

# Communicable Disease Administrative Procedure

When implementing Board Policy 3417, the District shall routinely follow these procedures unless otherwise directed by public officials and medical communities including the local health department.

## Prevention

Prevention, whenever possible and by using current evidence based medical practices, is paramount in controlling the spread of communicable diseases in the school setting. The school district will employ procedures to reduce communicable illness transmission including enforcing immunization regulations ([Policy 3413](#)) and consistent health practices that discourage the spread of communicable illnesses.

Staff are to utilize practices outlined in [Board Policy 5230 Prevention of Disease Transmission](#) and the [Blood Borne Pathogen Administrative Procedure](#) including universal/standard precautions, handwashing, cleaning of bodily fluids, reporting staff occupational exposures and reporting student exposures to another person's bodily fluid when known and occurring in the school setting.

Students are encouraged and allowed to wash their hands using soap and water during the school day particularly after using the bathroom and prior to eating. When water and soap hand washing are not available, hand sanitizer may be substituted when hands are not visibly soiled. Students should not have access to hand sanitizer when not being supervised by staff.

Staff will endeavor to practice and model "respiratory etiquette" and to encourage students to practice. Respiratory etiquette means measures to reduce the spread of germs related to coughing and sneezing.

- Coughing and sneezing into a disposable tissue whenever possible.
  - Dispose the tissue promptly into a wastebasket.
  - Wash hands with soap and water for 20 seconds or if unable to do so, use hand sanitizer for 20 seconds. ( Hand sanitizer must have alcohol content of  $\geq 60\%$ )
- Coughing and sneezing into clothing (shoulder/elbow) to prevent germs from becoming airborne.
- Avoiding touching the mouth, nose or eyes with unclean hands as this introduces germs into the respiratory system.
- Practice physical distancing when a person has coughing or sneezing by being a minimum of 3 to 6 feet from other people.
  - Staff and students should consider staying home when coughing and sneezing is excessive and cannot be readily contained from others.

Staff are encouraged to use sanitizing wipes daily or more frequently as needed on common surfaces such as door knobs and desks in classrooms, especially during times of increased communicable diseases such as colds.

## Identification

Not all illnesses or symptoms of potential illness require exclusion from school. When in question, staff and parents may directly consult [Communicable Disease: A Guide for Schools in Montana](#). A paper copy is available to staff in the school office or school nurse office. Staff may consult the school nurse for

further assistance or questions. The school nurse may use additional evidence based and most current resources, including consulting with the local health department when needed. The District may be directed to enact more stringent exclusion criteria and preventative measures in times of disease outbreaks that would supersede usual exclusion criteria or other procedures.

## Reporting

If a student or a staff member develops symptoms of any reportable communicable or infectious illness as defined by [ARM 37.114.203](#) while at school, the responsible school officials shall do the following:

1. Isolate the child or staff member immediately from other children.
2. Notify the school nurse, who may further determine the likelihood of a reportable disease and further action needed.
  - a. When a reportable communicable or infectious illness as defined by [ARM 37.114.203](#) is suspected, the school nurse, or the designated staff member, must inform the parent or guardian as soon as possible about the illness and request him or her to pick up the child.
  - b. The school nurse must report the case to the local health officer pursuant to 37-2-301, MCA.
3. Maintain confidentiality as per FERPA guidelines.

## Isolation

Isolation in the school setting means the sick person is far enough away from others that droplets from their coughing or sneezing do not land on other people. At minimum this has meant 3-6 feet away from all other people.

## Disinfection of Isolation Areas

Staff need to ensure appropriate disinfection of areas used to isolate ill students. Staff should do the following:

- Disinfect chairs, cots and other touched surfaces with disinfecting wipes after the ill person has exited the area and before another person sits or lays down in that area.
- Do not allow the sick person to use a shared phone. If the ill person did use a shared phone, immediately disinfect the phone.
- Use pillows only if absolutely needed and only if using a disposable pillow cover unless the pillow is made with a cleanable surface. Replace the disposable cover immediately after use or wipe cleanable pillow with disinfecting wipe.
- Do not use blankets unless you immediately segregate then launder the blanket prior to reuse.

## Blood Borne Pathogens

Blood borne communicable diseases such as HIV, Hepatitis B and Hepatitis C would not typically present with symptoms at school and therefore not be reported by school staff as defined by [ARM 37.114.203](#). Transmission of blood borne diseases is not likely in the school setting when using universal/standard precautions. Staff, who may be informed (e.g. by parent or student) that a student has a blood borne pathogen disease, must maintain confidentiality per FERPA regulations. Staff may consult the nursing

supervisor for further advice and do not necessarily need to identify the student name to the nursing supervisor. The nursing supervisor, in turn, may consult the student's health care provider (with written permission) or the local health department should a secondary infection be of concern or other extenuating circumstances are present. In all instances, FERPA shall be maintained and rarely, if ever, should staff be informed of a student's blood borne pathogen disease status by the District.

## Exclusion and re-admittance

Staff will follow exclusion criteria set forth in Communicable Disease: A Guide for Schools in Montana or otherwise as directed by the child's health care provider, local health department or other public officials. Students may be re-admitted as set forth in the Communicable Disease: A Guide for Schools in Montana, which generally is when exclusion criteria are resolved. Typically, a healthcare provider statement is not required. Schools should consult their school nurse for questions.

### References:

1. 37.114.101, et seq., ARM Communicable Disease Control
2. 37.111.825, ARM Health Supervision and Maintenance
3. Montana Department of Health and Human Services. 2018. Communicable disease: a guide for schools in Montana. Retrieved on December 4, 2019 from [https://dphhs.mt.gov/Portals/85/publichealth/documents/CDEpi/CDGuideforSchools2018\\_Final.pdf](https://dphhs.mt.gov/Portals/85/publichealth/documents/CDEpi/CDGuideforSchools2018_Final.pdf)

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