

AIDS POLICY

INTRODUCTION:

The acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS) is caused by a virus that is commonly referred to as the Human Immunodeficiency Virus. Researchers have identified a variety of strains of the virus with each having a specific identification label. However, for the purpose of this policy, the term the AIDS virus will be used.

This policy has been developed to protect and safeguard the health and well-being of the students and employees of this division, including those persons who are known to be infected with the AIDS virus. Also, this policy is designed to be sensitive to the needs of non-infected and infected students and employees. The Seven Oaks School Board promotes an attitude of assistance, understanding and support for students and employees who are known to be infected with the AIDS virus.

In developing this policy, a number of assumptions based on a thorough review of current medical information have been made. These assumptions include the following:

1. The AIDS virus is transmitted primarily through sexual contact, sharing contaminated needles or syringes, through transfusion of contaminated blood or blood products, or from infected mother to child during pregnancy, childbirth or breast feeding.
2. Having documented the ways in which AIDS is transmitted, we know that schools provide one of the very safest environments in our society for those who are not infected. Not one case of AIDS is known to have been transmitted in a school. AIDS is **not** spread through the kind of casual contact people have with each other, such as hugging, touching or sharing meals and bathrooms. This is supported by long-term studies of family members of both adults and children with AIDS. Not one household member has become infected through routine, non-sexual contact with a family member with AIDS.
3. An AIDS viral infection may weaken or destroy the infected individual's immune system, thereby increasing the infected person's susceptibility to all infectious diseases. This susceptibility can best be determined by a medical assessment.
4. An infected employee or the parent* of an infected student has the right to make

decisions about the notification and dissemination of information regarding the infected person's personal health status. This process of notification is appropriate given the mode of transmission for the AIDS virus as compared to other reportable communicable diseases.

- * For the sake of brevity, the term "parent" is used throughout this policy to refer to responsibilities which also apply to guardians or to students if over the age of 18.

1.0 AIDS EDUCATION

Information on the nature, transmission and prevention of AIDS shall be provided for students and employees of the Seven Oaks School Division. This information shall be age-appropriate, developmental, sequential and promote positive health practices.

- 1.1 Implementation of AIDS Education instruction shall be based on the guidelines approved by the Minister of Education and adapted to accommodate the needs of the students and employees of the division.
- 1.2 Where curriculum materials for AIDS Education exist that have been approved by the Minister of Education, these shall form the base for school level instruction. Such materials shall be adapted to meet the needs of the students. Appropriate supplemental resources shall be used to augment the provincial curriculum materials.
- 1.3 Where there are no curriculum materials for AIDS Education that have the approval of the Minister of Education, students shall receive information based on facts. Appropriate instructional resources can be used to meet the needs of the students.
- 1.4 The prime responsibility for education on sexual issues, including AIDS Education, rests with the family. Parents must be notified by the local school before a child begins receiving instruction about AIDS. Parents retain the right to withdraw their child from classes dealing with this subject.
- 1.5 All employees shall be instructed on the nature, transmission and prevention of AIDS.

2.0 INFECTED STUDENTS

The identity of a student infected with the AIDS virus shall be safeguarded.

- 2.1 The parent of a student infected with the AIDS virus, in consultation with a family physician, may choose to inform the Superintendent. The Superintendent will facilitate the provision of any special educational services the student may require.
- 2.2 The Superintendent is not bound to report his or her knowledge of an infected student to the Board of Trustees.
- 2.3 An employee who is informed in confidence of the health status of a student infected with the AIDS virus shall maintain that confidence at all times. There shall be no release of information without prior written consent from the parent. In the event that information shall be released, the Superintendent will be responsible for the release of all information.
- 2.4 The student's parent, in consultation with a family physician and the Superintendent, may invite other people to participate in discussions about the education of the student. It is recommended that the regional medical officer be included, with the parent's consent, as early as possible in the consultation process. Inclusion of a teacher is recommended in the consultation process.
- 2.5 Dissemination of any information regarding the infected student shall be restricted to those persons who have been identified as requiring the information to assure proper care and support for the infected student and to identify situations where the potential for transmission may increase. The Superintendent, in consultation with the student's parent and a family physician, shall determine who shall be informed.

3.0 REGULAR CLASS ATTENDANCE BY INFECTED STUDENTS

A student infected with the AIDS virus shall have the right to attend regular classes.

- 3.1 Those informed by the parent of the student's status (see guidelines 2.4 and 2.5) should participate in an assessment of the student's physical and psychological health status, to identify factors affecting the student's educational experience. Each individual case shall be judged on its own merit and consideration should be given to the psycho-social benefit of maintaining the student at school, as his or her health status permits. Also, consideration shall be given to the over-all well-being of all persons at the school including the infected student.

- 3.2 A review of the instructional arrangements on a case by case basis shall occur at least every three months.

4.0 ALTERNATIVE ARRANGEMENTS FOR INFECTED STUDENTS

Where alternative arrangements are required for instruction of a student infected with the AIDS virus, those arrangements should be recommended by the persons identified in guidelines 2.4 and 2.5 to the Superintendent of the school division. Alternative arrangements may be put into place immediately in response to the needs of the infected child.

- 4.1 Alternative arrangements may include a variety of settings ranging from special instruction within the school to home tutoring.
- 4.2 Decisions regarding alternative educational arrangements shall be made on a case by case basis.
- 4.3 A review of the instructional arrangements on a case by case basis shall occur at least every three months.

5.0 INFECTED EMPLOYEES

The identity of a division employee infected with the AIDS virus shall be safe-guarded.

- 5.1 The employee infected with the AIDS virus, in consultation with a family physician, may choose to inform the Superintendent.
- 5.2 The Superintendent is not bound to report his or her knowledge of an infected employee to the Board of Trustees.
- 5.3 An employee who is informed in confidence of the health status of an employee infected with the AIDS virus shall maintain that confidence at all times. There shall be no release of information without prior written consent from the employee. In the event that information shall be released, the Superintendent will be responsible for the release of all information.
- 5.4 The employee, in consultation with a family physician and the Superintendent, may invite other people to participate in discussions about the employment assignment of the employee. It is recommended that the regional medical officer be included, with the employee's consent, as early as possible in the consultation process.

- 5.5 Dissemination of any information regarding the infected employee shall be restricted to those persons who have been identified as requiring the information to assure proper care and support for the infected employee and to identify situations where the potential for transmission may increase.

6.0 EMPLOYMENT PLACEMENT OF INFECTED EMPLOYEES

Employees infected with the AIDS virus shall have the right to continue their employment with the Division. Consideration should be given to the advisability of the employee continuing in his or her current work assignment.

- 6.1 Where an employee with an AIDS-related illness is no longer able to work, full access shall be provided to all benefits as described in applicable collective and legislative agreements.

7.0 ROUTINE HYGIENE PROCEDURES - AIDS

This Division shall adopt routine hygiene procedures based on the Provincial Interim Guidelines for Schools and Day Care for handling blood or body fluids regardless of whether persons who are known to be infected with the AIDS virus are in attendance.

8.0 POLICY REVIEW

This policy shall be reviewed and revised annually and/or as required to reflect new medical information regarding AIDS virus infections.

- 8.1 The Superintendent shall bring to the attention of the Seven Oaks School Board for consideration, without delay, any new information which may have implications for changes to this policy.

9.0 OPERATIONAL GUIDELINES

The routine hygiene procedures to be followed include:

a) Disinfection of soiled materials:

Objects or surfaces that are visibly soiled with blood or other body fluids (regardless of whether persons who are known to be infected with the AIDS virus are in attendance) should be wiped clean with soap and water and then disinfected with a freshly prepared bleach solution*. The person doing the cleaning should wear disposable gloves and use disposable materials such as paper towels. If a mop is used it should be rinsed in disinfectant before further use. Clothing and linens that are visibly soiled with blood or other body fluids should be rinsed in cold water and then machine-washed in hot water with normal laundry detergent.

Disposable gloves should be worn by the person rinsing and washing the items. All disposable articles that are soiled should be placed in a plastic bag which should be closed with a twist tie and then placed in a regular garbage container.

b) First Aid:

Preliminary first aid should be administered, then as soon as possible, all blood and body fluids should be washed off with hot soapy water. Careful hand washing should be emphasized as an effective and reliable precaution.

Disposable gloves should be worn if possible to avoid exposure of open sores or broken mucous membranes. If an open sore does come in contact with blood or other body fluids it should be promptly washed.

* Bleach Solution: the most commonly recommended disinfectant is a 0.5% sodium hypochlorite solution which can be prepared by mixing household chlorine bleach (5.25%) - one part bleach to nine parts water. It must be prepared fresh daily. This solution is corrosive and must be used with caution on metal surfaces.