

Vista Policies and Procedures

Policy Name: Individual Health Attendance Policy
Policy Number: CS 515
Responsible Authority: Executive Director of Clinical Programs
Original Effective Date: March 17, 2016
Revision Date: April 13, 2023

Vista is committed to providing the best possible care to the individuals they support. This policy provides guidance for individuals in Vista programs in the event they are experiencing an abnormal state of health and as a result are not available for therapeutic services. While the normal state of health will vary, it is recommended that any individual who is not feeling well and is displaying active symptoms should remain at home recuperating under guardian care, rather than attend their regularly scheduled programming.

Scope

It is the responsibility of all team members to ensure individuals are in good health prior to initiating their daily program activities. As such, this policy applies to all parents and guardians, Program Specialists, Teachers, Behavior Consultants, Direct care staff, Supervisors, and Program Directors.

Procedure

Individuals should cancel services and remain at home or will be sent home from programming or services will be canceled and care will be transferred to the parents, legal guardians, or other specified non-Vista family representatives if any of the following are observed:

- Fever, vomiting, diarrhea, unidentified skin rash, mouth sores, open wounds, high seizure activity, abnormally unsteady gait, excessive lethargy, or subnormal body temperature.

It is understood that a person may not feel well and not display any previously listed symptoms. Therefore, an illness is not limited to observable symptoms.

Individuals with a body temperature over 100 degrees should consider viral testing for a communicable disease such as COVID-19. If an individual tests positive for COVID-19, they must remain out for five days from symptom onset or positive test. This individual will not have programming available until fever free for 24 hours, without the use of fever reducing medications. The exception to this is if an individual has submitted physician documentation of a periodic fever syndrome.

Individuals with diarrheal illness who have two or more episodes will also not have programming services until they are diarrhea free for 24 hours, without the use of diarrhea suppressing medications. Services are also not available to individuals who have two or more episodes of vomiting in a 24-hour period until they are symptom free for a 24-hour period. This also applies to individuals who do not possess the hygienic skills necessary to minimize exposure of others

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until symptom free for 24 hours. The exception to this is if an individual has submitted physician documentation of periodic diarrhea or vomiting.

An individual who contracts a reportable communicable disease requires a written statement from a physician prior to their return to programming except for COVID-19. Examples of reportable disease include Strep, Chicken Pox, Pertussis, etc. This written statement must contain the diagnosis, any physical limitations, and precautions that must be taken to prevent spread of the disease to other individuals. Individuals do not need a written statement from a physician for the common cold unless the absence is greater than three or more scheduled days.

Individuals who are out sick and unable to receive services for three or more scheduled days are required to have a doctor's note containing any follow-up information necessary, to best support them upon their return to programming. Individuals who tested positive for COVID-19 can provide a positive test result and do not need a doctor's excuse to return but must follow COVID-19 return procedures.

Individuals who are hospitalized require a note from their physician stating the date the individual is allowed to return to programming, with instructions on how to support individuals following surgery, in a cast, with crutches, in a wheelchair, etc.

The written statements from physicians must be provided to the program director or their designee, prior to returning to or receiving programming. Each program is responsible for informing guardians with whom to direct this communication. This ensures sufficient time to notify relevant team members, program nursing staff, and temporary rearrangement of the program design and environment to meet the individual's needs.

Individuals who become ill while supported by Vista staff will be assessed and monitored. Vista will advise if it is best for the individual to return home and/or for care to transfer to a parent, guardian, or other non-Vista family representative. For individuals unable to transport themselves home, a call will be placed first to the identified primary contact and second to listed emergency contacts to locate an individual who can take the individual home, provide supervision in the absence of Vista staff, or seek medical treatment. In the event of a medical emergency, program staff will first contact 911 and then the parent will be notified. If you are notified to pick up your child or assume primary care for them, please arrange to do so immediately.

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It is at Vista's discretion whether programming will be made available to the individual if assessed to be infectious with a communicable disease as defined by PA Code Chapter 27.1 or lacks sufficient skills to ensure illnesses are not transferred to others.

Code Definition

PA Code Chapter 27.1 Communicable and Non-communicable Diseases defines:

Communicable disease: An illness, which is capable of being spread to a susceptible host through the direct or indirect transmission of an infectious agent or its toxic product by an infected person, animal, or arthropod, or through the inanimate environment.

Attachment

Pennsylvania Department of Health Guidelines

Vista's illness policy reflects the Pennsylvania Department of Health guidelines for recommended lengths of absence for specific diseases and infectious conditions as outlined below.

Disease/Condition	Signs and Symptoms	Required Length of Absence/Exclusion
Common Cold	Fever, runny nose, watery eyes, fatigue, coughing, and sneezing	Exclusion from programming if individual has symptoms with <i>fever over 100</i> . Must be <i>fever free</i> for 24 hours
Influenza (flu)	Rapid onset of fever, headache, sore throat, dry cough, chills, lack of energy, and muscle aches	Exclusion from programming if individual has symptoms with fever over 100. Must be fever free for 24 hours. With a confirmed case of Influenza, a written note from a doctor is required stating individual is medically cleared to return. Note must be received prior to individual's return
Conjunctivitis, bacterial or viral (Pink Eye)	Red eyes, usually with some discharge or crusting around eyes	Exclude from programming while symptomatic and until 24 hours of antibiotic treatment has been completed. A written note from a doctor is required stating the individual is medically cleared to return. Note must be received prior to the individual's return
COVID-19	Temperature greater than 100, persistent and productive cough, shortness of breath, new loss of taste or smell, fatigue, body aches, headache, sore throat, and congestion	Exclude from program for five days from positive test/ onset of symptoms.
Chicken Pox	Fever and rash that may appear first on head, and then spread to body. Usually, two or three crops of new blisters heal, sometimes leaving scabs.	Exclude from programming for at least 7 days after eruptions first appear or until vesicles become dry and crusted over
Meningococcal infections (meningitis)	Sudden onset of fever, Intense headache, nausea and often vomiting, stiff neck, and, frequently, a reddish or purplish rash on the skin or mucous membranes.	After effective treatment determined by doctor, fever free for 24 hours and a written note from a doctor is required stating individual is medically cleared to return. Note must be received prior to the individual's return
Impetigo	Blisters on skin, commonly hands and face that open and become covered with yellowish crust. Fever does not usually occur.	24 hours after treatment started. If possible, lesions should be always covered

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Measles	Runny nose, watery eyes, fever, and dry cough. A blotchy red rash, which usually begins on the face, appears between the third and seventh day.	4 days from onset of rash. A written note from a doctor is required stating the individual is medically cleared to return. Note must be received prior to the individual's return
Coxsackie virus diseases (Hand, Foot & Mouth disease)	Rash in mouth, hands (palms and fingers), and feet (soles).	Exclusion from programming if the individual has symptoms with fever over 100. Must be fever free for 24 hours
Mumps	Swelling over jaw in front of one or both ears. Pain in cheeks made worse by chewing.	9 days from onset of swelling
Fifth Disease Human Parvovirus	Redness of the cheeks and body. Rash may reappear. Fever does not usually occur. An infected person can spread fifth disease during the week prior to the appearance of the rash. When the rash appears, a person can no longer spread the virus to others.	Exclusion from programming not indicated
Pediculosis (Head Lice)	Itching and scratching of scalp. The presence of pinpoint-sized white eggs (nits) that will not flick off the hair shaft and live lice.	Individuals must be nit free and lice free. A written note from a doctor is required stating the individual is medically cleared to return. Note must be received prior to the individual's return. The individual must be checked in the presence of a parent prior to their return.
Pertussis (Whooping Cough)	Low-grade fever, runny nose, and cough lasting about two weeks, followed by paroxysmal coughing spells and "whoop" on inspiration.	After completion of five days of antibiotic therapy and a written approval from doctor to return to programming prior to the individual's return
Ringworm	Slowly spreading, flat, scaly, ring-shaped lesions on skin. Margins may appear reddened and slightly raised.	24 hours after treatment has begun. If possible, lesions should be covered.
Mononucleosis, infectious (Epstein Barr virus)	Young children are generally asymptomatic. Symptoms, when present, include fever and fatigue, swollen lymph nodes, and sore throat	After effective treatment determined by doctor, fever free and a written approval from the physician to return to programming prior to the individual's return
Scabies	Small, raised, and red bumps or blisters on skin with severe itching. Often the thighs, arms, and webs of fingers.	Exclude programming until 24 hours of appropriate treatment has been completed. A written approval by doctor to return to programming is required prior to the individual's return.
Strep Throat/Scarlet Fever/Tonsillitis	Fever, sore throat, often with large, tender lymph nodes in neck. Scarlet fever-producing strains of bacteria cause a fine, red rash that appears 1-3 days after onset of sore throat	Twenty-four hours after effective antibiotic treatment has begun and 24 hours fever free.