

# COMMUNICABLE DISEASES

## Background

The District has a responsibility to protect, where possible, students and employees from the danger of exposure to communicable diseases. This responsibility includes the authority to restrict the attendance of a student or suspend an employee, when necessary, on the advice of the School Medical Officer.

The *School District 71 Communicable Diseases Requirements and Protocols* document has been created to align with the direction of the Provincial Health Officer and requirements of WorksafeBC to have employers create a comprehensive communicable disease protocol.

The recommendations and guidance in this document are subject to change based on the evolution and transmission of COVID-19 and other communicable diseases and the discovery of new evidence.

For a current copy of *School District 71 Communicable Diseases Requirements and Protocols* contact SD 71 Health and Safety Manager.

## Procedures

1. Employees who have a Communicable Disease (Examples of a communicable disease that may circulate include COVID-19, Norovirus, and seasonal influenza.)
  - 1.1. A communicable disease is an illness caused by an infectious agent or its toxic product that can be transmitted in a workplace or school from one place to another.
  - 1.2. Information within the *SD 71 Communicable Diseases Requirements and Protocols* that is specific to COVID-19 has been drawn from several primary sources, namely the *BCCDC COVID-19 Public Health Guidance for K-12 School Settings, Addendum – Public Health Guidance for K-12 Schools and the Ministry of Education* and the *Provincial COVID-19 Communicable Disease Guidelines for K-12 Settings*.
  - 1.3. The BCCDC regularly updates the guidelines in the Communicable Diseases Control Manual to reflect current best practice. <http://www.bccdc.ca/health-professionals/clinical-resources/communicable-disease-control-manual>
  - 1.4. In the case of any variance between district guidelines and the guidance in *Provincial COVID-19 Communicable Disease Guidelines for K-12 Settings*, the provincial standards should be followed.
2. Employees who have the AIDS Virus (HIV Infection)
  - 2.1. Under normal circumstances teachers and other staff who have an HIV infection pose no risk to other staff or students.
  - 2.2. No action needs to be taken unless the individual is attempting to continue work despite being obviously ill.

- 2.3. In the circumstances that the Medical Health Officer is aware of an employee that has AIDS or is an AIDS carrier, school officials will not normally be informed unless there is a danger to the health of other students or staff.
  - 2.4. In the circumstances where a school or District official becomes aware that an employee has HIV infection, information must be kept confidential to only those who truly need to know.
  - 2.5. An employee who has HIV infection is not to be removed from employment unless the attending physician and Medical Health Officer advise otherwise.
  - 2.6. Situations may arise where it is not known that an employee has HIV infection, but the symptoms become sufficient to make attendance at work difficult. In such cases the normal procedures for dealing with sick leave can be used.
3. Students Who Have the AIDS Virus (HIV Infection)
- 3.1. Personnel involved in the case and education of HIV-infected students shall respect the child's right to privacy, including maintaining confidential records. The number of personnel who are aware of the child's condition shall be kept at the minimum needed to assure proper care of the child.
  - 3.2. The Principal, who is ultimately responsible for student placement, will consult regularly with the Superintendent and the Medical Health Officer regarding the placement of known HIV-infected individuals.
  - 3.3. Decisions regarding the type of educational setting for HIV-infected children is to be based on the behaviours, neurologic development, and physical condition of the child and the expected type of interaction with others in that setting. In each case risks and benefits to both the infected child and to others in the setting are to be weighed. These decisions are best made using the team approach, including the child's physician, public health personnel, the child's parent, and school and District personnel. The Superintendent, in cooperation with the Medical Health Officer, will call such meetings as required.
  - 3.4. For most infected children, the benefits of an unrestricted setting would outweigh the risks of their acquiring potentially harmful infections in the setting and extremely low risk of transmission of HIV at school. Mandatory screening as a condition for school entry is not warranted.
  - 3.5. For very young children, for some neurologically handicapped children who lack control of their body secretions or who display behaviours such as biting, and for those children who have uncoverable oozing lesions, a more restricted environment is advisable. Children infected with HIV are to be educated in settings that minimize as far as practical exposure of other children to blood or body fluids. If necessary, when there is no appropriate school setting, and upon the advice of the Medical Health Officer, educational services can be provided through the District hospital or homebound program.
  - 3.6. District personnel providing personal care to an HIV-infected child shall at all times be guided by the advice and recommendations of the Medical Health Officer, who shall arrange for periodic inspection of such situations.
4. Hepatitis B Vaccination for Staff
- 4.1. While District staff have not generally been found to be at increased risk of Hepatitis B, there are some staff who may be at increased risk due to frequent exposures to blood or body fluids. The District will provide Hepatitis B vaccination for these employees at

no cost upon completion of the proper authorization form available from the District Health and Safety Officer. Employees who are eligible for Hepatitis B vaccine include:

- 4.1.1. Those who are expected to attend to bleeding students and staff (i.e. first aid responders);
- 4.1.2. Those who are providing regular personal care to students known to be Hepatitis B infected; and
- 4.1.3. Those who provide regular care to students whose usual behaviour involves biting or scratching or students who have poor control of bodily secretions.

Reference: Sections 17, 20, 22, 65, 85, 89, 90, 91 School Act  
Health Act  
Safety Standards Act  
Workers' Compensation Act  
Communicable Diseases Regulation  
Occupational Health and Safety Regulation  
A Quick Guide to Common Childhood Diseases  
Provincial Health Services Authority – BC Centre for Disease Control

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