

COMMUNICABLE DISEASE CONTROL POLICY

I. GENERAL PRINCIPLES:

The Sunapee School District will work cooperatively with the New Hampshire Division of Public Health Services to enforce and adhere to the Public Health Code (Chapter He-P 300 Diseases) for the prevention, control, and containment of communicable disease in schools. To insure adherence to current law and medical practices, these policies and administrative regulations will be reviewed annually by a task force appointed by the Superintendent.

II. COMMUNICABLE DISEASES KNOWN TO BE SPREAD BY CASUAL CONTACT

**"Casual contact" is used here to refer to any contact that does not permit the direct exchange of blood into the bloodstream, semen, or vaginal secretion from one person to another. Examples of casual contact are shaking hands, sneezing, coughing, sharing eating utensils, sharing food or beverages, toilet seats, furniture, telephone, office equipment, insect bites.

A. The school nurse has the authority to exclude a student or staff member from school when reliable evidence or information from a qualified source (e.g. medical professional, parent/guardian, or the infected eligible student or staff member) confirms him/her of having a communicable disease or infection that is known to be spread by any form of casual contact and is considered a health risk to the school population. Such a student or staff member shall be excluded unless their physician approves school attendance or the condition is no longer considered contagious.

Attachment #1 contains a list of diseases known to be spread by casual contact and are mandated exclusions from school.

B. Students are expected to be in compliance with the immunization requirements as specified in the New Hampshire Code of Administrative Rules, Chapter He-P 300, Part He-P 301 Communicable Diseases. In compliance with the Public Health Code and Rules students not meeting the immunization requirements may be excluded from school attendance unless they have applied for and met exemption requirements. School officials will cooperate with the New Hampshire State Department of Education in completing and coordinating all immunization data, exemption, and exclusions, including the annual immunization survey, to provide for preventable communicable disease control. For more information please refer to the immunization section of the School Health Services Handbook.

C. The identity of an individual with a communicable disease known to be spread by casual contact shall be disclosed based solely on his/her educational or medical needs.

**For a clearer understanding of the phrase "spread by casual contact" refer to The New England Journal of Medicine, Feb. 6, 1986, p.346: A research study indicating type of contact among 101 household members.

III. COMMUNICABLE DISEASES KNOWN NOT TO BE SPREAD BY CASUAL CONTACT

- A. When reliable evidence of information from a qualified source (e.g. Medical professional, parent/guardian, or the infected eligible student or staff member) confirms that a student/staff member is known to have a communicable disease or infection that is known not to be spread by casual contact (NSCC) (e.g. AIDS/HIV, Hepatitis B, and other like diseases including STDs), the infected student/staff member shall not be excluded from the school setting solely by virtue of having the disease. Students/staff who are infected or perceived to be infected with NSCC shall attend the school and classroom in which they would be assigned if they were not infected. They are entitled to all rights, privileges, and services accorded to other students.

Decisions about any changes in the education program of a student who is infected with NSCC shall be directed by a designated team and made on a case-by-case basis, relying on the best available scientific and medical advice. The team will be comprised of the school nurse, the infected person, his or her personal physician, and the student's parent or guardian.

B. NON-DISCRIMINATION:

There shall be no discrimination in employment based on having NSCC infection. No school employee shall be terminated, non-renewed, demoted, suspended, transferred, or subjected to adverse action based solely on the fact that he or she is infected with NSCC or is perceived to be infected. School employees who are unable to perform their duties due to illness, such as those related to NSCC, shall retain eligibility for all benefits that are provided for other school employees with long-term diseases or disabling conditions.

C. EDUCATION:

The School District shall establish a program of on-going education about NSCC for students and all school employees, including full-time, part-time, and temporary professional and support staff, to ensure that all are informed in a consistent manner about:

1. The nature of NSCC infection, including how it is and is not transmitted according to current scientific evidence. All employees should receive information on administering basic first aid and handling of body fluids. Demonstration combined with practice is the best way to teach employees and students how to safely administer first aid in a manner which will prevent the transmission of infectious diseases and how to clean up body fluids. All staff should be trained, particularly staff members who interact with students on the playground, on the school bus, and in the athletic setting. First aid kits containing the necessary materials to provide care to the injured person and protection to the caregiver should be available in all areas where injuries, accidents, and medical emergencies are likely to occur (e.g., classroom, playground, school bus, gym, athletic field).
2. School district policies and procedures related to employees and students with diseases such as NSCC infection.
3. Resources within the school district and elsewhere for obtaining additional information or assistance.
4. Procedures for infection control.

D. CONFIDENTIALITY:

The identity of an individual shall be disclosed based solely on his/her medical and/or educational needs. The school nurse shall be designated the "designee" within a local district to be notified that a student or staff member is infected with NSCC. The designee, along with the infected person, his/her personal physician, and a student's parent or guardian, shall determine whether further action is medically or educationally warranted at this time. These decision makers, if so warranted, shall

determine whether additional persons need to know that an infected person attends or works within the district. These additional persons shall not be told the name of the infected person without the written consent of the infected person and the student's parents/guardians.

A staff member informed of the identity or presence of an NSCC student or staff member shall not divulge information about, knowledge of, or the identity of the NSCC person. All persons privileged with any medical information that pertains to students or staff members shall be informed of their legal obligation and liability and are required to treat all proceedings, discussions and documents as confidential information. There are serious penalties for violating New Hampshire State Law and federal laws that protect the confidentiality of health records. Any written information about a student's NSCC status shall be kept in a secure location separate from the student's academic records.

E. **TESTING:**

There is no medical reason for routine testing of students or school staff for evidence of NSCC infection. Therefore, mandatory screening for NSCC infections shall not be a condition for school entry or attendance or for employment or continued employment. Information shall be made available to staff members and students regarding where they can obtain counseling and testing services should they feel that they are at risk.

F. **EVALUATING NSCC INFECTION:**

NSCC infection is not known to put the remaining school population at risk. Therefore, it is not, in itself, a reason to remove a student or staff member from school or school activities or to alter the educational program or job assignment of the infected person.

The school nurse shall annually reevaluate all NSCC persons. Reevaluation may be scheduled more frequently if educational or medical needs warrant it. Based upon periodic reevaluations, an individually-tailored plan for student/staff members shall be undertaken. If an individually-tailored plan is necessary, it shall be medically, legally, educationally, and ethically sound.

G. **INFECTION CONTROL:**

All body fluids of all persons may transmit various infections. Some infections such as Hepatitis B and HIV are transmitted via sexual fluids and blood. Many other infections such as colds, influenza, Hepatitis A, and cytomegalovirus are transmitted via other body fluids such as nasal discharge, saliva, vomitus, feces, and urine. In order to prevent the greatest number of infections, BODY SUBSTANCE PRECAUTIONS shall be utilized. Body Substance Precautions require that no one shall clean up fluids with bare hands; instead, paper towels and latex gloves shall be utilized to create a protective barrier. (see Attachment #2 regarding hand washing cleaning and decontaminating blood spills, laundry, infective waste, and bleeding injuries.)

A blood exposure is defined as contact with blood through a per cutaneous exposure (e.g., needlestick) or contact with an open wound, non-intact skin or mucous membrane (e.g., splattering of blood into mouth or eyes). A student/staff member with true exposure shall be referred immediately to a private physician or an AIDS testing site to obtain serological testing and counseling regarding post-exposure prophylaxis according to the current recommendations of the U.S. Public Health Service. AIDS Hotline: 1-800-752-AIDS. (See attachment #3)

Infection control also relates to medical equipment and procedures in the school setting. Schools accommodate children who have a variety of medical conditions. If school staff members have been asked to perform medical procedures for students, such as giving injections, cleaning tracheal tubes, and applying catheters, they shall be given adequate training in the use of equipment and infection control procedures.

IV. REPORTING REQUIREMENTS (ALL CASUAL & NON-CASUAL CONTACT COMMUNICABLE DISEASES).

All reportable communicable diseases will be referred to the NH Division of Public Health Services. The list of reportable communicable diseases is contained in attachment #4.

It is the responsibility of the physician or other health care provider assessing or diagnosing a communicable/infectious disease to report this information. However, if it becomes known to the school nurse that these reporting requirements have not been fulfilled, it is his/her responsibility to do so.

If a staff member is told confidential information about a child or a school employee, the informant should be made aware of the district's reporting requirements. The staff member must then contact the school nurse. The school nurse is then responsible for reporting this information to the Bureau of Disease Control, if he/she believes the infected person has a reportable communicable disease

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