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January 13, 2003
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Contact Person: Executive Director of Learning Supports (Supervisor of Health Services)

POLICY 420 COMMUNICABLE DISEASES

I. PURPOSE

To promote and protect the health and safety of our students and staff by implementing guidelines for communicable disease prevention and education. This Policy is intended to provide guidance for district staff members, reassurance to families and the community, and support for persons with communicable diseases including but not limited to HIV / AIDS.

II. GENERAL STATEMENT OF POLICY

- A. Utilizing guidelines established by agencies responsible for establishing policies related to communicable disease, including the Minnesota Department of Health and the Centers for Disease Control, students and staff will be allowed to participate in the school setting.
- B. If the health status of a student deteriorates enough to interfere with their ability to attend school, the District may request a licensed health care provider's exam to establish the safety and appropriateness of attending school.
- C. If the health status of an employee deteriorates to the extent that it interferes with their ability to attend work, the District, as governed by applicable law, may require a licensed health care provider's exam in order to establish whether the employee is fit for duty.
- D. Health data relating to students is private data and as such will not be released without permission of the student's parent or guardian, if the student is under 18 years of age, or if over 18 years of age by the student, or as otherwise allowed by law. (MN Statute 13.32, Subd.2)
- E. Health data related to employees is private data and as such will not be released except where allowed by law. (MN Statute 13.43, Subd.2)

III. DEFINITIONS:

Communicable Disease: disease due to an infectious agent that may be transmitted directly or indirectly from one individual to another; examples of communicable diseases include hepatitis, tuberculosis, and human immunodeficiency virus.

Standard Precautions: infection control methods that define all body fluids and substances as infectious.

Universal Precautions: infection control methods that treat all human blood as if known to be infectious with a blood borne pathogen.

Blood Borne Pathogen: infectious organism that lives in the bloodstream including, but not limited to, human immunodeficiency virus, hepatitis B and hepatitis C.

Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS): disease caused by infection with human immunodeficiency virus; AIDS affects the immune system and causes persons to be vulnerable to infections.

Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV): virus that causes acquired immune deficiency syndrome; persons with HIV may be asymptomatic for extended periods of time, often years.

Personal Protective Equipment: materials provided for staff that minimize exposure to potentially infectious substances or environmental hazards; may include but not limited to gloves, aprons, or face shields.

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REGULATION 420 COMMUNICABLE DISEASES

- I. The following areas will be addressed in this regulation:
1. School Attendance
 2. Employment
 3. Privacy Issues
 4. Infection Control
 5. Communicable Disease and Extracurricular Activities
 6. Communicable Disease Prevention Education
 7. Information and Resources
 8. Staff Development

- II. Background information on Communicable Diseases in the school setting.

The risk of transmitting blood-borne pathogens, including hepatitis B, hepatitis C, or HIV, is extremely low in school settings when Standard Precautions to prevent disease transmission are followed. Standard Precautions dictate that all blood and body fluids be handled as though they are infectious. Staff in the school setting need information about the appropriate measures to take when coming in contact with blood or body fluids.

Young persons engaging in high-risk behaviors such as unprotected sexual activity are at risk of becoming infected with HIV as well as other sexually transmitted diseases, and education remains the major tool for fighting the spread of such diseases. The district has a critical role to play in providing accurate up to date information regarding prevention of HIV and sexually transmitted infections. Minnesota statute 121A.23, Subdivision 1 mandates that schools provide this education.

A. School Attendance

A student with a communicable disease has the same right to attend school and receive services as any other student, and is subject to the same school policies. School guidelines for communicable disease exclusion will follow recommendations from local, state and federal agencies that address communicable disease standards.

When indicated, the educational placement of a student with a communicable disease will be determined by school authorities following established procedures for students with disabilities. The Executive Director of Student Services or his/her designee will involve the student's family and licensed health care provider in this process. The most appropriate environment for the student will be recommended. Federal guidelines for the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) will be complied with, and school accommodations made as needed.

Staff members will maintain a respectful school climate and disallow any physical or verbal harassment of an individual with a communicable disease, or anyone associating with a person or persons with a communicable disease.

B. Employment

It is the policy of the District that staff with communicable diseases will not be excluded from attending to their employment so long as the staff is physically, mentally and emotionally able to safely perform their assigned tasks and their attendance at work does not create a risk of transmission of the illness to students, staff, or others in the District. In the event the District can take reasonable steps to reduce the risk of transmission of the disease, such steps will be undertaken.

C. Privacy

No information regarding an individual's communicable disease status will be divulged to any individual or organization except where allowed or required by law.

Health records and documents that reference the communicable disease status of a student or staff will be kept in a secure location. Information regarding communicable disease status will not be added to the minor student's permanent education record without the written consent of the parent or guardian, or to the adult student's permanent education record without the student's written consent. (See Policy 515, Data Privacy for Student Educational Records)

D. Infection Control

The District will operate according to the standards promoted by the U.S. Occupational Health and Safety Administration for the prevention of bloodborne infections. All staff will consistently follow infection control guidelines to prevent bloodborne pathogen exposure at all times. Personal protective equipment will be supplied by the district in order for the staff to meet infection control standards. Concerns regarding unsafe practices will be reported to the Health and Safety Director or Health Service Supervisor.

In the event of a District staff member's communicable disease exposure, staff will be directed to their private physician or the Occupational Medicine Clinic. The staff will complete an accident investigation report and forward it to the Human Resources Department.

E. Communicable Disease and Extracurricular Activities

Following the guidelines established by the Centers for Disease Control and Minnesota Department of Health, students with a communicable disease may participate in physical education classes, athletic programs, organized sports, and school sponsored activities. Reasonable accommodations will be made to allow students with communicable diseases to participate in these activities.

F. District Athletic Programs

Infection control guidelines will be adhered to in all locker rooms and athletic settings. Personal protective equipment will be available as needed at athletic events.

The Director of Athletics will ensure that all physical education and athletic program staff complete an approved first aid and injury prevention course that includes infection control guidelines. Student athletes will be provided with guidelines to assist them to avoid exposure to blood-borne pathogens as well as other communicable diseases.

G. Communicable Disease Prevention Education

In accordance with Minnesota Statute 121 A.23, the school district will develop a comprehensive education plan to prevent communicable diseases, including HIV. Components of the program will include the following:

- Age appropriate information from kindergarten through 12th grade.
- Knowledge building from year to year.
- Accurate information sharing.
- School health curriculum plan.
- Involvement of parents/ guardians.
- Sensitivity to the student's cultural background, developmental level, and behaviors.
- Consistency with community standards.

Parents and guardians will have the opportunity to preview all communicable disease curricula and materials.

The District will cooperate with community communicable disease prevention efforts that address high-risk youth.

H. Information and Resources

Students and staff will be provided with information to assist them in obtaining confidential care regarding communicable disease education and services. Administration will provide such information without breaking confidentiality standards. Current information regarding communicable diseases will be available through the District Health Office.

I. Staff Development

All staff will be trained with current information regarding bloodborne pathogen exposure and procedures for handling blood exposure in the school setting. Staff whose positions require additional training relevant to their positions and responsibilities will receive this training on a yearly basis.

Staff with responsibility for teaching students about communicable disease prevention will receive the necessary training and materials to assist students to develop the knowledge, attitudes, and behavior that will help prevent communicable diseases.