

Procedure Title	Bloodborne Pathogens (HIV/Hepatitis B & C)		
Date of Issue	February 15, 2000	Related Policy	BP 3801-D
Revision Dates	April 20, 2010; December 7, 2016	Related Forms	
Review Date		Originator	Administrative Council
References			
Health Protection and Promotion Act; The Ontario Curriculum, Grades 1-8: Health and Physical Education, 2015, and The Ontario Curriculum, Grades 9-12: Health and Physical Education, 2015; Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act; Occupational Health and Safety Act; Education Act; AP 3851-D "Biological Hazards"			

1.0 RATIONALE

Bluewater District School Board recognizes that it has an inherent interest in, and moral obligation to foster the personal and social well-being of students and staff, as it relates to bloodborne pathogens (including Human Immuno Deficiency Virus, Hepatitis B & C and other similar communicable/infectious diseases).

Bluewater District School Board endeavours to maintain a safe and healthy working environment for its staff and students, and in doing so, recognizes its responsibility to provide education and implement processes pertaining to bloodborne pathogens. The board has an obligation to deal with each student and employee in an equitable manner that shows due regard for privacy while also providing protection, where possible, from harmful contact with bloodborne pathogens.

Bluewater District School Board recognizes that the major responsibility for counselling and support for students and staff that may be affected by bloodborne pathogens (including Human Immuno-Deficiency Virus, Hepatitis B & C and other similar communicable/infectious diseases) rests with community agencies, and subsequently will cooperate with those agencies in promoting rehabilitative programs and professional counselling.

Bluewater District School Board will ensure compliance with the *Education Act*, the *Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*, the *Health Protection and Promotion Act*, the *Occupational Health & Safety Act*, and all other applicable legislation.

2.0 DEFINITIONS

Bloodborne Pathogens

Blood carrying virus/micro-organisms causing illness via blood, semen, vaginal secretions and saliva. These pathogens include, but are not limited to, HIV, Hepatitis B and Hepatitis C.

HIV

Human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) is a retrovirus which attacks the immune system, causing the individual who does not obtain treatment, to be vulnerable to other infections over the course of many years. Without treatment HIV leads to severe immune dysfunction, and results in AIDS. HIV is transmitted from an infected person by body fluids such as blood, semen, vaginal and rectal fluids and breast milk.

Acquired indicates that it is not the result of an inherited predisposition but is a condition that develops.

Immuno Deficiency indicates that the alteration results in the weakening of the immune system.

Syndrome indicates that the disease results in a variety of health problems.

Hepatitis B

Hepatitis B is an infection that attacks the liver. It is caused by the Hepatitis B virus (HBV) and is more infectious than HIV or Hepatitis C. Infection with HBV may be acute or chronic. The virus is found in the body fluids of people with Hepatitis B (e.g., the body fluids may include blood, semen, vaginal and rectal fluids, breast milk, and to a much lesser extent, saliva). The virus can be passed on to another person through contact with an infected person's blood and other body fluids. It is vaccine-preventable.

Hepatitis C (HCV)

Hepatitis C (HCV) is transmitted when HCV+(positive) blood comes into contact with the bloodstream of an HCV-(negative) person via direct blood-to-blood contact (e.g., shared syringes, tattoos, piercings), or via contact with HCV+(positive) blood and the mucus membrane of an HCV-(negative) person (e.g., sharing needles, illicit drug inhalation equipment). Other ways of transmission include blood transfusions prior to the year 1990, and mother-to-child during childbirth.

3.0 PROCEDURE

3.1 GENERAL INFORMATION

- i. The Health Protection and Promotion Act, Part IV, Section 28 states:
 "The principal of a school who is of the opinion that a pupil in the school has or may have a communicable disease shall, as soon as possible after forming the opinion, report thereon to the Medical Officer of Health of the Health Unit in which the school is located."
 Please refer to Appendix A for information regarding the application of *the Health Protection and Promotion Act*, along with *the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*.
- ii. A school staff member who is of the opinion that a person in a school has or may have a communicable/ infectious disease shall discuss the matter with the principal.
- iii. The identity of a person affected with a bloodborne pathogen infection or living with a related disease is strictly confidential. This information will not be disclosed by the board, or by any board employee, to any other person without the prior written consent of the affected person, except where disclosure is otherwise required or authorized by law.
- iv. Information for which written consent has been given by the affected person may only be disclosed within the limits of the consent.
- v. As a general measure, to minimize the risk of infection, universal precautions such as the wearing of vinyl gloves should be taken when handling human blood or other bodily fluids capable of transmitting bloodborne pathogen infections. Immediate handwashing with soap after direct contact is recommended if vinyl gloves are not available. The 'Universal Precautions for the Workplace' involve a four-step approach:
 1. Wash Hands
 2. Wear Protective Barriers
 3. Use Safe Disposal
 4. Clean Contaminated Surfaces
- vi. The Grey Bruce Health Unit is the main source of local education available to conduct employee, student or School Council education awareness sessions. For further information, staff members should contact Federation, Association, or Union Representatives, members of the Joint Occupational Health & Safety Committee or the Occupational Health & Safety Officer.

3.2 EMPLOYEE RELATED INFORMATION**3.2.1 Non-Discrimination**

- i. The fact that an individual has or is perceived to have a bloodborne pathogen infection (including Human Immuno-Deficiency Virus, Hepatitis B & C and other similar communicable/infectious diseases) is not a valid basis on which to dismiss an employee.
- ii. An employee affected with a bloodborne pathogen infection has the right to continued employment, provided the employee is able to carry out the essential requirements of the position in a safe and competent manner. In the event that an employee is experiencing difficulty in meeting these requirements, the board will attempt to make modifications, wherever possible, to accommodate continued employment, and providing the employee comes forward with information regarding health status to help facilitate such modification. Any decisions made to exclude a person from employment because of health and safety considerations must be based on an individual assessment supported by authoritative and up-to-date medical and scientific information.
- iii. There is no evidence that bloodborne pathogens are transmitted through casual contact with affected individuals. As a general measure, to minimize the risk of infection, workers should take universal precautions when handling human blood or other bodily fluids capable of transmitting bloodborne pathogens.
- iv. Where an employee with a bloodborne pathogen infection becomes unable to carry out duties, full access to benefits carried by the employee will be ensured.

3.2.2 Staff Education

- i. Information on bloodborne pathogens shall be provided by the employer as part of training required by the Occupational Health & Safety Act.
- ii. Mandatory testing for bloodborne pathogen infections is not a prerequisite for employment by the board. However, the board does recognize that circumstances exist where individuals may wish to seek such testing. The board's role is to provide education for those employees who request it and to refer such employees to appropriate testing resources.
- iii. The board shall provide resource materials and precautionary equipment in sufficient quantities to minimize exposure to bloodborne pathogen infections, e.g., disposable gloves, CPR mouthpiece airways, cleaning materials. Location of these materials is to be determined by each facility's safety committee.
- iv. The supervisor in each facility assumes responsibility for distributing and maintaining the materials and equipment.
- v. It is the responsibility of the employees to familiarize themselves with this procedure, other related procedures such as AP 3851-D "Biological Hazards", and use the provided materials and equipment in all situations where there is the possibility of personal contact with other people's body fluids.
- vi. Questions can be directed to the Health and Safety Department.

3.3 STUDENT RELATED INFORMATION**3.3.1 Student Education**

- i. Education regarding bloodborne pathogens is an integrated part of *The Ontario Curriculum, Grades 1-8: Health and Physical Education, 2015*, and *The Ontario Curriculum, Grades 9-12: Health and Physical Education, 2015*, which provide comprehensive health education programs for students.

3.3.2 Student Support

- i. Education is an ongoing process, not a single event. Supportive education will begin early. The school community will support students whose lives are affected with bloodborne pathogen infections and will assist them to access any support program established in the community. Students, parents/guardians and school personnel will be made aware of the support programs that are available.
- ii. Confidentiality must be an essential component of any support program provided.

3.3.2.1 The Objectives of Student Support

- i. The support program for an affected student should promote a compassionate, humane and understanding environment that will allow the student to be a valued and productive member of the school community.
- ii. The support program for an affected student should provide reassurance of a safe supportive environment and an empathetic attitude towards the student.

3.3.2.2 Resources for Support

When support is required, school staff will:

- i. Establish a process for accessing support.
- ii. Make current information available to students.
- iii. Inform all staff of the need for and the nature of the support process.
- iv. Inform all students and their parents of the availability of the support program.

APPENDIX A

Application of the Health Protection and Promotion Act and the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act

Collecting Personal Information

Section 29 (1) (b) of the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act authorizes the collection of personal information indirectly from a source other than the individual if a statute, regulation or by-law authorizes the collection.

Procedure AP 1420-D Bloodborne Pathogens, Section 2.1 'General Information' requires that "The principal of a school who is of the opinion that a pupil in the school has or may have a communicable disease shall, as soon as possible after forming the opinion, report thereon to the Medical Officer of Health of the Health Unit in which the school is located", as required by the Health Protection and Promotion Act, Part IV, Section 28.

Where Disclosure Permitted

The Health Protection and Promotion Act is the principal's authority to disclose the information to the Medical Officer of Health that a pupil in the school has or may have a communicable/infectious disease.

Notice of Collection

Section 29 (2) of the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act requires that when personal information is collected, either directly or indirectly, the individual to whom the information relates must be notified that the collection has occurred. The Principal must advise the individual that the collection has occurred and that the information is being referred to the Medical Officer of Health, as authorized by the Health Protection and Promotion Act, Part IV, Section 28, and in section 2.1 of procedure AP 1420-D Bloodborne Pathogens.

Note: Information is collected at the time it is first acquired.