



PROCEDURE

HS-003

COMMUNICABLE DISEASES

Superintendent Responsible: Superintendent of Human Resources	Initial Effective Date: 2021/11/22
Last Updated: 2023/12/20	Next Review Date: 2027/12/20

Purpose:

To outline the measures that need to be taken to prevent and reduce the transmission of communicable diseases.

Guiding Principles:

- 1.0 This applies to all communicable diseases which include, but are not limited to, influenza, Parvovirus B-19 (fifth disease), measles, mumps, chickenpox, Covid-19 (Coronavirus), Hand, Foot and Mouth.
- 2.0 The best protection against outbreaks of infectious diseases is frequent and thorough hand washing techniques with water and soap. Where waste and body fluids are a potential risk, strict adherence to guidelines including gloves and hand washing techniques are required.
- 3.0 Employees with communicable diseases are considered to have a medical disability and are protected by the *Ontario Human Rights Code*. They will be treated fairly and equitably and in a manner that respects their privacy and dignity in the workplace. These employees will be given the opportunity to remain in their position(s) provided they are physically and mentally able to meet appropriate performance standards, and providing that their presence does not pose a safety or health hazard to themselves or others. Confidentiality of an employee's medical information will be maintained.
- 4.0 Preventing exposure to infectious and communicable disease is a shared responsibility of all employees. Routine precautions should be used whenever employees have contact with blood or body fluids at work.
- 5.0 Immunization is an important step in the fight against illness. It stimulates the body's own immune system to produce antibodies so if an exposure occurs years later, the immune system response is activated to prevent viral or bacterial infection. Immunization begins in early infancy and continues throughout life. Having up-to-date immunization is the best protection against infectious diseases.

6.0 Communicable Diseases

6.1 Varicella (Chickenpox)

Chickenpox is a contagious rash and is caused by a virus called varicella zoster. The infection is usually mild in children. Chickenpox is most common in the late winter and early spring. Chickenpox is reportable to the local Health Unit and employees can return to work as soon as they are feeling well enough to participate in regular activities.

Should a diagnosed case of chickenpox occur in a school, the Administrator(s)/immediate Supervisor(s) are to contact the Superintendent of Human Resources or the Health and Disability Officer.

6.2 Influenza and COVID-19

An annual influenza and COVID-19 vaccine is suggested.

6.2 Tetanus

Employee(s) are encouraged to maintain their immunization at a current status. Boosters will be given by a health care provider when the employee's last recorded shot was ten or more years prior, or the employee(s) is uncertain.

6.3 Conjunctivitis (Pink Eye)

Employee(s) with conjunctivitis should seek direction from their medical practitioner regarding their ability to be at work. If bacterial, person can return after 24 hours of appropriate antibiotic treatment.

6.4 Measles, Mumps and Rubella (MMR)

Employee(s) born before 1970 are considered immune while those born after 1970 should receive one dose of MMR. Should a diagnosed case of rubella occur in a school, the Administrator(s)/immediate Supervisor(s) are to contact the Superintendent of Human Resources or the Health and Disability Officer.

6.5 Parvovirus B-19 (Fifth disease)

Fifth disease or Parvovirus B-19 is a common viral infection associated with fever and a distinctive rash. Outbreaks of fifth disease can occur at any time of the year, but most often occur in winter and spring.

Should a diagnosed case of Parvovirus B-19 (Fifth disease) occur in a school, the Administrator(s)/immediate Supervisor(s) are to contact the Superintendent of Human Resources or the Health and Disability Officer.

7.0 Employees with a Communicable Disease

- 7.1 Administrator(s)/immediate Supervisor(s) have a duty to report diseases to the Medical Officer of Health of the Health Unit in which the school is located. Administrator(s)/immediate Supervisor(s) should be familiar with the list of reportable diseases maintained by the area Health Units (see Appendix B). In addition, Health Units can also provide information regarding the conditions/diseases that require children to be excluded from attending school.
- 7.2 Pregnant employees or those who are trying to become pregnant should know their health history. Several childhood diseases can potentially harm the unborn child and the parent if they are not immune. These diseases include: chickenpox or shingles, cytomegalovirus, fifth disease and rubella. Prior to pregnancy, or as soon as possible if the pregnancy is not planned, the employee should talk to their health care provider about any necessary precautions.
- 7.3 Employees with a communicable disease who pose a risk of transmission to students or other employees will remain off work and provide a medical certificate for their absence in accordance with the Board's Health and Disability Management process and return to work when they no longer pose a risk of transmission.
- 7.4 Employees who are placed in quarantine by the Medical Officer of Health will remain off work until cleared by the Ministry of Health (MOH).

References:

- Blood-borne Infections Procedure (HS-009)
- Employee Injury Report and Investigation Procedure (HS-006)
- Pediculosis (Head Lice) Procedure (SO-041)
- Ontario Human Rights Code
- Reportable Diseases of Public Health Significance
- Exclusion Criteria for Infectious Diseases

Appendix A

This letter is to be printed on school letterhead and distributed to all families of the school when there is a confirmed case of either fifth disease or chickenpox. Please insert the name of the confirmed disease in the three blanks.

Date

Dear Parent(s)/Caregiver(s):

We have recently had a diagnosed case of _____ at the school.

If you suspect that your child may have _____, please make an appointment with your doctor for medical confirmation. If medically confirmed, please notify the school.

Children with _____ may attend school if they are feeling well enough to take part in activities.

If you have any questions, please contact your doctor or your local Health Unit.

Administrator

REPORTABLE DISEASES AND EXCLUSION CRITERIA

[Reportable Diseases of Public Health Significance](#)

[Exclusion Criteria for Infectious Disease](#)