

Life-Threatening Communicable Diseases

Definitions

- *AIDS* – Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome.
- *HIV Infection* – refers to the disease caused by the HIV or human immunodeficiency virus.
- *Infectious agent*—Any organism, such as a virus, bacterium, fungus or parasite, that is capable of being communicated by invasion and multiplication in body tissues and capable of causing disease.
- *Life-threatening communicable disease* – An illness which is capable of being spread to a susceptible host through the direct or indirect transmission of an infectious agent or its toxic product by an infected person, animal or arthropod, or through the inanimate environment, from which the likelihood of death or permanent disability is probable unless the illness or condition caused by the illness is interrupted.
- *Outbreak*—An unusual increase in the number of cases of a disease, infection or condition, whether reportable or not as a single case, above the number of cases that a person required to report would expect to see in a particular geographic area or among a subset of persons (defined by a specific demographic or other features).

Education

1. The District shall provide a curriculum that is age appropriate and consistent with the latest factual information relevant to the nature life-threatening communicable diseases, the methods of transmission, and the methods of prevention.

The Administration will provide appropriate information and materials on the health education program to any parent/guardian who requests it.

2. HIV/AIDS.
 - a. As part of its commitment to the provision of curriculum pertaining to life-threatening and communicable diseases, the District shall ensure that such curriculum covers HIV/AIDS, in full compliance with 22 Pa. Code § 4.29.
 - b. A student shall be excused from instruction pertaining to HIV/AIDS and other life-threatening communicable diseases when the instruction conflicts with the religious beliefs or principles of the student or parent or guardian of the student

and when excusal is requested in writing. Curricular materials, if practical, shall be made available for home instruction use by a parent or guardian of a student excused from HIV/AIDS instruction.

- c. Parents have the option to decide if their child shall participate in this curriculum. If not, alternate health assignments will be provided.
3. Designated staff shall receive information regarding relevant medical regulations and universal precautions developed by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and/or other health authorities to be followed to minimize exposure to life-threatening communicable diseases both inside and outside the school setting.
4. The District will provide all staff members with education and training that is current and appropriate to their job functions. This education and training will cover both knowledge of the disease and information needed to implement the District's policies on controlling infections.

Confidentiality of Information

1. Confidentiality of all testing, test results, health care, counseling, social work, records and all other information relating to student or employee exposure or infection shall be maintained at all times in accordance with Pa. Act 148. (A copy of Act 148 will be kept on file in the administration office for reference). All persons shall be required to preserve the confidentiality of information disclosed to them, regardless of whether the general public may already have gained information through other sources. Any employee who disseminates in any manner confidential information in violation of this Policy or in violation of the Pa. Act 148 will be subject to discipline.
2. Except as otherwise required by law or as expressly set forth in this Policy, prior to the release of any test results, health records or any other information relating to a student or employee's infection or exposure to life-threatening communicable diseases in a manner that identifies the student, the District shall obtain consent from the employee, parents of the minor student, or the student if the student has attained the age of majority. Said consent shall be in writing and shall, at a minimum, identify with specificity the information subject to release, the person or persons to whom the information may be released, the general purpose for the release, and the date upon which consent will expire.
3. The school physician and the District solicitor may be consulted regarding accommodations and adaptations within the school setting and with respect to further Policy developments and implementation. School officials shall only be involved on a "need to know" basis.

4. Should employees or students with a compromised immune system or life-threatening and communicable disease voluntarily share this information, the confidentiality of the individual shall be protected and maintained by all staff members. No information regarding the identity or medical condition of the person infected shall be provided except with the person's consent as stated above. Failure to maintain confidentiality shall be considered a violation of this Policy and may result in disciplinary action in accordance with state and federal law.

Exception to Confidentiality of Information

In the event of an outbreak of a life-threatening communicable disease or infectious agent, the District may need to timely share information about the outbreak with other government agencies and within the school community. The confidentiality of individuals shall still be maintained to the highest degree possible.

For example, if there is an outbreak of potentially life-threatening communicable disease, the District shall be allowed to notify members of the school community that someone with whom they had been in contact tested positive for a life-threatening communicable disease. While such notification necessarily requires the disclosure of information regarding an individual's infection or exposure, the individual shall not be specifically named, and the District shall take all reasonable measures to prevent the derivative disclosure of that individual's identity. This exception would not apply to HIV/AIDS or any other life-threatening communicable disease that is not transmitted casually and does not of itself provide reason to remove an individual from the school setting.

The procedures for sharing such information shall be in line with the standards set forth in the Infection Control section of this Policy and in accordance with state and federal law.

Attendance and Employment

General provisions

1. When a student or staff member with a life-threatening communicable disease is identified, and the proper consent is given by the employee or the student or their parent/guardian, the Superintendent or designee may, at their discretion, convene and chair a committee comprising the Director of Safety and Student Services or the administrator responsible for personnel as the case may be, the school principal, a District-designated physician knowledgeable in the area of /life- threatening communicable diseases, the District solicitor or other legal counsel, and a physician selected by the student or staff member to recommend the most appropriate and least restrictive school environment for the student or employee.
2. This committee shall review all of the information pertinent to the individual's situation. They shall assess whether the current mode of instruction and the classroom setting for

the infected student, or job assignment and responsibilities in the case of an employee, are appropriate for that individual in terms of current and ongoing needs.

3. In making its assessment, the committee shall consider the following factors:
 - (a) the physical condition of the individual and any behavior or neurological development which might significantly increase the risk of transmission of infection or might significantly affect that individual's performance;
 - (b) probable patterns of interaction with others in the school setting;
 - (c) the risks and benefits to both the infected individual and to others in the school or employment setting;
 - (d) such other relevant information it deems necessary to carry out its responsibilities;
 - (e) maintenance of the confidentiality of the individual.
4. The committee's assessment and recommendations, together with the reasons therefore, shall be submitted to the Superintendent, who shall promptly notify the employee or the parents or guardian of the student of such assessment and recommendations. Should the infected employee or the parents or guardian of the infected student disagree with the committee's recommendations or the Superintendent's action on those recommendations, the employee, parents, or guardian may appeal such action to the Board of School Directors. Any appeal and related hearings shall be conducted in Executive Session.
5. If it is determined that a student's current instructional placement is no longer appropriate, an alternative educational program shall be provided. In addition, if appropriate, a referral to the Multi-Disciplinary Team shall be made for the purpose of assessing the student's educational needs and developing an individualized educational program (IEP) for the student.
6. If it is determined that an employee is unable to fulfill assigned job duties and responsibilities because of illness related to a life-threatening communicable disease, the District shall attempt to accommodate such employee's condition by offering a suitable job assignment.

Specific provisions regarding HIV/AIDS

1. Medical guidelines established by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention indicate HIV infection is not transmitted casually and does not of itself provide reason to remove a student or employee from the school setting or to be subjected to any form of discrimination. If there is a secondary infection that constitutes a medically recognized risk of transmission to others (pneumonia, tuberculosis, etc.), the procedures that shall be followed are governed by regulations established by the Pennsylvania Department of Health and generally accepted medical practice.
2. No staff member or student entering the District shall be requested to submit proof of infection status of HIV/AIDS.
3. If it is determined that an employee is unable to fulfill assigned job duties and responsibilities because of illness related to HIV, the District shall attempt to accommodate such employee's condition by offering a suitable job assignment.

Infection Control

1. The District shall inform all employees of universal precautions for the control of infectious disease which shall comply with the regulations and guidelines established by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the Pennsylvania Department of Health, the Pennsylvania Department of Education, and other identified health authorities.
2. The District shall provide staff members with all materials necessary for compliance with these procedures.
3. The District shall communicate the procedures used to deal with infectious disease control with employees.
4. The nurse in each building shall be responsible for maintaining a sufficient supply of materials to carry out these procedures over the course of the school year.
5. In the event of an outbreak of life-threatening communicable disease, the District may revise these procedures to comply with updated regulations and guidelines from the authorities listed above.

Counseling and Testing

1. The Director of Safety and Student Services shall maintain a list of agencies that provide testing, counseling, and education relevant to life-threatening and communicable diseases. This information shall be readily available to all students and employees.
2. The District shall work with outside agencies and with the medical insurance groups covering District employees to ensure adequate life-threatening communicable disease counseling services are available to all employees.

Notification and Media Inquiries

The community shall also be informed of this Policy and the procedures to be followed. Students shall receive applicable information through the health curriculum at all levels.

Any inquiries from the public or media regarding life threatening communicable diseases shall be handled by the Superintendent or Superintendent's designee.

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