

PURPOSE

To outline the strategies and actions that schools are required to take to prevent the transmission of an infectious disease or control transmission of an infectious disease when a case/s is identified.

SCOPE

- Primary responsibility for the prevention and control of infectious diseases lies with individuals, families and public health authorities.
- Schools are not expected to provide expert advice or treat students, which is the role of medical practitioners and health authorities.
- As of December 2019 changes to the Public Health and Wellbeing Regulations (the Regulations) mean primary schools and children's services are **no longer required to notify the Department of Health and Human Services** if a child at their school has an confirmed infectious disease.
- A person in charge of a primary school must not allow a child to attend the school in accordance with the Public Health and Wellbeing Regulations 2019 (the Regulations), if they have been informed the child is infected with, or been in contact with a person with an infectious disease/condition listed in the Regulations; where that condition requires exclusion. Diseases and exclusion periods are listed in the Department of Health and Human Services school exclusion table.
- As of December 2019 changes to the Regulations mean failure of a person in charge of a primary school to exclude a child with, or exposed to, a specified infectious disease from a primary school, in accordance with the Regulations, may result in an infringement penalty. An existing court penalty also remains.
- Schools have a legal responsibility to help manage infectious diseases in their facilities and have an important role to play in supporting prevention and control of disease transmission.

POLICY

Schools have a legal responsibility to help manage infectious diseases in their facilities. Schools also have an important role to play in supporting the prevention and control of transmission of infectious diseases through:

- abiding by legislated requirements for school exclusion, infectious disease notification and immunisation status recording
- supporting the personal hygiene routines of students, for example, provision of hand hygiene facilities
- ensuring procedures are in place to safely manage the handling of spills of blood and other body fluids or substances.

Definitions

Hand hygiene is a general term referring to any action of hand cleansing. It includes hand washing with soap and water and using antimicrobial hand rubs (for example, an alcohol-based hand rub). For more detailed information about hand hygiene, see: Personal Hygiene in Related policies

Infectious diseases are diseases caused by pathogenic microorganisms, such as bacteria, viruses, parasites or fungi; the diseases can be spread, directly or indirectly, from one person to another.

Respiratory hygiene or **cough etiquette** are terms used to describe infection prevention measures. Practices include:

- covering the mouth and nose when coughing or sneezing
- using tissues and disposing of them appropriately
- attending to hand hygiene immediately after coughing, sneezing or blowing nose.

Standard precautions are the minimum infection prevention and control practices that must be used at all times for all people in all situations. The use of standard precautions aims to minimise and, where possible, eliminate the risk of transmission of infection.

Prevention of infectious diseases

The following table outlines the strategies and actions that schools are required to take to prevent the transmission of an infectious disease.

Strategy	Action
Support for immunisation programs	Schools have a role in helping health authorities and families prevent and control infectious diseases through the support of immunisation programs and through recording the immunisation status of each student . For more information, see the Immunisation policy.
Standard precautions	Staff and students should treat all blood and other body fluids or substances as being potentially infectious and practice standard precautions whenever dealing with them. Standard precautions include: hand hygiene, for more information, see the Personal Hygiene policy the use of personal protective equipment (for example, gloves and masks) safe handling and disposal of 'sharps', for more information, see the Syringe Disposals and Injuries policy respiratory hygiene.

RELATED POLICIES AND RESOURCES

- [Personal Hygiene](#) Policy
- [Immunisation](#) Policy
- [Syringe Disposals and Injuries](#) Policy
- First Aid Policy
- Health Care Needs Policy

ENDORSEMENT

This policy was ratified by School Council on 22nd May 2020.

REVIEW PERIOD

This policy is scheduled for review in May 2023.