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**COMMUNICABLE
DISEASES AND
INFECTIOUS
DISEASE CONTROL**

Every child is entitled to a level of health that permits maximum utilization of educational opportunities. It is the policy of the Duval County School District to work cooperatively with the Florida Department of Health in Duval County (DOH) to enforce and adhere to public health and welfare statutes and regulations. Procedures are established for prevention, control, and containment of infectious diseases to ensure that both the rights of the individual and concerns of the community are addressed.

The control and eradication of communicable diseases is one of the primary missions of DOH. The DOH is charged with detecting disease, treating cases, and preventing the spread of disease to new contacts. The communicable disease program relies heavily upon immunization for preventable disease and the epidemiological process for detection and control of disease. The epidemiological process includes monitoring and surveillance activities, investigation of cases, determination of causative factors and possible modes of transmission, identification of contacts, and the institution of measures to prevent the spread of infection. The DOH coordinates this process in all cases of a public health hazard, including activities of other agencies involved in some aspect of public health.

Infectious and Communicable Disease Administrative Procedures

- Florida Law - The authority for infectious disease control in Florida is Chapter 381.0031 F.S., 64D- 3.046 F.A.C. Section 381.0031, Florida Statutes requires the reporting of diseases of public health significance to DOH. Florida Administrative Code Rule 64D-3.029, provides a listing of notifiable diseases or conditions to be reported to local county health departments and Florida Administrative Code Rule 64D-3.030, addresses notification by Florida licensed practitioners.
- The DOH has the statutory authority pursuant to sections 252.36, 381.0031, and 381.00315, Florida Statutes, to isolate, quarantine, and conduct contact tracing of individuals.
- Reporting and controlling infectious disease suspected or detected within the school community will be accomplished as follows:
 1. The Principal will not permit a student to enter the school who is out of compliance with the current required immunization schedule, unless exempt for medical reasons, religious beliefs, or the student has a temporary 30-day exemption.
 2. Any student with symptoms of a communicable disease or condition should be excluded from school until symptoms are no longer present, or approval for return has been granted by the student's health care provider, the school nurse, the principal, DOH, or the State Office of Epidemiology.
 3. If a school administrator has any questions concerning an infectious disease or condition, the DOH School Health office (904-253-1580) and/or DOH Epidemiology office (904-253-1850) should be contacted.
 4. DOH may have access to any establishment and records of any establishment in the discharge of its official duties in accordance with the law.

5. Diseases of public health significance must be reported by the nurse who attends to a student infected with these diseases or suspected diseases.
6. If a need occurs to send letters to the parent/guardian about a serious, suspected or diagnosed infectious disease, the letter should be initiated by a DOH school nurse and then reviewed by the DCPS Director of School Health Services and school principal.
7. It is not necessary to inform all parents/guardians when a few cases of an infectious disease occur, if it is determined that the classroom or school is not at risk for an epidemic. The parent/guardian of the affected child will be notified. If a class has three (3) or more students with a diagnosed or suspected infectious or communicable disease or condition, the Principal, in consultation with the DOH school nurse and the DCPS Director of School Health Services, may decide to notify all parents/guardians of the disease outbreak.
8. If an infectious disease epidemic is present, the DCPS Director of School Health Services will confer with the DOH School Health office and/or DOH Epidemiology Supervisor. The DCPS Director of School Health Services will also consult with the school principal and DOH school nurse to determine necessary procedures to prevent further spread of disease. The decision to close schools due to infectious disease outbreaks is at the discretion of the school district's administration. Consultation on such decisions is available to the school district from DOH and the State Office of Epidemiology.
9. School personnel and others involved in education and caring for a child with an infectious disease will respect the child's right to privacy, including maintaining confidential records. Only school staff with a legitimate need to know should be informed.

General Procedures:

The DOH school nurse will be viewed as the resource for communicable diseases and conditions in the school. The DOH school nurse can give general information and assist in decision-making when communicable diseases and conditions are suspected. The DOH school nurse and/or health room designee must guard against being placed in the position of making a medical diagnosis. The DOH school nurse may also be asked to gather information concerning the suspected communicable disease.

Reporting Procedures:

- The procedure outlined below should be followed when verifying or reporting a suspected communicable disease case:
 1. Contact the DOH school nurse. The DOH school nurse or health room designee should obtain as much information concerning the situation if available:
 - a. Name
 - b. Address
 - c. Phone
 - d. Birth date

- e. Parent/Guardian name(s)
 - f. Days of attendance at school
 - g. Immunization dates (if pertinent)
 - h. Hospital and physician name (if available)
 - i. Diagnostic Tests performed
 - j. Source of information
2. Contact the DOH Epidemiology office at 904-253-1850 and relay the information obtained.
- Refer to Attachment E-I for a list of reportable diseases/conditions in Florida. These diseases have the potential to cause a negative impact on public health and must be reported to DOH when suspected or diagnosed.

Procedures for Notifying Parent/Guardian and Taking Other Action

It is recommended that the procedures, as outlined below, is followed when a communicable disease or condition is suspected or reported at school.

- When signs and symptoms of a communicable disease or condition are **observed**, as outlined in the Common Diseases and Conditions chart (Attachment E-II), prepared in conjunction with the DOH, it shall be the responsibility of the principal or the principal's designee to notify the parent/guardian of symptoms displayed by the student and take the following action:

1. NO EXCLUSION From School

- a. If the symptoms indicate a communicable disease or condition which **does not require exclusion**, in accordance with the guidelines as outlined in the Common Diseases and Conditions chart (Attachment E-II), notify the parent/guardian, complete the Observation of Symptoms Form (Attachment B-VI), and send the form home with the student at the end of the day.

2. EXCLUSION From School

- a. If it appears that the student may have a communicable disease which **requires exclusion** in accordance with the guidelines as outlined on the Common Diseases and Conditions chart (Attachment E-II), contact the parent/guardian and take the following action:
 - Separate the student from other students, until such time as the student can be removed from the school site by the parent/guardian or responsible person designated by the parent/guardian.
 - Provide the parent/guardian with the Observation of Symptoms Form (Attachment B-VI).

- b. Require a note from a health care provider, if indicated in the Common Diseases and Conditions chart (Attachment E-II).
- When one of the communicable diseases listed below is **reported** to the school, notify the DOH School Health Office at 904-253-1580. The DOH school health Office will notify the DOH Epidemiology Unit and the DOH school nurse assigned to the school. Principals should feel free to communicate directly with the DOH Epidemiology Unit at 904-253-1850, if additional information is needed.

Diphtheria
Mumps
Hepatitis
Measles-Rubeola (Regular)
Tuberculosis (Active)

Whooping Cough
Measles-Rubella (German Measles)
Polio
Meningitis (Bacterial)
Meningococcal Disease

- When one of the reportable diseases listed above is **confirmed** by DOH, it shall be the responsibility of the principal or the principal's designee to take the following actions in addition to those outlined above:
 1. Notify parent/guardian of all students in the classroom where one (1) or more cases of the disease were identified by sending home a COMMUNICABLE DISEASE FACT SHEET which provides information about the particular disease in question. The Communicable Disease Fact Sheets are provided in this manual (starting at attachment E-IV).
 2. Take further action as directed by the Medical Director of DOH.
 3. Require that the identified student submit a written statement from the physician giving permission to return to school and stating any restrictions.

Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)

COVID-19 is a contagious viral illness spread mainly from person-to-person through respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs, sneezes, or talks.

People with COVID-19 have a wide range of symptoms reported – ranging from mild symptoms to severe illness. Symptoms may appear 2-14 days after exposure to the virus. Common symptoms may include:

- Fever (temperature of 100.4°F or greater) or chills
- Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Fatigue
- Muscle or body aches
- Headache
- New loss of taste or smell
- Sore throat
- Congestion or runny nose

- Nausea or vomiting
- Diarrhea

The symptoms listed above do not include all possible symptoms of COVID-19.

If a COVID-19 positive case is identified at a school, exclude the student or staff member from school and report the case to DCPS School Health Services. DCPS School Health Services will report the case to DOH Office of Epidemiology. The DCPS communications department will provide the principal with the appropriate communication for the school community. Once the case is confirmed, an investigation will be conducted by DOH to determine close contacts. DOH will determine who will need to quarantine and for how long and will provide letters to the parent/guardian.

Students or staff diagnosed with COVID-19 and who are **symptomatic**, can return to school after 10 days since symptom(s) first appeared and fever-free for 24-hours without the use of fever reducing medications, and other symptoms of COVID-19 are improving. Loss of taste or smell may persist for weeks or months after recovery and need not delay the end of isolation.

Students or staff diagnosed with COVID-19 and who are **asymptomatic** (without symptoms), can return to school after 10 days have passed since the positive test for COVID-19, as long as they remain asymptomatic.

Confidentiality of Students with Communicable Diseases/Chronic Health Conditions

Many times school personnel are placed in the position of answering questions from numerous concerned parents/guardians about the spread of a disease in the school setting or if a student has a specific disease. The most common and most difficult example is meningitis. Word of a case of meningitis or other infectious disease in a school can cause widespread panic in parents/guardians and even school staff. It is important to maintain the confidentiality of the student who has been diagnosed with a communicable disease whether it is meningitis, human immunodeficiency virus (HIV), tuberculosis, etc.

Do not release the name of the student with the particular disease to parents/guardians, members of the community or even school staff. Only school staff with a legitimate need to know (as determined by the principal) should be informed. In general, only the principal or his/her designee, shall determine who, if anyone, should have access to student health-related information.

Inadvertent or intentional release of confidential information such as a medical diagnosis in association with a student can place the employee and the school district at considerable legal risk.

General advice regarding the spread of a disease, prevention of spread and control measures can frequently be given without compromising a student's right to confidentiality. The School District, with direction from DOH, will establish a plan of action based on individual situations.

Universal Precautions and Bloodborne Pathogens

“Universal Precautions” means protecting oneself from exposure to blood or body fluids and treating all blood or body fluids as a potential source of contamination/infection. According to Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) guidelines, all employees should have annual training regarding universal precautions, bloodborne pathogens, and biomedical waste disposal (Attachment E-III).

Bloodborne pathogens are infectious microorganisms present in blood that can cause disease in humans. These pathogens include, but are not limited to, hepatitis B virus (HBV), hepatitis C virus (HCV), and human immunodeficiency virus (HIV), the virus that causes AIDS. Workers exposed to bloodborne pathogens are at risk for serious or life-threatening illnesses.

Policy and Procedure if Exposure Occurs:

- Immediately wash area with soap and water or a skin disinfectant if available.
- Contact school nurse for student exposure or health room designee.
- First aid as needed.
- Report incident to principal. Depending on seriousness of situation, principal may notify DCPS Risk Management Office.
- For *staff exposure*, submit a Notice of Injury (NOI) via the Johns Eastern Website, eliminating the need of faxing or phoning the information. The link to this form is available on the DCPS Risk Management webpage. See your school workman’s compensation representative. Employee will be sent to the workman’s compensation doctor and will follow-up with them regarding treatment plan.
- For *student exposure*, submit a student/visitor report via the Johns Eastern Website, eliminating the need of faxing or phoning the information. The link to this form is available on the DCPS Risk Management webpage. A parent/guardian should be contacted and advised to follow-up with their child’s health care provider for medical evaluation.

Policies and Guidelines for Handling Body Fluids in School

Research shows that the risk of getting a significant contagious disease in a school setting is extremely small. However, school staff should decrease the possibility of exposure to bloodborne pathogens. Bloodborne pathogens are infectious microorganisms in human blood that can cause diseases in humans. These pathogens include, but are not limited to, hepatitis B (HBV), hepatitis C (HCV), and human immunodeficiency virus (HIV). Bloodborne pathogens may be present in body fluids such as: blood, urine, feces, vomitus, saliva, drainage from sores/cuts, etc.

It is possible for individuals who have no symptoms of disease to have infectious organisms present in their body fluids. These individuals may be in various stages of infection or may be chronic carriers. Therefore, it is recommended that increased precautions be taken in handling

body fluids of *any* student in *any* school setting and treat all blood or body fluids as a potential source of contamination/infection.

Disposable gloves should be worn when in contact with blood and other body fluids. Protective eyewear should be worn when body fluids may come in contact with eyes. Soiled clothing (i.e., clothing with blood, stool or vomit) should be sent home with the student in a double-bagged plastic bag.

The following guidelines are intended to provide simple and effective precautions against disease transmission for all persons exposed to blood or body fluids of any student.

Hand Washing

Thorough and frequent hand washing is probably the most effective practice in preventing the spread of disease. Proper hand washing requires the use of soap from a dispenser and running water.

- Use soap and running water
- Rub hands to create friction for approximately 20 seconds
- Wash all surfaces: back of hands, wrists, between fingers, thumbs, and under fingernails
- Dry with paper towel
- Turn off faucet with clean paper towel

Examples of when to wash hands:

- Before and after eating or handling food
- After using the restroom
- Before and after administering first aid or medication to a student
- Immediately after contact with another person's blood, saliva, nasal secretions, or other body fluids
- After disinfecting items or surfaces contaminated with body fluids
- Before and after physical contact with a student

Use of disposable, non-sterile gloves

Direct hand contact with body fluids such as blood, feces, urine, and vomitus should be avoided by using disposable gloves. A supply of disposable gloves will be available in the health room and preferably in the classrooms where they may be needed frequently.

Examples of when to use disposable gloves:

- When cleaning up blood spills, vomitus, etc.
- When handling cloth, diapers, paper, or surfaces soiled with
- blood, urine, feces, or vomitus.

- When handling clothes soiled by incontinence.
- When caring for bleeding, oozing wounds.
- When you have cuts or abrasions on your hands.

Procedure

- Gloves are non-sterile and are intended to protect your hands.
- Removal of gloves must be done carefully to avoid contaminating your hands with the outside of the soiled glove.
- Remove gloves last after discarding or disposing of contaminated materials. Follow these steps:
 1. Grasp the top edge of one glove
 2. Unroll the glove, inside out, over the hand
 3. Discard in a plastic waste bag
 4. With the bare hand, grasp the opposite glove cuff on the inside surface
 5. Remove the glove by inverting it over the hand
 6. Discard in a plastic waste bag
 7. Wash hands

Gloves for School Personnel Use When Handling Bloody Materials and Body Fluids

Medically hypoallergenic non-latex gloves for school personnel use when handling bloody materials and body fluids may be ordered from the storeroom catalog. These gloves are listed in the First Aid Section of the storeroom catalog. Principals should keep a supply for teachers, school nurses and other school personnel.

Note: Gloves to be used by cafeteria staff for handling food are listed in a different section of the storeroom catalog.