

BERMAGUI PRESCHOOL



4.24 Safe Handling and Disposal of Needles and Sharps Policy

This policy is guided by the paramount consideration that children's safety, rights and best interests are upheld above all other considerations in all decisions, actions and practices.

This policy has been developed by Bermagui Preschool in consultation with the Nominated Supervisor, educators and staff and approved by the Approved Provider.

Date Approved: August 2026

Review Date: August 2029

Aim

Bermagui Preschool is committed to providing a safe, healthy and hygienic environment for children, educators, families and visitors. The Preschool aims to minimise the risk of sharps injuries and the transmission of blood borne infections through the safe handling, use, storage and disposal of needles, syringes, lancets and other medical sharps used in the care of children with medical conditions. The Preschool recognises that while the use of sharps within an education and care service is limited, educators may be required to assist with emergency medication or support children with diagnosed medical conditions. Safe practices protect children, educators, volunteers and visitors from injury and infection.

Background

Needles and other sharps contaminated with blood or body fluids can transmit blood borne infections including hepatitis B, hepatitis C and human immunodeficiency virus (HIV). Although the likelihood of transmission following a sharps injury is low, appropriate handling and disposal procedures are essential to minimise risk.

Children attending Preschool may require medication administered by injection or devices incorporating sharps, including adrenaline autoinjectors for anaphylaxis, insulin pens, lancets used for blood glucose monitoring or other prescribed medical devices. Educators responsible for administering medication must be appropriately trained and follow the child's Medical Management Plan at all times. Bermagui Preschool is committed to implementing effective infection prevention and control practices, ensuring staff are appropriately trained and maintaining safe systems for the storage, handling and disposal of medical sharps.

Policy

To minimise the risk of injury and infection associated with needles and sharps, Bermagui Preschool will:

- Ensure sharps are only used where medically required.
- Ensure only appropriately trained educators administer medication or use medical devices involving sharps.
- Maintain approved sharps disposal containers that comply with Australian Standards.
- Ensure sharps containers are securely located, clearly identified and inaccessible to children.
- Dispose of all used sharps immediately after use.
- Never recap, bend, break or manipulate used needles before disposal.
- Ensure educators follow standard infection prevention and control precautions whenever blood or body fluids are present.
- Respond promptly and appropriately to any sharps injury.
- Maintain confidentiality regarding children's medical conditions while ensuring educators have access to information necessary to protect children's health and safety.

Procedures and Responsibilities

The Approved Provider and Nominated Supervisor will:

- Ensure appropriate procedures are implemented for the safe handling and disposal of needles and sharps.
- Ensure approved sharps containers complying with Australian Standard AS 4031 are readily available where required.
- Ensure sharps containers are securely mounted or stored and remain inaccessible to children.
- Replace sharps containers before they reach their recommended capacity.
- Ensure educators responsible for administering medication maintain current approved first aid qualifications, including asthma and anaphylaxis management.
- Provide educators with training regarding infection prevention, blood borne infections and safe sharps management.
- Ensure appropriate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) is available.
- Ensure incidents involving sharps are documented, investigated and reviewed.
- Review procedures following any sharps-related incident to identify opportunities for improvement.

Educators will:

- Follow each child's Medical Management Plan and Medication Authorisation.
- Use sharps only when authorised and medically required.
- Wash or sanitise hands before and after administering medication.
- Wear disposable gloves where contact with blood or body fluids is anticipated.
- Immediately dispose of used needles, syringes, lancets and other sharps into an approved sharps container.
- Never attempt to recap, bend or break used needles.
- Never leave sharps unattended.
- Ensure sharps containers remain secure and inaccessible to children.
- Report damaged or overfilled sharps containers immediately.
- Report all sharps injuries to the Nominated Supervisor without delay.
- Maintain confidentiality regarding children's medical information.

Families will:

- Inform the Preschool of any medical condition requiring the use of sharps before their child commences attendance or immediately following diagnosis.
- Provide current Medical Management Plans completed by the child's treating medical practitioner.
- Supply prescribed medication and medical devices that are clearly labelled and within their expiry date.
- Replace medication before expiry.
- Work collaboratively with educators to support the safe management of their child's medical condition.

Safe Handling of Sharps

Educators will:

- Prepare equipment immediately before use.
- Use each needle or lancet only once unless specifically designed for multiple use by the same individual.
- Dispose of sharps immediately after use.
- Never pass exposed sharps between educators unless essential.
- Keep children's medications securely stored until required.
- Transport prescribed emergency medication safely during excursions and emergency evacuations.

Disposal of Sharps

Bermagui Preschool will ensure:

- All used sharps are placed immediately into an approved puncture-resistant sharps container.
- Sharps containers comply with Australian Standard AS 4031.
- Sharps containers are sealed and replaced before becoming overfilled.
- Full containers are disposed of through an approved clinical waste disposal service in accordance with local health requirements.
- Used sharps are never placed in general rubbish or recycling bins.

Sharps Injury Procedure

If a sharps injury occurs, educators will:

- Encourage the wound to bleed gently (where appropriate).
- Wash the affected area thoroughly with soap and running water.
- Cover the wound with a waterproof dressing.
- Immediately notify the Nominated Supervisor.
- Seek urgent medical assessment and follow medical advice regarding blood borne virus exposure.
- Complete an Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Record.
- Complete a Workplace Incident Report where applicable.
- Review procedures to minimise future risk.

Infection Prevention

Educators will:

- Follow standard precautions whenever blood or body fluids are present.
- Wear appropriate Personal Protective Equipment where required.
- Clean contaminated surfaces using approved infection control procedures.
- Dispose of contaminated materials safely.
- Wash hands thoroughly after removing gloves.

Confidentiality

Information relating to a child's medical condition will be treated confidentially and managed in accordance with the Preschool's Privacy and Confidentiality requirements. Information will only be shared with educators and authorised persons who require the information to safely support the child.

Legislation and Standards

Children (Education and Care Services) National Law (NSW)

Education and Care Services National Regulations

- Regulation 77 – Health, hygiene and safe food practices
- Regulation 85 – Incident, injury, trauma and illness policies and procedures
- Regulation 90 – Medical conditions policy
- Regulation 93 – Administration of medication
- Regulation 94 – Exception to authorisation requirement—anaphylaxis or asthma emergency
- Regulation 95 – Procedure for administration of medication
- Regulation 136 – First aid qualifications, anaphylaxis management training and emergency asthma management training
- Regulation 168 – Education and care service must have policies and procedures

National Quality Standard

Quality Area 2 – Children's Health and Safety

- Standard 2.1 – Health
 - Element 2.1.2 – Health practices and procedures
- Standard 2.2 – Safety
 - Element 2.2.2 – Incident and emergency management

Quality Area 7 – Governance and Leadership

- Standard 7.1 – Governance
 - Element 7.1.2 – Management systems

Resources

- Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA)
- NSW Health
- SafeWork NSW
- Australian Guidelines for the Prevention and Control of Infection in Healthcare
- Australasian Society of Clinical Immunology and Allergy (ASCIA)

Related Documentation

Related Policies

- 4.12 Incident, Injury and Trauma
- 4.16 Emergency Procedures (Evacuation and Lockdown)
- 4.20 Workplace Health and Safety
- 4.22 Allergies and Anaphylaxis – Management
- 4.21 Allergies and Anaphylaxis – Reducing the Risk
- 4.32 First Aid
- 2.06 Confidentiality
- 2.12 Record Keeping and Retention of Records
- 4.41 Paramourty in Child Safe Practice

Related Documents

- Medical Management Plans
- Medication Authorisation Forms
- Medication Record
- Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Record
- Workplace Incident Report
- Staff First Aid Training Records
- Sharps Disposal Procedures

Version History

V1.0 – First Published: Pre-October 2021

V2.0 – August 2026: Comprehensive review and update completed. The policy was revised to reflect current NSW legislation, the Education and Care Services National Law, Education and Care Services National Regulations, National Quality Standard and current infection prevention guidance. The review strengthened procedures for the safe handling, storage and disposal of needles and sharps, clarified educator and family responsibilities, enhanced incident response and reporting requirements, updated references and related documentation, and reinforced Bermagui Preschool's commitment to protecting children, educators and visitors from sharps injuries and blood borne infection risks.