

INFECTIOUS DISEASES

PHILOSOPHY

Primary responsibility for the prevention and control of infectious diseases lies with individuals, families and public health authorities; however schools also have an important role to play.

PURPOSE

To help prevent and control the transmission of infectious diseases in schools.

IMPLEMENTATION

Schools:

- Can support the prevention and control of transmission of infectious diseases by:
 - Immunisation records being required at enrolment (failure to provide will exclude students from particular activities)
 - Supporting immunisation programs
 - Providing prompt and consistent response to detected or suspected cases of disease
- Are not expected to give expert advice or treat students, which is the role of medical practitioners and health authorities as appropriate.

Prevention and control of infectious diseases

In the event of an infectious disease outbreak, schools must:

- Take specific precautions as stated by the Emergency Management Plan to prevent and control the transmission of infectious diseases
- Minimise contact with body fluids and substances and have procedures that:
 - Protect staff and student who deal with inappropriate student behaviour that could result in exposure to body fluids
 - Include educating the student about why the behaviour is inappropriate and the potential consequences.

Principals must ensure a first aid kit is appropriately stocked and contains advice on handling spills of body fluids and substances.

Precautions

Specific precautions to assist with infection prevention and control must be followed by all people in a school at all times. They include the below hygiene, blood and other body fluids and substance precautions.

Hygiene

General precautions include:

- Good hygiene practices, particularly washing and drying hands before and after meals, after using the bathroom, after nose blowing, and after contact with contaminated objects
- The use of protective barriers which can include gloves and masks
- Safe handling of 'sharps'
- Use of non-touch technique, as appropriate.

Blood and other body fluids

Interaction between people at schools should minimise contact with body fluids and substances, including:

- Blood, whether wet or dry
- Secretions
- Excretions other than sweat
- Other body substances.

Staff members and students should:

- Cover broken skin on their hands or lower arms with waterproof occlusive dressings at all times
- Treat blood and other body fluids and substances as being potentially infectious
- Avoid direct contact with blood and other fluids and substances, where possible
- Be familiar with recommended hygiene and standard precautions
- Deal with spills:
 - Using single use gloves, or
 - Until it is possible to get someone wearing gloves to take over, then thoroughly wash their hands and any body parts that were in contact with the spill using warm water and liquid soap
- Use a resuscitation mask, if available, if mouth-to-mouth resuscitation is required

Note: CPR training should be practiced with the use of a single-use resuscitation mask and manikins should be cleaned, dried and disinfected.

Exclusion

Schools must be aware of, and abide by, exclusion requirements during an outbreak of an infectious disease. Certain excludable infectious diseases require immediate notification to the Department of Education and Training.

Student behaviour

Procedures that deal with inappropriate student behaviour resulting in students and staff being exposed to body fluids and substances should:

- protect students and staff
- educate students and staff about:
 - Why the behaviour is inappropriate
 - The consequences of the behaviour

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