

SCHOOL DISTRICT 82 (COAST MOUNTAINS)

Personnel

3400: HIV/AIDS Infection

Policy

The Board of School Trustees realizes that AIDS is a communicable disease and respects the right of students and employees to be protected. At the same time, the Board recognizes the right of students and employees affected with HIV/AIDS to receive maximum consideration in maintaining a normal educational or work environment.

The Board recognizes the importance of general public awareness and education with respect to HIV/AIDS and supports such initiatives and efforts.

Information

The purpose of this information section is to provide guidance to the public, employees, and the Board, as to an appropriate approach to the problem of HIV/AIDS in School District 82 (Coast Mountains).

Three necessary definitions are:

- M.H.O.: Medical Health Officer
- HIV: Human Immunodeficiency Virus: the AIDS virus
- AIDS: Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome: the destruction of the body's immune system.

HIV/AIDS continues to increase in British Columbia. It seems inevitable that we will have to cope with this virus in the school system.

The AIDS virus (HIV) is transmitted only by sexual contact with an HIV carrier or patients or by the entry of the virus into the body through body fluids such as blood from an individual infected with the virus. Such entry occurs by such means as injections of infected blood (e.g., transfusions, sharing intravenous syringes).

Extensive studies of families of HIV/AIDS victims have now demonstrated that the virus is not easily transmitted even with intimate contact occurring in the family setting, including sharing dishes, kissing, etc. It is for this reason that neither a student or a

teacher infected with HIV needs to be withdrawn from the school system unless they are otherwise ill.

HIV cannot penetrate the intact skin and infect the body. In order for it to enter the body, there must be a break in the skin such as a fresh cut or sore. Body fluids, such as blood, feces, urine, semen, and vomit all may contain HIV and/or a variety of other viruses or bacteria (e.g., Hepatitis B virus). Many such body fluids are encountered frequently in the school system and it is vital that important hygienic procedures be practised in ALL SPILLS of body fluids regardless of whether or not we have HIV/AIDS in the community. It is the intent of this document to encourage the implementation of an adequate standard of normal hygienic practice in schools to prevent not just AIDS, but all potential infections from contact with body fluids.

With respect to HIV/AIDS in the school system, there are four major components that require attention: These are:

1. General Hygiene
2. Employees Diagnosed as Having Aids
3. Students Diagnosed As Having Aids
4. Education

General Hygiene

1. **Handwashing:** It is always important to stress the usefulness of handwashing as a method of avoiding the spread of disease.
2. **Disinfecting soiled objects and surfaces:** Objects or surfaces which are visibly soiled with blood or body fluids (mucus, semen, urine, stool, vomit) of any persons regardless of infection status, should be wiped clean with soap and water and then disinfected with bleach solution.

A freshly prepared 1:10 dilution of household bleach or similar substance in water is recommended as the disinfectant. The person doing the cleaning should wear disposable gloves to avoid exposure of open sores and/or broken mucous membranes to blood/body fluids. Disposable materials such as paper towels should be used. If a mop is used, it should be rinsed in a disinfectant before being used again.

Clothing and linens visibly soiled with blood or body fluids should be rinsed in cold water and then machine washed in hot water and ordinary household laundry detergent. Disposable gloves should be worn by the person washing the clothes. All disposable articles soiled with blood or body fluids should be placed in a plastic bag, closed with a twist tie, and then placed in a regular garbage container.

3. **Administering First Aid:** Preliminary First Aid should be administered. As soon as possible, thereafter, all blood or body fluids should be washed off in hot soapy water. It should be emphasized that careful handwashing is an effective and reliable

precaution. Disposable gloves should be worn, if possible, to avoid exposure to open sores. If blood or body fluids do come into contact with an open sore, it should be washed promptly.

Regulations

Employees and Volunteer Aides

1. Diagnosis
 - a) It is the duty of a teacher, employee, or volunteer aide who suspects that he/she may have HIV/AIDS to obtain a medical opinion as to the state of his/her health because such a person is susceptible to opportunistic infections and may acquire a disease that is contagious and which endangers the health of pupils and colleagues.

2. Disclosure

- a) If there is confirmation of a diagnosis of HIV/AIDS, the Board requires that the employee meet with the Superintendent of Schools.
- b) If a volunteer aide receives confirmation of a diagnosis of HIV/AIDS, the Board requires that the volunteer aide terminate his/her services.
- c) The employee may be accompanied to the meeting with the Superintendent of Schools, if he/she so desires, by a union or association representative.
- d) The Board will not be advised of the name of the employee and the Superintendent of Schools will protect the identity of the employee who has HIV/AIDS and keep the matter confidential.

3. Electing To Continue Working

- a) If an employee, diagnosed as having HIV/AIDS, wishes to continue to work, an assessment will be made by a team consisting of the employee's physician, the Medical Health Officer, and the Superintendent of Schools.

4. Medical Leave

- a) If an employee wants to take medical leave, the employee will have full access to sick leave, long-term disability and medical benefits or whatever other provisions exist for that employee within his or her collective agreement.
- b) If an employee who elected to continue work becomes too ill to continue to do, he/she shall be covered as stated in 4(a).

5. Counselling

- a) Employees diagnosed as having HIV/AIDS will be encouraged to seek counselling to assist in dealing with personal, medical, or financial problems.

Students

1. General

- a) A student in the education system may have become infected through blood transfusion or intravenous drug abuse in the prenatal or perinatal period or through sexual abuse. A student so infected will not transmit the virus except through sexual contact or contact with blood or other body fluids. Hence, there is no reason for such a student to be excluded from school and no special precautions are warranted.
- b) It is important that routine hygienic practices be observed. If the Medical Health Officer is aware of a student's infection, there is no reason that this information should necessarily be transmitted to school officials until such time as the student requires special consideration within the school system.
- c) It will likely be important for the well-being of the student that he/she remain within the school system as long as possible. A student infected with the AIDS virus should not, therefore, be removed from school unless this has been recommended by the attending physician or M.H.O.

2. Communication

- a) Should a teacher or administrator become aware that a student has HIV/AIDS, the teacher or administrator should immediately inform the Medical Health Officer or the Superintendent of Schools.
- b) The Superintendent of Schools will immediately inform the Medical Health Officer and the M.H.O. will convene an assessment team meeting.

3. Assessment Team Meeting

- a) Should a student with HIV/AIDS be reported, an assessment team will be formed to assess the case in relation to education. This team will consist of the Medical Health Officer (Chair), the student's physician, the student's parent or guardian, the Superintendent of Schools or his/her delegate.

4. Regulations

- a) A student with HIV should be allowed to attend school without restriction unless there are significant risks to others from the student's attendance. Restrictions are for specific reasons beyond presence of HIV.
- b) Each student should be assessed individually by the attending physician and the Medical Health Officer. The assessment for attendance should be based on the behaviour, development, and physical condition of the student and the expected type of interaction with others in the setting. Involvement of the parent is essential to ensure that all facts are taken into account and that everyone understands the rationale for the final decision.
- c) In general, school staff need not be informed that a student with HIV is in the school. If, in the opinion of the School Medical Officer and the attending physician, it is necessary to inform the Superintendent of Schools of the student's infection, then the information should be restricted to those officials who "need to know".
- d) The parent must be made aware of the intention to inform and, if possible, should be a participant during the transmission of this information to ensure that everyone involved understands the situation and the implications of any actions which may be taken. The decision to inform is most often required when the student's health status requires consideration of alternative or special educational arrangements.
- e) If the student's health permits and in the absence of special risk factors, the benefits of unrestricted school attendance outweigh the student's risk of acquiring potentially harmful infections in the school setting and the extremely remote risk of transmission of the infection in the school environment. The condition of the student's school program should be recommended if necessary.
- f) An uninfected student who has a family member with HIV should not be excluded from school.
- g) Routine screening of students for HIV infection is not warranted.
- h) Since blood and body fluids may carry various infectious agents, all schools should be encouraged to adopt good hygiene practices for handling environment soiling by blood, urine, stool, vomit or other body fluids. School personnel involved in such cleaning should be taught to avoid exposure of open skin lesions or mucous membranes to blood or body fluids.

5. Education

- a) School District 82 feels that education is the crucial factor in the control of HIV/AIDS and will:

- i) offer students the Provincial Career and Personal Planning Curriculum as approved by the Minister of Education, Skills and Training;
- ii) make all HIV/AIDS related resource materials available to parents and Parent Advisory Councils;
- iii) make school facilities available at no charge to parents and Parent Advisory Councils providing AIDS OR AIDS-related information sessions;
- iv) attempt to update the policy, regulations, and preventative measures on HIV/AIDS to recognize the latest research.