

COMMUNICABLE DISEASES

Background

The District recognizes that a student infected with HIV (commonly known as AIDS Virus) and HBV (Hepatitis B) has the right to receive an education in the public school system and that a staff member infected with the HIV and HBV has the right to continue his/her employment with the District.

The District also recognizes that it has a responsibility to assure that the public school provides a safe environment for all its students, staff members and public. The District will honour its obligations to all its staff members, which have been defined by law and in Collective Agreements.

Further, the District acknowledges that students and staff members have the right to confidentiality in all health matters related to the HIV and HBV infection.

1. Human Immunodeficiency Virus (AIDS Virus) and Hepatitis B Virus

Human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) and Hepatitis B virus (HBV) are not infections acquired in the workplace under normal circumstances.

2. Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV)

The acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS) is caused by human immunodeficiency virus and is characterized by a breakdown in the body's immune system. The immune system fights off diseases in healthy individuals.

3. Hepatitis B Virus (HBV)

This is one of the many causes of Hepatitis (a liver disease). HBV is transmitted in similar fashion to human immunodeficiency virus (HIV).

4. Transmission of HIV and HBV

Both the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) and Hepatitis B virus (HBV) are transmitted by:

- 4.1 intimate sexual contact
- 4.2 intravenous or intramuscular injection of drugs with a hypodermic contaminated with the blood of an infected person
- 4.3 transfusion of blood or blood products contaminated with the viruses or
- 4.4 from an infected mother to her fetus in utero or to her newborn child.

5. Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS)

In fully developed AIDS, the body's immunity is substantially reduced. "Opportunistic infections" can then gain access to the body causing diseases which may prove fatal.

Individuals with a positive HIV antibody test are probably infected with the virus. A high proportion of persons so infected will develop disease. Accordingly, this administrative procedure refers to individuals who have tested positive for HIV antibodies as well as those with active disease caused by AIDS.

6. Hepatitis B

While Hepatitis B virus (HBV) is transmitted in similar fashion to the HIV, HBV does not attack the immune system but attacks the liver, HBV may cause a mild inapparent infection or can progress to fatal disease.

7. Transmission by Casual Contact

There is no epidemiologic evidence that HIV or HBV are transmitted by casual contact in the work setting.

Fear of AIDS (AIDS-O-PHOBIA) obscures a rational balanced approach to the disease known as AIDS and also impacts on the disease known as Hepatitis B.

The viruses that cause AIDS or Hepatitis B "do not come looking for you, you have to go looking for them".

The spread of these viruses through casual contact in school or social settings is "remote".

8. Education

There is a vaccine available to protect against Hepatitis B. It is recommended for people in high risk situations where exposure to blood or blood products is common. Unfortunately, there is neither a vaccine nor a cure for AIDS.

For AIDS and Hepatitis B, education is the most effective means of preventing the spread of the viruses.

Schools need a well-reasoned set of procedures based on sound medical evidence to effectively deal with students/staff infected with the AIDS (HIV) or Hepatitis B (HBV) viruses. This administrative procedure will ensure infected students/staff are treated justly and are not discriminated against. It will also reduce concerns among the remaining student/staff populations.

9. Note:

This statement was reviewed by the Medical Officer, Dr. M. Arnott, and was based on the most current medical information - June 1989.

Procedures

1. Students with HIV (commonly known as AIDS Virus) and HBV (Hepatitis B)
 - 1.1 A student infected with HIV or HBV shall not be excluded from attending regular classes unless the attending physician or the District Medical Officer advise otherwise in writing.
 - 1.2 Each known HIV or HBV positive student shall be assessed on an individual basis by the attending physician and the District Medical Health Officer, taking into account the student's psychological as well as his/her physical health status. In accordance with Regulation 7 of the Communicable Disease Regulations, the Medical Health Officer has ultimate authority.
 - 1.3 The student is to be closely monitored, on a regular basis, by the parents and the attending physician. Any consideration of removing the student from his/her current school placement must be discussed with the parents, the student's physician, the District Medical Health Officer and designated District officials. The psychosocial benefits of maintaining the student at school, as his/her health status permits, must be considered.
 - 1.4 An uninfected student who has a family member infected with HIV or HBV shall not be excluded from school.

Alternative Education Services

- 1.5 Alternative instruction may include a variety of arrangements ranging from special instruction within the school setting to home tutoring.
- 1.6 Decisions regarding alternative instruction shall be made on a case-by-case basis.
- 1.7 Alternative instruction for students with HIV or HBV shall be provided by teachers who fully understand the situation of a student who has developed AIDS-related illnesses.

Confidentiality

- 1.8 The confidential nature of the students infected with HIV or HBV shall be maintained at all times. Dissemination of any information shall be restricted.
 - 1.9 Designated District officials shall not be informed of the identity of a student infected with HIV or HBV by the District Medical Health Officer until such time as deemed necessary.
 - 1.10 If the District Medical Health Officer deems it necessary to inform designated District officials, a meeting of the Superintendent, Principal, the student's teacher(s), the District Medical Health Officer and the student's parents shall be mandatory to ensure that everyone involved understands the situation and the implications of any action which may be taken.
2. Staff members with HIV (commonly known as AIDS Virus) and HBV (Hepatitis B)
 - 2.1 A staff member infected with HIV or HBV shall not be excluded from his/her employment unless the attending physician or the District Medical Health Officer advise otherwise in writing.

- 2.2 Each staff member infected with HIV or HBV shall be assessed on an individual basis by the attending physician and the District Medical Health Officer, taking into account the staff member's psychological as well as his/her health status. In accordance with Regulation 7 of the Communicable Disease Regulations, the Medical Health Officer has ultimate authority.
- 2.3 A staff member infected with HIV or HBV who becomes too sick to work shall have full access to full benefits as defined under the collective agreements.
- 2.4 An uninfected staff member who has a family member infected with HIV or HBV shall have the right to continue his/her employment.
- 2.5 A staff member infected with HIV or HBV is encouraged to seek counselling, request alternative duties as necessary and additional support from a designated District official.

Confidentiality

- 2.6 The confidential nature of any District personnel infected with HIV or HBV shall be maintained at all times.
- 2.7 Designated District officials shall not be informed by the District Medical Health Officer of a District staff member infected with HIV or HBV unless the staff member's health status indicates consideration of alternative arrangements.
- 2.8 If the District Medical Health Officer decides to inform officials, a meeting of the Superintendent, Principal, the District Medical Health Officer and the staff member shall be mandatory to ensure that everyone involved understands the situation and the implications of any action which may be taken.

3. Education Programs

- 3.1 An information session on the nature, transmission, and prevention of HIV and HBV shall be offered to all staff members.
- 3.2 The District will be responsible for financially supporting educational programs.
- 3.3 Information on HIV (AIDS Virus) and HVB (Hepatitis B) shall be provided as part of the curriculum for all students.
- 3.4 The District will encourage the local Health Unit to provide information on HIV and HBV to all community members.

4. Safety Health Precautions

- 4.1 All staff member shall be given training in safety procedures for all body secretions.
- 4.2 Adequate first aid supplies will be provided, in all District buildings, for the safe handling of all body secretions.
- 4.3 Safety precautions, with appropriate supplies, shall be followed as per the Health Unit's Public Health Precaution Sheet for dealing with patients infected with HIV or HBV.

5. Resource Personnel in the District

- 5.1 Resource personnel, people not in the employment of the District, who indicate that they are infected with HIV or HBV will consult with the District Medical Health Officer.

6. Procedure Review

- 6.1 This administrative procedure will be reviewed in consultation with the employee groups at least semi-annually and revised to reflect new medical information regarding HIV and HBV infection.

Reference: Section 65, 85, School Act
Communicable Disease Regulation