

ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURE NO. 322

COMMUNICABLE DISEASE CONTROL AND BLOOD BORNE INFECTIONS

Background

Within the tradition of the Catholic education, all students and staff are treated with dignity and compassion and shall be considered valued and productive members of the school community. Students and employees diagnosed with an infectious blood borne disease are entitled to a confidential relationship between themselves, the medical community and/or other agencies. People with a blood borne disease are encouraged to meet with the school principal and/or Superintendent to discuss their disease and immediate and future needs.

The Division and Alberta Health Services share the responsibility to provide appropriate education and procedures related to the spread of communicable diseases in division schools. In fulfilling this responsibility, it is accepted that universal precautionary measures undertaken by staff, students, parents/guardians, are necessary in the prevention of serious communicable diseases. In health related matters, the Division relies on guidance and direction from Alberta Health Services and medical professionals.

Definitions

Communicable disease means an illness that is caused by an organism or microorganism or its toxic products and is transmitted directly or indirectly from an infected person or animal or the environment (AB Regulation 238/85: Communicable Disease Regulation).

Blood Borne Disease is an illness caused by harmful biological organisms that live primarily in blood. Blood Borne diseases include viruses such as hepatitis B, hepatitis C, and human immune-deficiency virus (HIV)-AIDS. (OHS Guideline).

Public Health Act

In circumstances where students and staff have communicable diseases, the division will manage the support, procedures and privacy issues in accordance with the Public Health Act and the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FOIP). Alberta Health Services determines when protection of the individual or the public is required.

The Public Health Act and FOIP require confidentiality. Health authorities and school division personnel are not at liberty to divulge any specific information with regards to individuals with communicable diseases. Unless the physical condition of the staff member or student poses a health risk, the employee may continue to fulfill his/her duties and the student may continue to attend class.

Where a staff member has reason to believe a student or staff member is infected with a notifiable communicable disease as identified by the Public Health Act, he/she must notify the Superintendent. The Superintendent shall notify Alberta Health Services.

Procedures

1. All staff are expected to follow routine health practices and to support students to do the same through curriculum implementation and day to day procedures. Precautions include:
 - 1.1 Be aware of first aid procedures.
 - 1.2 Properly washing hands and covering up when sneezing and coughing.
 - 1.3 Routinely using gloves when anticipating contact with blood and/or body fluids.
 - 1.4 Immediately washing hands and other skin surfaces after removal of gloves and/or contact with blood.
 - 1.5 Keeping shared surfaces clean.
 - 1.6 Properly disposing of gloves and other materials that have blood and/or other body fluids on them or may contain contaminants.
2. Schools will be provided with appropriate first aid and protective equipment.
3. Information on blood borne diseases shall be provided by the Division as part of training required by Occupational Health and Safety.
4. Education is an ongoing process. Supportive education shall be available regularly throughout the year for staff and students.
5. In cases where a student has a history of bleeding easily, biting, spitting or other actions that may result in an exchange of body fluids, school staff involved will, at all times, be prepared to follow appropriate procedures. i.e. have gloves on hands at all times, ensure that appropriate responses are used and that necessary training is current.
6. In situations where, despite following division regulations and protocols for the handling of blood and body fluids, division personnel or volunteers are exposed to a communicable disease, the principal, in consultation with the Superintendent and Alberta Health Services will advise the staff member that they have been exposed to a risk of contracting a communicable disease.
7. School personnel will abide by Division procedures and protocols as well as information provided from the Occupational Health and Safety department regarding prevention practices to minimize contagious outbreaks.

8. In the case where staff or students are at risk from the spread of a disease from an infected individual, an appropriate alternative education plan for the infected person will be developed.
9. Decisions based on the type of education and care settings should be based on the behaviour, neurological development and physical condition of the student, in consultation with the parent/guardian. These decisions will be made using a cross-disciplinary team approach including the parent/guardian.

References:

Alberta Public Health Act
Communicable Diseases Regulation 238/85
Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy (FOIP)
Sections: 11,52,53,54,196,197,222 of the Education Act
Alberta Education Information Bulletin on HIV/AIDS in Educational Settings
Guide to Education
Occupational Health and Safety Guidelines

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