

Communicable Diseases, Illnesses and Infections Policy

Policy Overview

This policy outlines the responsibilities of principals, school staff, and parent(s)/guardian(s) for reporting communicable diseases, illnesses and infections and the role the Nova Scotia Health Authority plays in monitoring and guiding schools related to these conditions.

Table of Contents

- 1.0 Legislative Context
- 2.0 Principles
- 3.0 Authorization
- 4.0 Policy Review

Policy and Procedures History

- Policy approved September 28, 2011
- Policy revised March 21, 2018
- Procedures approved September 28, 2011
- Procedures revised March 21, 2018

1.0 Legislative Context

1.1 The Halifax Regional School Board is committed to ensuring the *Communicable Diseases, Illness and Infections Policy* is in accordance with the following:

- 1.1.1 *Education Act*
- 1.1.2 *Health Protection Act*
- 1.1.3 *C.009 Administration of Medication to Students by School Personnel Policy*
- 1.1.4 *Nova Scotia Communicable Disease Control Manual*

2.0 Principles

2.1 Communicable diseases, illnesses and infections may affect students or school staff. These diseases, illnesses and infections can be transferred to others and could be life-threatening.

Communicable Diseases, Illnesses and Infections Policy

Approved: September 28, 2011

Revised: March 21, 2018

- 2.2 Students who are diagnosed with a communicable disease, illness or infection may be absent from school.
- 2.3 The confidentiality and dignity of students diagnosed with a communicable disease, illness or infection will be respected.
- 2.4 The Halifax Regional School Board will collaborate and take advice regarding communicable diseases, illnesses and infections from the Public Health Services Team within the Nova Scotia Health Authority.

3.0 Authorization

- 3.1 The Superintendent is authorized to develop and implement procedures in support of this policy.

4.0 Policy Review

- 4.1 This policy will be reviewed by the Superintendent every year and by the Governing Board every five (5) years or on an as needed basis.

Communicable Diseases, Illnesses and Infections Procedures

Table of Contents

- 1.0 Principal Responsibilities**
- 2.0 School Staff Responsibilities**
- 3.0 Parent(s)/Guardian(s) Responsibilities**
- 4.0 Recommended Absence from School**

1.0 Principal Responsibilities

1.1 The principal shall:

- 1.1.1 Notify Public Health Services when aware that a student has been diagnosed with a communicable disease, illness or infection; identifiable under the *Health Protection Act*.
- 1.1.2 Notify Public Health Services if 10% or more of the students are absent from school due to illness;
- 1.1.3 Contact parent(s)/guardian(s) if it is suspected that a student is exhibiting symptoms of a communicable disease, illness or infection;
- 1.1.4 Collaborate with Public Health Services regarding student immunizations;
- 1.1.5 Distribute communicable disease, illness or infection information sheets and/or letters home only under the direction of Public Health Services in the Nova Scotia Health Authority;
- 1.1.6 Ensure school staff is aware of this policy.

2.0 School Staff Responsibilities

2.1 School staff shall:

- 2.1.1 Notify the principal if they are aware that a student has been diagnosed with a communicable disease, illness or infection; as outlined here:
https://novascotia.ca/dhw/cdpc/documents/06026_ItsTheLawPoster_En.pdf

Communicable Diseases, Illnesses and Infections Procedures

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- 2.1.2 Promote with students the importance of regularly washing hands with soap and water as it the most effective way to prevent communicable diseases, illnesses and infections from spreading;
- 2.1.3 Exercise sensitivity and confidentiality when a student is diagnosed with a communicable disease, illness or infection;
- 2.1.4 Distribute communicable disease, illness or infection information sheets and/or letters home only when directed to do so by the principal;
- 2.1.5 Contact Public Health Services in the Nova Scotia Health Authority with questions regarding communicable diseases, illnesses or infections.

3.0 Parent(s)/Guardian(s) Responsibilities

- 3.1 Parent(s)/guardian(s) shall:
 - 3.1.1 Notify the principal if their child has been diagnosed with a communicable disease, illness or infection that might put others at risk;
 - 3.1.2 Promote proper hand washing techniques with their child;
 - 3.1.3 Contact the Nova Scotia Health Authority with any questions regarding communicable diseases, illnesses or infections.

4.0 Recommended Absence from School

- 4.1 The following are recommended timelines from Public Health Services in the Nova Scotia Health Authority indicating when students may be absent from school as a result of having a communicable disease, illness or infection:

Disease/Illness/Infection diagnosed by a physician	Recommended timelines
Conjunctivitis (Pink Eye)	Student may return to school when free of symptoms.
Fifth Disease	Student may attend school.
Hand, foot and mouth disease	Student may attend school.
Hepatitis A	Student may return to school two weeks after onset of symptoms.
Hepatitis B	Student may attend school.
Hepatitis C	Student may attend school.
HIV/AIDS	Student may attend school.
Impetigo	Student may return to school twenty four hours after treatment has been initiated.

Communicable Diseases, Illnesses and Infections Procedures

Approved: September 28, 2011

Revised: March 21, 2018

Influenza	Student may return to school when symptoms have improved.
Meningitis-Bacterial	Student may return to school after having completed antibiotic treatment.
Meningitis-Viral	Student may attend school.
Mononucleosis (Infectious)	Student may attend school.
Mumps	Student may return to school five days from the time of onset.
Roseola	Student may return to school when rash is no longer apparent.
Rubeola (Measles)	Student may return to school five days after onset of rash.
Rubella (German Measles)	Student may return to school seven days after the onset of rash.
Pertussis (Whooping Cough)	Student may return to school five days after starting antibiotics or if no antibiotics are given, three weeks after onset of symptoms.
Ringworm	Student may return to school after treatment is initiated.
Scabies	Student may return to school after treatment is completed.
Strep Throat	Student may return to school twenty four hours after onset of treatment.
Varicella-Zoster (Chicken Pox)	Student may return to school five days after onset of rash or when all lesions are crusted over.

Communicable Diseases, Illnesses and Infections Procedures

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