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 Department of Health 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.

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.

- **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 or religious beliefs.
  
  2. Any student with symptoms of communicable illness should be excluded from school until symptoms are no longer present, or approval for return has been granted by the student's physician, the school nurse, the principal, the Department of Health in Duval County, or the State Office of Epidemiology.
  
  3. If a school administrator has any questions concerning infectious disease, the School Health office and/or the Department of Health in Duval County's Epidemiology office should be contacted.
  
  4. The Florida Department of Health 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 parents about a serious, suspected or diagnosed infectious disease, the letter should be initiated by a Department of Health School Nurse and then reviewed by the DCPS Wellness office and school Principal.
  
  7. It is not necessary to inform all parents when a few cases of infectious disease occur if it is determined that the classroom or school is not at risk for an epidemic. Parents/Guardians of the affected children will be notified. In certain cases, the Principal, in consultation with the Department of Health School Nurse, DCPS Wellness office and School Health office, may decide to notify all parents of the disease outbreak.
  
  8. If an infectious disease epidemic is present, the DCPS Wellness Director will confer with the Health Department School Health office and/or Department of Health Epidemiology Supervisor. The DCPS Wellness Director will also consult with the School Principal and 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 the Department of Health in Duval County 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. The number of personnel who are aware of the child’s condition should be kept to the minimum. (Family Education Rights and Privacy Act of 1974).

General Procedures:

The Department of Health in Duval County School Nurse will be viewed as the resource for communicable disease in the school. The nurse can give general information and assist in decision-making when communicable diseases are suspected. The nurse/health designee must guard against being placed in the position of making a medical diagnosis. The 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 School Nurse. The nurse/ health designee should obtain as much information concerning the situation as is available at the school such as:

     a. Name
     b. Address
     c. Phone
     d. Birth date
     e. Parent’s names
     f. Days of attendance at school
     g. Immunization dates if pertinent
     h. Hospital and physician name, if available
     i. Diagnostic Tests performed
     j. How information was obtained (source)

  2. Phone the Department of Health in Duval County Epidemiology office (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 the local Department of Health when suspected or diagnosed.
Universal Precautions

“Universal Precautions” simply means treating all body fluids as potential sources of contamination/infection. According to OSHA guidelines all employees should have annual training regarding Universal Precautions, Bloodborne Pathogens and Biomedical waste disposal.

Policy and Procedure if Exposure Occurs:

- Wash area with soap and water. Use hand sanitizer or antiseptic wipes if no water available.
- Contact School Nurse for student exposure.
- First aid as needed.
- Report incident to principal and depending on seriousness of situation, principal may notify superintendent office.
- For staff exposure, fill out accident report and workman’s compensation paperwork. 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, fill out a student accident report and forward to the DCPS Risk Management office. A parent should be advised to follow-up with their child’s Primary Care Provider for medical evaluation.

Policies and Guidelines for Handling Body Fluids in School

Publicity about certain diseases such as Hepatitis B and Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome (AIDS) causes concern about the risk of diseases being transmitted in school. There is no evidence that Hepatitis B and AIDS are spread by casual person-to-person contact. However, organisms which cause these, and other diseases, may be present in body fluids such as blood, urine, feces, vomitus, saliva, drainage from sores/cuts, semen, etc. There is only a theoretical potential for the transmission of diseases through casual contact with body fluids of an infected person. Any theoretical transmission would most likely involve exposure of open skin lesions or mucous membranes to blood or other body fluids of an infected person.

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.

The theoretical risk of disease transmission should be considered when coming into close contact with any person’s body fluids. Transmission of disease is more likely to occur from contact with unrecognized carriers than from a person known to be ill because simple precautions are not always taken with a seemingly well person.

Therefore, it is recommended that increased precautions be taken in handling body fluids of any student in any school setting. 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.
• A. Hand washing:

1. 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 warm running water.
   a. Use enough soap to produce lots of lather.
   b. Rub skin against skin to create friction for approximately 30 seconds.
   c. Rinse under running water.
   d. Dry with paper towels.
   e. Keep fingernails short and clean.

2. Examples of when to wash hands:
   a. Before eating and after using the rest room.
   b. Before and after administering first aid or medication to a student.
   c. After contact with another person’s blood, saliva, nasal secretions, or other body fluids.
   d. After disinfecting items or surfaces contaminated by body fluids.
   e. Before and after physical contact with a student.

• B. Use of disposable, non-sterile gloves:

1. 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 (special needs classrooms, etc.).

2. Examples of when to use disposable gloves:
   a. When cleaning up blood spills, vomitus, etc.
   b. When handling cloth, diapers, paper, or surfaces soiled with blood, urine, feces, or vomitus.
   c. When handling clothes soiled by incontinence.
   d. When caring for bleeding, oozing wounds.
   e. When you have cuts or abrasions on your hands.

3. Procedure:
   a. Gloves are non-sterile and are intended to protect your hands.
   b. Removal of gloves must be done carefully to avoid contaminating your hands with the outside of the soiled glove.
   c. Remove gloves last after discarding or disposing of contaminated materials. Follow these steps:
Grasp the top edge of one glove.
Unroll the glove, inside out, over the hand. Discard in a plastic waste bag.
With the bare hand, grasp the opposite glove cuff on the inside surface.
Remove the glove by inverting it over the hand. Discard in a plastic waste bag.
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 catalog. Stock # 6003 is for non-latex medical gloves, large. Stock # 6004 is for non-latex medical gloves, medium. Principals should keep a supply for teachers, school nurses and other school personnel.

For additional information regarding precautions to be taken when handling blood and body fluids, school personnel may refer to the “Guidelines to Prevent Transmission of Infectious Diseases in Schools” (see attachment E-II).

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

Communicable Disease Procedures for Notifying Parents and Taking Other Action

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

- **When signs and symptoms of a communicable disease are observed**, as outlined in the Communicable/Non-Communicable Disease Chart prepared in conjunction with the DOH-Duval it shall be the responsibility of the principal or the principal’s designee to notify the parent(s) of symptoms displayed by the student and take the following action:

1. **NO EXCLUSION from School**
   a. If the symptoms indicate a communicable disease which does not require exclusion in accordance with the guidelines as outlined on the Communicable/Non-Communicable Disease Chart (see attachment E-III), send home with the student at the end of the day: the Report of Medical Symptoms Observed at School form.
   b. Provide the parent with the **Report of Medical Symptoms Observed at School form** (see attachment E-IV) to inform parents of symptoms displayed by the student and to provide a form (bottom half of Report of Medical Symptoms Observed at School), for a parental statement to inform the school of the student’s condition upon return to school.
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 Communicable/Non-Communicable Disease Chart (see attachment E-V), **contact the parent or legal 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 or responsible person designated by the parent.
   - Provide the parent with the **Report of Medical Symptoms Observed at School** form (attachment E-IV).

   b. **Require** that the parental statement on the bottom half of the Report of Medical Symptoms Observed at School is completed and submitted upon the student’s return to school or a **note from the physician or nurse** if their recommendation is required in accordance with the Communicable/Non-Communicable Disease Chart guidelines.

   - When one of the communicable diseases listed below is reported to the school: **Notify the Supervisor of DOH School Health Services** at 904-253-1580. The Supervisor of School Health Services will notify the Department of Health in Duval County Epidemiology Unit and the School Nurse assigned to the school. Principals should feel free to communicate directly with the Department of Health in Duval County Epidemiology Unit at 904-253-1850 if additional information is needed.

     | Disease                          | Disease                          |
     |----------------------------------|----------------------------------|
     | Diphtheria                       | Whooping Cough                   |
     | Mumps                            | Measles-Rubella (German Measles) |
     | Hepatitis                        | Measles-Rubeola (Regular)        |
     | Polio                            | Meningitis (non-viral)           |
     | Tuberculosis                     | Meningococcal Disease            |

   - When one of the reportable diseases listed above (diseases for which parents of classroom contacts are to be notified) is confirmed by DOH-Duval, 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 parents 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-VI).

     2. **Take further action** as directed by the Director of the Department of Health in Duval County.

     3. **Require** that the identified student submit a written statement from the physician giving permission to return to school and stating any restrictions.

   It is recommended that school personnel encourage parents to observe their child daily for signs and symptoms of communicable diseases and notify the school when the child has a communicable disease.
Confidentiality Issues and Students with Communicable Diseases/Chronic Health Conditions

Many times school personnel are placed in the position of answering questions from numerous concerned parents about the spread of a particular disease in the school setting or if a student has a particular 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 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), or Tuberculosis, etc.

Do not release the name of the student with the particular disease to parents, 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. However, in a school setting, there are few cases of other personnel that have a genuine need to know. 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. On medical issues, the School District, with direction from the Health Department, will establish a plan of action based on individual situations.

Additional Documentation Incorporated by Reference

- Biomedical Waste Plan (attachment E-XXXIV)