwashing, effective cleaning procedures, complying with recommended exclusion guidelines and timeframes for children and educators/staff.

The Committee is responsible for:

1. ensuring that if there is an occurrence of an infectious disease at the service, reasonable steps are taken to prevent the spread of that infectious disease (Regulation 88(1))
2. ensuring that where there is an occurrence of an infectious disease, a parent/guardian, authorised nominee or emergency contact of each child at the service is notified of the occurrence as soon as is practicable (Regulation 88(2))
3. ensuring that information about the minimum exclusion periods recommended by the Department of Health is displayed at the service and is available to all stakeholders supporting the Nominated Supervisor and the educators/staff at the service to implement the requirements of the recommended minimum exclusion periods

4. ensuring information about the National Immunisation Program (NIP) Schedule is displayed and is available to all stakeholders (refer to www.health.vic.gov.au/immunisation/factsheets/schedule-victoria.htm)

5. conducting a thorough inspection of the service and consulting with educators/staff to assess any risks by identifying the hazards and potential sources of infection to educators/staff and children

6. ensuring there are sufficient resources available for educators/staff and parents/guardians in relation to the identification and management of infectious diseases and infestations

7. keeping informed about current information and research, ensuring that any changes to the exclusion table or immunisation schedule are communicated to educators/staff and parents/guardians in a timely manner.

The Nominated Supervisor is responsible for:

1. informing DEECD, DHS Communicable Diseases Prevention and Control Unit and the parents/guardians of the child within 24 hours of becoming aware that a child is suffering or believed to be suffering from a vaccine-preventable disease, or a child not immunised against such a disease has been in contact with an infected person at the service (Health (Infectious Diseases) Regulations 2001: Regulation 13(2)). Any exclusion will be based on firm medical evidence following diagnosis of a vaccine-preventable disease, or on recommendations from the DHS Communicable Diseases Prevention and Control Unit

2. contacting the parents/guardians of a child they suspect may be suffering from an infectious or vaccine-preventable disease, or of a child not immunised against a vaccine-preventable disease that has been detected at the service, and requesting the child be collected as soon as possible

3. notifying a parent/guardian, authorised nominee or emergency contact person when a symptom of an excludable infectious illness or disease has been observed

4. ensuring that a minimum of one educator with current approved first aid qualifications is in attendance and immediately available at all times the service is in operation (refer to Administration of First Aid Policy)

5. establishing good hygiene and infection control procedures, and ensuring that they are adhered to by everyone at the service (refer to Hygiene Policy)

6. ensuring the exclusion requirements for infectious diseases are adhered to as per the recommended minimum exclusion periods (Health (Infectious Diseases) Regulations 2001: Regulation 14)

7. notifying the Committee and parents/guardians of any outbreak of infectious disease at the service, and displaying this information in a prominent position

8. advising parents/guardians on enrolment that the recommended minimum exclusion periods will be observed in regard to the outbreak of any infectious diseases or infestations (refer to http://docs.health.vic.gov.au/docs/doc/Minimum-Period-of-Exclusion-
from-Primary-Schools-and-Childrens-Services-Centres-for-Infectious-Diseases-Cases-and-Contacts)

9. advising the parents/guardians of a child who is not fully immunised on enrolment that they will be required to keep their child at home when an infectious disease is diagnosed at the service, and until there are no more occurrences of that disease and the exclusion period has ceased

10. requesting that parents/guardians notify the service if their child has, or is suspected of having, an infectious disease or infestation

11. providing information and resources to parents/guardians to assist in the identification and management of infectious diseases and infestations

12. maintaining confidentiality at all times (refer to Privacy and Confidentiality Policy).

Certified Supervisors and other educators are responsible for:

1. encouraging parents/guardians to notify the service if their child has an infectious disease or infestation

2. observing signs and symptoms of children who may appear unwell and informing the Nominated Supervisor

3. providing access to information and resources for parents/guardians to assist in the identification and management of infectious diseases and infestations

4. monitoring any symptoms in children that may indicate the presence of an infectious disease and taking appropriate measures to minimise cross-infection

5. complying with the Hygiene Policy of the service

6. maintaining confidentiality at all times (refer to Privacy and Confidentiality Policy).

Parents/guardians are responsible for:

1. keeping their child/ren home if they are unwell or have an excludable infectious disease

2. keeping their child/ren at home when an infectious disease has been diagnosed at the service and their child is not fully immunised against that infectious disease, until there are no more occurrences of that disease and the exclusion period has ceased

3. informing the service if their child has an infectious disease or has been in contact with a person who has an infectious disease

4. providing accurate and current information regarding the immunisation status of their child/ren when they enrol, and informing the service of any subsequent changes to this while they are enrolled at the service

5. complying with the recommended minimum exclusion periods

6. regularly checking their child’s hair for head lice or lice eggs, regularly inspecting all household members, and treating any infestations as necessary

7. notifying the service if head lice or lice eggs have been found in their child’s hair and when treatment was commenced

8. complying with the Hygiene Policy when in attendance at the service.

Volunteers and students, while at the service, are responsible for following this policy and its procedures.
In order to assess whether the values and purposes of the policy have been achieved, the Committee will:

1. regularly seek feedback from educators, staff, parents/guardians, children, management and all affected by the policy regarding its effectiveness
2. monitor the implementation, compliance, complaints and incidents in relation to this policy
3. ensure that all information related to infectious diseases on display and supplied to parents/guardians is current
4. keep the policy up to date with current legislation, research, policy and best practice
5. revise the policy and procedures as part of the service’s policy review cycle, or as required
6. notify parents/guardians at least 14 days before making any change to this policy or its procedures.