COMMUNICABLE DISEASE CONTROL AND BLOOD BORNE INFECTIONS

Belief

The Division is committed to ensuring a safe and healthy work environment for all students and staff. The Division further believes in ensuring the privacy of medical information and fostering a spirit of understanding and compassion for students and employees who have a blood borne infection or another serious communicable disease.

Guidelines

1. Students and employees diagnosed with a communicable disease or blood borne infection are entitled to a confidential relationship between themselves, the medical community and/or other agencies.

2. Students and employees with a blood borne disease are encouraged to meet with the principal and/or Superintendent or designate to discuss their disease and immediate and future needs.

3. The Division and Alberta Health Services share a 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 and blood borne infections.

4. In health related matters, the Division relies on guidance and direction from Alberta Health Services and medical professionals.

5. Communicable disease means an illness that is caused by an organism or micro-organism or its toxic products and is transmitted directly or indirectly from an infected person, animal or the environment (AB Regulation 238/1985: Communicable Diseases Regulation).

6. 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.

7. In circumstances where a student or staff member has a communicable disease, the Division will manage the supports, procedures and privacy issues in accordance with the Public Health Act and the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FOIPP). Alberta Health Services determines when protection of the individual or the public is required.
8. The Public Health Act and FOIPP 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 condition of the student or staff member poses a health risk, the student may continue to attend class and the employee may continue to fulfill his/her duties.

9. Where a staff member has reason to believe that 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, or designate shall notify Alberta Health Services.

Procedures

10. Division administration will ensure that there is:

10.1 Compassion shown for the individual who has a blood borne infection or another serious communicable disease;
10.2 Medical privacy for the individual is maintained; and
10.3 Support for students with a blood borne infection or another communicable disease to maintain their normal educational experiences and staff members with these diseases to maintain their positions of employment, so long as their health permits and others are not at risk as advised by a medical officer.

11. Employees shall adhere to Alberta Education Guidelines for HIV/AIDS in Educational Settings and/or advice by a medical officer.

12. In the event that a blood borne infection or communicable disease case has been identified, the supervisor shall immediately contact the Superintendent to review procedures to be followed.

13. All Division staff members and volunteers must be aware that:

13.1 Blood or other body fluids such as vomit, urine containing visible blood may carry infectious diseases.
13.2 Hygienic practices shall be reviewed on a regular basis with local public health personnel.

14. Staff members and students must recognize their obligation to protect the health and safety of themselves and others.

14.1 When attending an ill or injured person, use protective gloves, dressings and tissues to minimize direct contact with blood, other body fluids and wounds.
14.2 When cleaning up body fluids, protective gloves are to be used.
14.3 If any part of the skin comes in contact with body fluids of another person, it is to be immediately washed with disinfectant or hot soapy water.
14.4 Appropriate disinfectants (e.g. 1:9 dilution of household bleach in water) are to be used in cleaning body fluids from floors, walls and clothing. The local Public Health Unit can be contacted if there is doubt as to which disinfectants or cleansers are to be used.

14.5 The person doing the "cleaning up" of body fluids shall use disposable materials such as paper towels, if at all possible. If a mop is used it is to be rinsed in disinfectant before being used again.

14.6 All disposable articles soiled with body fluids (e.g. paper towels) are to be placed in a plastic container.

14.7 Clothing and linens visibly soiled with blood or other body fluids are to be rinsed in cold water and then machine-washed in hot water and ordinary household laundry detergent (or dry cleaned). Protective gloves are to be worn by the person who is rinsing the clothes.

14.8 In an emergency situation preliminary first aid is to be administered. As soon as possible, thereafter, all blood/body fluids are to be washed off in hot, soapy water. It is to be emphasized that careful hand washing is an effective and reliable precaution. If blood/body fluids to come into contact with an open sore, it must be washed promptly in hot soapy water.

15. 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 like having gloves on hands at all times, ensuring that appropriate responses are used and that necessary training is current.

16. 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 blood borne infection or communicable disease, the Principal, in consultation with the Superintendent or designate and Alberta Health Services will advise the staff member that he/she was exposed to a risk of contracting a blood borne infection or communicable disease.

17. In the case where students or staff members are at risk from the spread of an infection or communicable disease from an infected individual, an appropriate alternate education plan or employee assignment for the infected person will be developed.

18. In the case of students, 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-ministerial and cross-disciplinary team approach including the parent/guardian.

Reference:
Alberta Public Health Act
Alberta Public Health Act Communicable Diseases Regulation 238/1985
Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act
School Act
Alberta Education Guidelines for HIV/AIDS in Educational Settings
Occupational Health and Safety Act