



Huron-Superior Catholic

DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

PROCEDURAL GUIDELINES INFECTIOUS DISEASE PREVENTION

Infectious disease control and prevention is a priority across the Huron-Superior Catholic District School Board. The board recognizes the unique risks and challenges that infectious diseases present and the following preventative measures are put into place to create safe environments to learn and work.

Public Health Ontario states that infectious diseases are caused by bacteria, viruses, parasites or fungi and can be spread from the environment or from one person to another resulting in illness in the community. Transmission of infectious diseases can occur through contact with infected individuals or their bodily fluids or by contact with contaminated surfaces or objects. Examples of infectious diseases that may circulate in a workplace include the common cold, seasonal influenza, norovirus-like illnesses, chickenpox, and COVID-19.

Infectious diseases are most commonly spread from an infected person through:

- Respiratory droplets, particles or aerosols when a person coughs or sneezes.
- Close personal contact, such as touching or shaking hands.
- Touching something contaminated with virus, bacteria, parasites or fungi and then touching your eyes, nose, or mouth before washing your hands.

Blood-borne infections such as Hepatitis and Human Immunodeficiency Virus are very rare in children and the risk for transmission in school settings is extremely low. Refer to the section below on Blood-borne Infectious Disease Prevention Measures for more specific information.

General Infectious Disease Prevention Measures

Stay Home If Sick

Staff and students are advised to stay home from work, school and errands when sick. This will help prevent others from catching your illness. Avoid close contact with people who are sick.

Hand Hygiene

Hand washing, when done correctly, is the single most effective way to prevent the spread of diseases. Follow these steps to wash your hands and get rid of germs: Wet hands, Soap and Lather for 20 seconds, Rinse, Dry (either single-use disposable paper towel or hand dryer), and if using a paper towel, use it to turn off the tap. If hands are not visibly dirty, alcohol hand sanitizer containing a minimum of 70% alcohol is a good alternative. Refer to these short Public Health Ontario videos for detailed instructions on [How to Hand Wash](#) and [How to Hand Rub](#).

Respiratory Etiquette

All staff, students and visitors within a school or workplace should practice proper [respiratory etiquette](#). This includes covering coughs and sneezes with their elbow or a single use tissue, appropriate disposal of any used tissues into garbage bins and practicing proper hand hygiene afterwards.

General Cleaning/Disinfecting of the Worksite

Schools and worksites will be cleaned and disinfected as outlined in the HSCDSB Basic Cleaning Schedules for Elementary and Secondary schools and the Caretaker Duties while Classes are in Session. Copies of these schedules are available in each school and they are in compliance with the most recent guidance from our local health units and the Ministry of Education.

Ventilation and HVAC Maintenance

Heating, Ventilation, and Air Conditioning Systems (HVAC Systems) are regularly maintained by the Plant Department. The ASHRAE guidelines are routinely checked for operational updates and adjustments are implemented as needed. These guidelines include the following recommendations:

- Increased run-times for ventilated spaces – starting two hours prior to occupancy and run two hours past end of occupancy (when practical).
- Maximized the amount of outdoor air supplied within the capacity of the heating systems.
- Filtered the air with MERV-13 filters wherever the ventilation equipment allows it.
- Provided maximum possible occupant control over rooms by ensuring windows and any venting louvres (if applicable) are functional and operating.

Additionally, HEPA units have been provided for any areas without mechanical ventilation, Kindergarten rooms, classrooms with high enrolment, resource rooms and office areas.

Blood-Borne Disease Prevention Measures

It is important to assume that all blood is potentially infectious and follow [Routine Practices](#) (previously known as Universal Precautions) (Appendix 3) when coming into contact with blood or body fluids (e.g., urine, feces, nasal secretions, vomitus). Universal Precautions should be used whenever administering first aid or cleaning spills of blood or body fluids. The 4 key components of Universal Precautions are hand hygiene, protective barriers (e.g., personal protective equipment), cleaning and disinfection of potentially contaminated surfaces and safe handling/disposal of potentially contaminated material.

Becoming Sick at School or Work

Students or staff who develop symptoms of infectious disease (e.g., chickenpox, flu, COVID-19) during the school day should be separated from others and arrange to go home. The sick individual should be encouraged to put on a mask, practice hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette. Refer to [Appendix 1](#) for a list of common infectious diseases and their requirements for exclusion from school and to [Appendix 2](#) for COVID specific exclusion information.

Reportable Diseases

In accordance with the Education Act, 1990, principals have a duty to report promptly to the medical officer of health when they have reason to suspect the existence of any communicable disease (suspect or confirm) in the school. Refer to [Ontario Regulation 135/18: Designation of Diseases](#), under the Health Protection and Promotion Act, for a list of communicable diseases that must be reported to public health. Refer to [Algoma Public Health](#), [Public Health Sudbury and District](#) and [Porcupine Health Unit](#) for more detailed information. The principal of the school shall submit any reports, as required, to their local public health unit.

Education

Recognizing that education has a vital role to play in the prevention of transmission of infectious diseases, students will receive age appropriate and curriculum-based education about infection control. Employees will be provided with training in infection control, as outlined in our board's Health and Safety policies and procedures.

Confidentiality and Privacy

The Huron-Superior Catholic District School Board will make every effort to provide a safe environment for students, employees and visitors. According to the Personal Health Information Protection Act (PHIPA) and the Municipality Freedom of Information Act (MFIPA) providing confidentiality to the student or employee infected with an infectious disease will be fully enforced.