

<b>PROCEDURE 164</b>	
<b>Adopted</b>	November 28, 2000
<b>Last Revised</b>	October 2021
<b>Review Date</b>	October 2026

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## **MANAGEMENT OF COMMUNICABLE AND INFECTIOUS DISEASE**

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### **1) PURPOSE**

Hastings and Prince Edward District School Board (HPEDSB) promotes responsibility for wellness as a means of enhancing a caring, safe and healthy workplace and learning environment. Issues relating to communicable and infectious disease will be addressed in a caring and respectful manner consistent with the legal requirements of the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Education, and HPEDSB administrative procedures.

HPEDSB recognizes its obligation to develop and maintain a consistent approach to the management of communicable disease in the school and workplace. The principal and all department supervisors are responsible for implementing HPEDSB administrative procedures related to communicable and infectious disease and for promoting employee awareness.

### **2) GUIDING PRINCIPLES**

- a) HPEDSB has a moral and ethical responsibility to respond to communicable and infectious disease in a caring and respectful way for students, employees and communities.
- b) Principals/supervisors and employees will help protect students and employees from infectious disease and, in the case of the person with the infection, from fear and discrimination.
- c) The right of an individual to confidentiality must be respected. The needs and wishes of employees, students and others within the community must also be considered to allow for the highest degree of safety and security possible.
- d) Principals, supervisors and employees of schools and buildings shall take appropriate action when dealing with an individual who has or may have a communicable infectious disease.

### **3) EDUCATION ABOUT DISEASES**

- a) Education for the employees, students and community members shall be provided as deemed necessary by the principal/supervisor in consultation with the Medical Officer of Health or designate. Employees shall be responsible for being informed about relevant diseases and for adhering to all administrative procedures of HPEDSB.
- b) Infectious and communicable diseases can be transmitted by blood borne, air borne or body fluid exchange. Therefore, appropriate standards of hygiene shall be encouraged at all times.
- c) Teachers shall include hand washing skills and routines in their program and encourage hand washing in their learning environments.

**4) THE MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH**

- a) If symptoms develop in a student or employee that could signal a potential reportable infectious disease, that student or employee shall be referred to the principal or their supervisor for further clarification of the person's status and a decision as to the appropriate course of action. A principal is required to report suspected infectious diseases to the Medical Officer of Health and notify the appropriate superintendent.
- b) It is the responsibility of the Medical Officer of Health to assess each referral of a reportable infectious disease according to current Ontario Regulations under the *Health Protection and Promotion Act 1983*, and to determine whether the student or employee will be permitted to attend school or the workplace.
- c) If the Medical Officer of Health notifies school authorities that a student or employee has a reportable infectious disease, then every effort shall be made to involve, as appropriate, parents or guardians, the attending physician or health unit representative and the principal in the discussion so that a plan can be developed to meet the needs of the student or staff member.
- d) Students who have reached the age of 18 years will be treated as adults. Information concerning such an individual will only be shared with the student's consent unless, in the opinion of the Medical Officer of Health, the student is not likely or has refused to comply with directions given by the Medical Officer of Health.

**5) RIGHT TO STUDY OR WORK**

- a) The fact that a student has an infectious disease is not grounds for expulsion. The employment of an employee cannot be terminated because they have an infectious disease.
- b) An employee cannot refuse to work with an individual with a reportable infectious communicable disease because of that fact alone, as long as the person has been allowed into the school or workplace by the Medical Officer of Health.
- c) Infected students or employees may continue to study or work as long as they are approved to do so by the Medical Officer of Health.
- d) As long as the individual is able to perform the essential duties of his or her studies or job, the management approach shall be the same as with any other individual.
- e) Efforts shall be made to adjust requirements to accommodate the individual, in accordance with applicable law.
- f) In the rare situation where it is determined by the Medical Officer of Health that an individual with an infectious disease may pose a risk to others, it is appropriate to seek to balance their rights with the rights of others to a safe environment. Consideration shall be given to changing the learning or working environment where there is evidence that the individual cannot fulfill his or her responsibilities or is a risk to others.

**6) GUIDELINES**

The director of education instructs school principals and department supervisors to follow these guidelines:

- a) Principals and department supervisors should refer parents and members of the community to Hastings Prince Edward Public Health for the most current information about infectious and communicable disease. List of reportable diseases in Ontario.

- b) Principals, supervisors and employees should indicate to parents, employees, students or members of the community who ask questions about possible infected individuals that they are not at liberty to discuss the infection in relation to specific individuals because of the right of individuals to confidentiality in health matters.
- c) Principals and supervisors should indicate to parents or others their willingness to share information and curriculum materials related to the infection in order to assist in their understanding, and to provide them with a copy of this administrative procedure to assist in their awareness of HPEDSB procedures.
- d) Visitors that come into HPEDSB schools and buildings for many reasons are to be informed, if relevant, by the principal or supervisor of this administrative procedure. Visitors are expected to meet the same procedural requirements for hygiene and confidentiality when dealing with students and employees.
- e) Principals and department supervisors should refer parents, employees or members of the community to the school group superintendent or immediate supervisor if they continue to have unresolved questions and concerns.

#### 7) **PREVENTIVE MEASURES EDUCATION**

- a) Education is essential to prevent the spread of infections and to assist people in making responsible and informed decisions about matters relating to their health and well-being.
- b) The district shall make available to all employees a copy of this administrative procedure and will provide ongoing information and assistance to enable everyone associated with the school system to deal with problems which may arise concerning specific infectious diseases. Students and/or parents may obtain a copy on request.
- c) It is the intent of HPEDSB, through the implementation of this administrative procedure, to encourage appropriate responses relating to communicable and infectious disease.

#### 8) **IMMUNIZATION**

- a) HPEDSB will follow the direction of the Ministry of Health and Medical Officer of Health where vaccines are available for protection against communicable and infectious diseases.

#### 9) **ENVIRONMENTAL PRECAUTIONS**

- a) Since blood and body fluids can carry other infections as well as blood borne infections, employees and students must take adequate steps to protect themselves when handling these potentially infectious materials.
- b) **The measures described in this procedure must be followed in ALL INSTANCES.**
- c) Routine adoption of these universal precautions promotes familiarity and ensures that appropriate hygienic precautions have been taken in the event that a first-aid victim is subsequently discovered to carry a blood borne infection.
- d) Recommended precautions must be followed, regardless of an individual's vaccination status.

#### 10) **GENERAL MEASURES**

- a) A basic kit which contains the following items shall be available in each classroom and workplace:
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- i) disposable (nitrile) gloves (contact the district Health and Safety Officer for other product options);
  - ii) disposable absorbent materials; and
  - iii) plastic garbage bags and ties.
- b) Cuts, sores and wounds will be washed well with soap and water and covered.
- c) **Disposable (nitrile) gloves must be worn when there is exposure to blood or body fluids.**
- d) **Hands must be washed immediately** after contact with blood or body fluids. Abrasive soaps and the use of brushes which may cause breaks in the skin should be avoided. **Proper technique requires washing with liquid soap under running water for a minimum of 20 seconds, followed by rinsing and thorough drying.**
- e) Individuals who have had direct contact with potentially infectious materials through their mouth, eyes or broken skin, are advised to rinse the area gently and contact the family doctor.
- f) Disposable, absorbent material, such as paper towels, should be placed on blood or body fluids immediately.
- g) Surfaces and equipment which are contaminated with blood or body fluids shall be cleaned using a solution of 1 part (hydrogen peroxide based cleaner) (6% concentrate) to 9 parts water. The disinfectant shall be left on the treated area for 20 minutes and then removed with water. **The 10% solution of disinfectant and water must be prepared fresh each time.**
- h) Contaminated materials must be double bagged and disposed of immediately. Sufficient tissue should be placed in the outer bag to absorb any liquid, if the inner bag ruptures.

#### 11) SPECIFIC MEASURES FOR EMPLOYEES AND STUDENTS

- a) To date there have been no reports of persons becoming infected with infectious diseases such as blood borne infection in the school or work setting if no other risk factors, as previously identified, are present. Skin contact with blood or blood-contaminated body fluids of blood borne infection carriers or individuals is very unlikely to spread the infection, although it is possible in theory. For this reason, employees and students must be familiar with procedures for personal care, first aid, and other situations where contact with blood is likely. Strict hygiene measures must be followed.
- b) These specific measures represent the ideal procedure for handling ALL blood or body fluid spills. However, in emergency situations care of the injured is of paramount importance, and common sense must prevail.
  - i) **Disposable (nitrile) gloves must** be worn when there is exposure to blood, or to body fluids which may contain blood.
  - ii) Surfaces soiled with blood or body fluids (floor, toilet seats, desks) are to be **wiped or scraped clean and washed thoroughly with detergent and water.**
  - iii) **These surfaces shall also be disinfected** following the directions provided in section 10.7 above. Mops will be rinsed in disinfectant after use.
  - iv) If any custodial materials or equipment are used during the absence of the custodian, care must be taken to inform the custodian upon his or her return to the school.

- v) Disposable items (gloves, paper towels, sanitary napkins) will be double bagged and disposed of with regular garbage.
- vi) Clothing soiled with blood will be double bagged and sent home.
- vii) **Hands must be thoroughly washed after contact with blood or other body fluids, even though gloves have been used.**

## 12) RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CPR

- a) There is only theoretical risk of contracting these infections through blood contact when administering cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR). It is recommended that a barrier mask be used when administering CPR. If no mask is available, then CPR can be administered without the breath, using only chest compressions.
- b) In an emergency situation, the remote possibility of the rescuer's contracting blood borne infections would be far outweighed by the likelihood of permanent injury or death of an unconscious patient who is not resuscitated.

## 13) HUMAN BITES CAUSING BLEEDING

- a) If a child or employee is bitten and there is bleeding, the main concern is infection. All pertinent recommendations for strict hygiene and contact with a family health care provider must be followed.
- b) Wash the wound with soap and water immediately, allowing the wound to bleed freely.
- c) In the case of a child, the principal will notify the parents or guardians to seek medical advice as soon as possible. Immunization status will need to be assessed.
- d) The principal will inform parents or guardians of all children involved of what action has been taken.
- e) The principal will inform parents that there is an extremely low risk of transmission of Hepatitis B, Hepatitis C, or HIV from human bites. Parents may wish to discuss the need for testing with their doctor.
- f) If an employee is bitten, inform the employee of the need to seek medical advice as soon as possible. Immunization status will need to be assessed.
- g) The principal, parent/guardian, employee or physician may contact the Health Unit for further information.

## 14) FIFTH DISEASE

- a) According to the National Centre for Disease Control, Fifth Disease is a mild rash that occurs most commonly in children. The child typically has a bright red rash on the face and a lacy red rash on the trunk and limbs.
- b) The principal will notify all staff members of the potential exposure risk through an email indicating there is a confirmed case of Fifth Disease in the school.
- c) The principal will give to staff and send home the Fifth Disease Information Sheet.

- d) The principal will add a web and voice announcement on SmartFind Express to alert any occasional or casual staff.
- e) The principal will post a sign on the entrance door indicating there is a confirmed case of Fifth Disease as well as at the sign-in book near the front door. Principals at secondary schools should also post signs at all key access doors. A sample sign is attached as Appendix A. This sign may be removed after 20 days of no new confirmed cases.
- f) Pregnant employees should consult with their physician immediately about possible exposure as well as to determine their level of immunity. Immunity to the disease and recent infection is determined by a blood test.
- g) If there is a confirmed case of Fifth Disease at their school, the principal should contact the Wellness Officer for further instructions regarding pregnant employees.

**Contacts for Questions Related to Health**

Hastings Prince Edward Public Health

179 North Park Street, Belleville Ontario. Telephone: 613-966-5500

- Medical Officer of Health
- Infectious and Communicable Disease Intake Line, ext. 349
- Public Health nursing staff

**Legal references**

- *Education Act*, section 265 Duties of Principal: Report to Medical Officer of Health
- *Health Protection and Promotion Act 1983*: Ontario Regulation 559/91 Specification of Reportable Diseases
- *Ontario Occupational Health and Safety Act*
- *Immunization of School Pupils Act*
- Ontario Regulation 645—General, Record of Immunization
- *Ontario Human Rights Code*
- *Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*

**District references**

- Administrative Procedure 149 - Safety and Well-Being of Students and Staff
- Administrative Procedure 162 - Treatment of Injured/Ill Students and Staff Members
- Administrative Procedure 164A - Infection Prevention and Control: Routine Practices
- Administrative Procedure 420 - Occupational Health and Safety

**Resources**

Hastings Prince Edward Public Health Infection Control in Schools

# ***ATTENTION***

**VISITORS, STAFF AND STUDENTS**

**THERE HAS BEEN AN OUTBREAK OF**

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**PLEASE SEE THE OFFICE  
SHOULD YOU HAVE ANY  
QUESTIONS OR CONCERNS**