

BLOOD BORNE INFECTIONS

The Board of Trustees of the Portage la Prairie School Division recognized its responsibility to staff and students in ensuring their safety from blood borne infections such as Hepatitis (Hep B and Hep C) and Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV). They also recognize an individual's right to privacy regarding information about their personal health.

In balancing the risk involved to staff and students and their individual right to privacy, the following action will be taken:

1. Information and training on blood borne infections and the proper handling of blood and body fluids will be provided to all employees emphasizing the importance of following the routine precautions. All contact with blood and body fluids should be viewed routinely as having the potential for causing an infection. This practice should apply regardless of whether infected individuals with a blood borne disease are involved.
2. Education programming for students will be provided based on curriculum materials developed by Manitoba Education.
3. In accordance with current legislation, employees' and students' rights to privacy regarding their personal health information will be respected.
4. The policy and procedures of the Division with respect to blood borne infections will be based upon the most current available medical knowledge.
5. Parents and staff will be encouraged to share any health care information with appropriate school personnel to ensure the health and safety of all students and staff involved.
6. In evaluating new information, the Division will maintain liaison with the local Medical Officer of Health or designate.

A. STUDENTS

The Board believes that for most school aged children with blood borne infections, the benefits of an unrestricted educational setting outweighs the risks of them transmitting the disease through casual contact. Consequently, the Board believes that these students should attend school in an unrestricted setting unless, in the opinion of the student's physician and the Medical Officer of Health, there are special circumstances that would necessitate some restrictions. The assessment for attendance or restrictions should be based on the behaviour, development and physical condition of the student and the expected type of interaction with others in the education setting.

In compliance with current legislation regarding the confidentiality of this information, the Division, in consultation with the student's parent(s)/guardian(s), the student's physician and/or the Medical Officer of Health shall determine which other persons should have the information to ensure the proper care and support of the infected person.

Any restrictions to a student's educational setting or attendance will ultimately be the decision of the Division. Such a decision shall be made subject to consultation with the student's physician and/or the Medical Officer of Health and following consultation with the student's parent(s)/guardian(s).

Where the physical condition or behaviour of the infected requires alternative arrangements for instruction, they will be provided.

Decisions regarding the alternative arrangements for instruction shall be determined on a case-by-case basis by the Division.

A review of the student's medical condition shall occur in consultation with the family physician whenever a significant change in the student's physical condition or behaviour occurs.

B. EMPLOYEES

An employee who has become infected with a blood borne disease is encouraged to report the diagnosis of this condition to the Superintendent.

In compliance with current legislation regarding a person's right to privacy, the Superintendent, subject to consultation with the employee's doctor and/or Medical Officer of Health, shall determine which other person should have the information to ensure proper care and support of the infected person. A meeting of the Superintendent, the employee, the employee's physician and the Medical Officer of Health may be held to ensure that everyone involved understands the situation and the implications of any actions that may be taken. The infected employee may be accompanied at the meeting by a union or association or other representative if he/she so desires.

An employee infected by a blood borne disease shall have the right to maintain his/her regularly assigned position unless, because of the employee's physical condition or behaviour, there is a risk to the infected person or the employee is no longer able to physically perform his/her duties. When reasonable cause prevails, the Superintendent shall have the authority to reassign the employee to a more suitable employment position, subject to consultation with the physician of the infected employee, public health personnel, Division personnel and the employee. All regular employee benefits such as sick leave provisions, salary continuance and long-term disability shall apply.

Release of Information

In accordance with the provision of this policy, the Superintendent and/or Chairperson of the Board shall be responsible for responding to any inquiries or requests for information from individuals, school communities or the media, related to the handling of specific cases of blood borne infections.

Adopted: October 13, 1988

Revised: March 24, 2005