Antibiotics Policy

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure the safe and effective management of antibiotics within the setting, while protecting the health and wellbeing of all children, staff, and families. This policy supports infection control, child safety, and consistency in decision-making.

General Principles

- Antibiotics are prescribed to treat bacterial infections and does not immediately prevent a child from being infectious.
- Children may experience side effects or allergic reactions, even if they have taken the same antibiotic before.
- Attendance decisions are based on the child's overall health and wellbeing, not solely on whether antibiotics have been started.

Exclusion After Starting Antibiotics

- Any child who is prescribed antibiotics must remain at home for at least 24 hours after the first dose.
- This exclusion period applies even if the child has taken the same antibiotic previously. Children can experience side effects or allergic reactions to antibiotics at any time, even if they have previously taken the same medication on several occasions without issue. Allergic reactions can develop after repeated exposure, and side effects such as rashes, sickness, or diarrhoea may occur during any course of treatment. For this reason, the setting requires children to remain at home for 24 hours after the first dose of antibiotics so parents/carers can monitor their child's response and ensure they are well enough to return.
    - Examples of possible reactions
        - **Mild:** rash, loose stools, nausea
        - **Moderate:** widespread rash, swelling, persistent vomiting
        - **Severe (rare but serious):** breathing difficulties, facial swelling, collapse (anaphylaxis)

          Severe reactions are uncommon, but they can occur **without warning**, even after previous uneventful courses.
- The purpose of this period is to:
    - Monitor for adverse reactions (e.g. rash, sickness, diarrhoea)
    - Allow the medication time to take effect
    - Reduce the risk of infection spreading within the setting

Some infections may require longer exclusion periods in line with national public health guidance (Please see Sickness and Medication Policy). The setting will follow recommended exclusion guidance where applicable.

Returning to the Setting

After the 24-hour exclusion period, a child may return only if:

- They are well enough to participate in normal activities
- They are fever-free
- They are not suffering from symptoms that would normally exclude them (e.g. vomiting, diarrhoea, lethargy)

The setting reserves the right to refuse attendance if a child is deemed unwell on arrival.

Administration of Antibiotics in the Setting

- Antibiotics will only be administered where:
    - They have been prescribed by a medical professional
    - The child has completed the initial 24 hours at home
    - A completed and signed medication consent form has been provided
- Medication must be:
    - In its original container
    - Clearly labelled with the child's name, dosage, and instructions

All medication administration will be recorded in line with the setting's medication procedures.

Parental Responsibilities

Parents/carers must:

- Inform the setting if their child has been prescribed antibiotics
- Keep their child at home for the required exclusion period
- Provide accurate information regarding dosage and timing
- Ensure their child is well enough to attend before returning

Staff Responsibilities

Staff will:

- Follow medication and recording procedures
- Monitor children for any signs of adverse reactions

- Communicate concerns promptly to parents/carers
- Apply this policy consistently and fairly

Manager Discretion

In exceptional circumstances, the manager may consider individual cases; however, **the 24-hour exclusion following the first dose of antibiotics is the standard expectation** and will be applied consistently to support child safety and infection control.