

## **COMMUNICABLE DISEASES – STAFF**

### **Background**

The existence of numerous communicable diseases, including Acquired Immune Deficiency (AIDS) requires Districts to establish procedures with regard to the management of infected staff. Such procedures must take into account the provisions of the Alberta Public Health Act and the Alberta Human Rights, Citizenship and Multiculturalism Act and reflect both the preservation of the public interest as well as the protection of individual rights and freedoms.

The District is committed to the humane treatment of staff infected with communicable diseases within an environment that protects the privacy of the individual and the health and safety of all students and staff.

### **Procedures**

1. Employees infected with communicable diseases shall be allowed to continue normal duties unless:
  - 1.1 In the opinion of the local medical health officer, special circumstances dictate otherwise.
  - 1.2 The job of the employee requires that the employee be free from any communicable diseases.
2. The right of infected employees to privacy will be respected and their identity remain confidential except as required in accordance with the Public Health Act, or as necessary to maintain the safety of staff and students.
  - 2.1 In case of voluntary disclosure, the identity of an employee infected with HIV or other communicable disease will remain confidential to the supervisor to whom he/she has disclosed, except with permission of the employee, or as required by the Public Health Act, after the employee has been informed of the requirement.
  - 2.2 In the event that the Board, the Superintendent, or other supervisor employed by the District is made aware that an employee is infected with HIV or other communicable disease, the Board, the Superintendent or the supervisor shall keep the identity of the employee confidential and discuss the matter with the employee forthwith. After the matter has been discussed with the employee, the identity of the employee will continue to remain confidential except with permission of the employee or as required by the Public Health Act, after the employee has been informed of the requirement or as necessary to maintain the safety of staff and students.

3. Employees who are unable to continue their duties as a result of having a communicable disease shall have full access to sick leave, long-term disability and other medical benefits provided for by the various collective agreements, benefit plans and policies and procedures.
4. Procedures for dealing with employees who may be exposed to HIV (AIDS virus) will be consistent with occupational health and safety requirements (outlined in Appendix 411A).
5. In the event that an employee indicates that he/she has been infected with HIV, the supervisor shall immediately contact the Superintendent to review procedures to be followed.
6. The need for a restricted environment will be assessed by the medical officer of health and the attending physician. This need will be periodically reassessed.
7. If, in the opinion of the attending physician, an infected employee is no longer capable of working, the matter will be dealt with in the same way as other illnesses that impair an employee's capacity to work.
8. When a principal knows that a student (or staff member) has a communicable disease, this must be reported to the local Public Health Centre. (see Appendix 411B)
9. The principal will consult with the Public Health Centre to determine if there is a need to inform other children, their parents or staff of any communicable disease. (eg. Fifth Disease is a concern for pregnant women.) (see Appendix 411B)

Reference: Public Health Act  
Human Rights, Citizenship and Multiculturalism Act  
Ministerial Directive HIV/AIDS in Educational Settings 4.1.1

## COMMUNICABLE DISEASES ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURE

The following information is excerpted from an occupational health and safety publication in relation to Aids in the Workplace – Universal Precautions for Workers Who May Be Exposed to HIV, October, 1988, (AWP – 02).

It is recommended that each school Principal/department head arrange to discuss the appropriate precautions with his/her specific work area.

“Although the risk of being infected with HIV (the AIDS virus) through occupational exposure is very low, workers who are exposed to blood and body fluids should take appropriate precautions. Health care and pre-hospital emergency care, dental, laboratory and funeral services workers are likely to be in situations where they may be exposed to blood or other body fluids. In general, workers should minimize direct contact with blood or other body fluids and take precautions against penetrating injuries from needles or other body fluids and take precautions against penetrating injuries from needles and other sharp objects. Taking such precautions will not only protect against HIV but also against more infectious agents such as Hepatitis B and some other hospital-acquired infections.”

“Tests for HIV infection are not 100 percent accurate. This means that blood and certain body fluids should be handled as if they could be infectious, and all patients should be handled in a way that minimizes exposure to blood and these body fluids. Universal precautions apply to blood, other body fluids containing visible blood, semen and vaginal secretions. They also apply to tissues and cerebrospinal, synovial and pleural, peritoneal, pericardial and amniotic fluids. They do not apply to nasal secretions, sputum, saliva, sweat, tears, vomitus, urine and feces unless they contain visible blood.”

Specific procedures may be obtained through the Occupational Health and Safety Department that deals with the following precautions:

1. Minimizing direct contact with blood and body fluids.
2. Procedures for cleaning up spills and contaminated surfaces.
3. Disinfection and sterilization of equipment.
4. Laundering of soiled linen and clothing.
5. Infectious waste disposal.
6. A list of procedures for the employee should exposure occur.

## LIST OF COMMUNICABLE DISEASES

Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome (AIDS)  
Amoebiasis  
Anthrax  
Arboviral Infections (including Dengue)  
Botulism  
Brucellosis  
Campylobacter  
Cerebrospinal Fluid Isolates  
Chicken Pox •  
Cholera  
Congenital Infections (includes Cytomegalovirus, Hepatitis B, Herpes Simplex, Rubella, Toxoplasmosis, Varicella-Zoster)  
Dengue  
Diphtheria •  
Encephalitis (specified or unspecified) •  
Enteric Pathogens \*  
Fifth Disease  
Foodborne Illness \*  
Gastroenteritis, epidemic \*  
Giardiasis  
Head Lice  
Hemophilus Influenza Infections (invasive) •  
Hemolytic Uremic Syndrome  
Hepatitis A, B, Non-A, Non-B •  
Influenza (Flu)  
Kawasaki Disease  
Lassa Fever  
Legionella Infections  
Leprosy  
Leptospirosis  
Malaria  
Measles •  
Meningitis (all causes) •  
Meningococcal Infections  
Mumps •  
Neonatal Herpes  
Nosocomial Infections  
Ophthalmia Neonatorum (all causes)  
Paratyphoid  
Pertussis  
Plague  
Poliomyelitis •

Psittacosis  
Q-Fever  
Rabies  
Ringworm  
Rye Syndrome •  
Rickettsial Infections  
Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever  
Rubella (including Congenital Rubella)  
Rubeola •  
Salmonella Infections •  
Scabies  
Shigella Infections •  
Smallpox  
Stool Pathogens, all types \*  
Tetanus  
Toxic Shock Syndrome  
Tuberculosis •  
Tularaemia  
Typhoid  
Typhus  
Varicella  
Viral Hemorrhagic Fevers (including Marburg, Ebola, Lassa, Argentinean, African Hemorrhagic Fevers)  
Waterborne Illness (all causes) \*  
Whooping Cough •  
Yellow Fever

- \* Enteric Pathogens, Food-borne Illness, Gastroenteritis, epidemic and Waterborne Illness include the following and any other identified or unidentified cause: Aeromonas; Bacillus cereus; Campylobacter; Clostridium botulinum and perfringens; E. Coli (enteropathogenic serotypes); Salmonella; Shigella; Staphylococcus; Viruses such as Norwalk and Rotavirus; Yersona.
- These communicable diseases must be reported to the local Public Health Authority under the Public Health Act.