

Blood Borne Pathogens – Safety Practises

The Board of Education will establish procedures so that students and employees can learn and work in safe and health school communities. The Board of Education also recognizes that a student infected with an infectious blood borne disease (i.e. HIV, AIDS and Hepatitis B or C virus) is entitled to an education program in accordance with the School Act and an employee infected with an infectious blood borne disease has certain rights to work.

General

While recognizing that both 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, the Board of School Education encourages these individuals to meet with the School Principal and/or Superintendent of Schools to discuss their disease and immediate and future needs.

Assessment

Students

The Superintendent (or designate) will be informed by the school Principal as soon as is known, of any student infected with an infectious blood borne disease.

A risk assessment will be conducted using a team approach including the personal physician, public health personnel, the parent or guardian, and school district personnel as appropriate and will make recommendations about the type of education and care setting based on the following:

- Behaviour, neurological development and physical condition of the child.
- Type of interaction expected with others.
- What the potential is for exposure.
- Areas for potential exposure.
- How exposure may happen.
- Who needs to know.
- What will happen if there is a risk of exposure.

The team will consider the risk to others in the workplace, whether or not the individual is healthy enough to continue to attend school, and what precautions should be taken to ensure the safety and health of others.

The identity of the infected students will remain confidential and restricted to those who need to know or are required to be informed.

Decisions on attendance at school are dependent on the circumstances of each individual case. Regular evaluation of the appropriateness of attendance will be conducted.

The Board will be notified immediately when the team considers the health condition of a student to be a danger to the immediate health and welfare of a school, its students or employees of the Board. Upon being notified of the team's concern, the Board will refer the matter to the Medical Health Officer in accordance with the procedures outlined in the School Act.

Employees

The Superintendent will be informed, by district staff as soon as is known, of any employee infected with an infectious blood borne disease.

Employees with an infectious blood borne disease, who are able to carry out the essential duties of their jobs in a satisfactory manner without posing a health or safety risk to themselves or others, will be entitled to continue their work.

Decisions regarding potential health or safety hazards will be made on a case-by-case basis in consultation with the employee, the personal physician and district personnel as appropriate.

The identity of infected employees will remain confidential and restricted to those who need to know or are required to be informed.

The Board will be notified immediately if the Superintendent considers the health condition of an employee to be a danger to the immediate health and welfare of a school, its students or other employees of the Board. Upon being notified of the Superintendent's concern, the Board will refer the matter to the Medical Health Officer in accordance with the procedures outlined in the *School Act*.

Hygienic Safety Practices

All employees will follow "Universal Infection Control Precautions" by assuming that blood and other body fluids from all individuals are potentially infectious. These precautions include:

- Routinely using gloves when anticipating contact with blood.
- Immediately washing hands and other skin surfaces after removal of gloves and/or contact with blood.

Schools will be provided with appropriate protective equipment including disposable waterproof gloves (natural rubber latex, neoprene, nitrile or vinyl), tongs or pliers and proper sharps containers.

Schools' medical room mattresses will be either vinyl-coated beds or cloth mattress with a protective vinyl (plastic) covering so that they can be cleaned as needed with a bleach solution.

Blankets can be cleaned as needed by forwarded them, in a clearly labeled plastic bag, to the Assistant Supervisor Operations at the Facilities Office.

Universal Precautions

Universal Precautions to prevent transmission of blood borne disease will be followed. Universal Precautions is the term for infection control measures endorsed by the Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety for workers who might come into contact with blood and other body fluids. In summary¹, they include:

¹ Child and Family Canada. Universal Precautions to Prevent Transmission of Blood-Borne Diseases (Adapted for Child Care Settings).

- Wash hands for 30 seconds after contact with blood and other body fluids contaminated with blood.
- Wear disposable latex gloves when you encounter blood, body fluids, or when cleaning cuts, scrapes or wounds. Wash your hands as soon as you remove your gloves. Dispose gloves in a plastic bag.
- Use disposable absorbent material like paper towels to stop bleeding.
- Discard bloodstained material in a sealed plastic bag and deposit in the garbage. Label as containing blood-tainted material.
- Cover cuts or scratches with a bandage until healed.
- Immediately protect staff and students from coming in contact with blood-soiled surfaces. The area must be disinfected with a fresh solution of one part bleach and nine-parts water (10% bleach solution).

Mops or brushes used for cleaning should be soaked in a bleach solution for 20 minutes. (Note: The custodial department will provide each school with the product for dissolving in water to provide the bleach solution.)

Identification of Risks of Occupational Exposure

In accordance with the *Occupational Health and Safety Regulations (Section 6.35)*, the district's Health and Safety Coordinator will develop and maintain a list of positions and/or tasks and procedures where there is a potential for occupational exposure to blood borne pathogen.

Employees who have, or may have, occupational exposure to the Hepatitis B virus, will upon request, receive a Hepatitis B vaccination (*Section 6.39, Occupational Health and Safety Regulations*).

Employees who may have been exposed to blood borne pathogen in an exposure incident will be advised to immediately seek medical attention.

Date Adopted: October 2000

Definitions:

- *Occupational Exposure means reasonably anticipated, harmful contact with blood or other potential bio-hazardous material that may result from the performance of a worker's duties*
- *Exposure means any incident which results in exposure to blood or infectious body fluids through a break in the skin or the mucous membranes such as the eyes, or the inside of the nose or mouth.*

Legal Reference: School Act, Sections 91, 92

*Resources: Work Safe BC, HIV / AIDS and Hepatitis B and C – Preventing Exposure at Work
Work Safe BC Occupational Health and Safety Regulations, Part 6, 6.33 to 6.41*