

INFECTION CONTROL POLICY



PURPOSE

Newmark Primary is committed to the care, safety and welfare of staff and students.

The infection control policy sets out the principles and framework, which ensure the school discharges its legal responsibilities and supports the care of students and staff. The policy should be read and understood by staff and parents/carers.

PRINCIPLES

- The school and its staff have a duty of care towards its students.
- Schools have a legal responsibility to help manage infectious diseases by supporting the prevention and control of disease transmission.
- The school, as employer, will provide a safe working environment and adequate facilities for the welfare of their employees, so far as is reasonably practicable.

AIMS

- To prevent and control the transmission of infectious disease.
- To provide the framework within which appropriate procedures for the control of infection are set.

LEGAL AND REGULATORY BASIS FOR COMPLIANCE

- Duty of Care
- Education and Training Reform Act 2006 (Vic)
- Education and Training Reform Regulations (2017)
- Worksafe Compliance Code – First Aid in the Workplace
- Health (Immunisation) Regulations 1999 (Vic)
- Health (Infectious Diseases) Regulations 2001 (Vic)
- Public Health and Wellbeing Regulations 2019 (regulation 85)
- Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004 (Vic)
- Occupational Health and Safety Regulations 2017

KEY DEFINITIONS

Duty of care

As part of the duty of care owed to students, the school and its teachers are required to protect children from harm. However, the primary responsibility for the health of a student lies with the parents/carers. The school and its staff are not expected to give expert medical advice or to medically treat students.

Students: Communication, Exclusion and Reporting

The Regulations mandate the following:

- Parents/carers of primary aged children must inform the school if their child is infected or has come into contact with an **excludable condition**;
- Schools are required to exclude infectious children from primary schools; the Regulations include information setting out the minimum periods of exclusion; and
- Immunisation status certificates must be retained at primary schools.

Changes to the Regulations mean that schools are no longer required to notify the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS Vic) if a child at the school has an infectious disease.

The Health (Infectious Diseases) Regulations 2001 (Vic) also set out the following requirement.

The principal must notify parents/carers if they form a reasonable belief that the child:

- is suffering from an infectious disease; or
- has been in contact with someone who is infected with an infectious disease and the child has not been immunised against that disease or the immunisation status of the child is unknown.

The principal must exclude a primary school child if they have been informed that the child has, or has been in contact with someone with an infectious disease on the regulated list. An infringement penalty will apply for a failure to exclude the child.

The school will communicate clear guidelines to parents/carers in relation to their child(ren)'s attendance at school when they have, or have been in contact with someone with an infectious disease.

Students: Immunisation

Parents/carers of primary school children are required to provide the school with an immunisation certificate. The school must take reasonable steps to obtain the certificate and to ensure that it is up-to-date.

Primary schools must keep a record of the immunisation status for each student enrolled in the school, regardless of whether the child is or is not immunised. The school must keep the record for the period that the student is enrolled in the school.

Only an Immunisation History Statement from the Australian Immunisation Register can be accepted as proof of immunisation status on school entry.

The school must allow authorised officers to access immunisation status records at any reasonable time.

Occupational Health and Safety

The school should be familiar with Worksafe Victoria's compliance code 'First Aid in the Workplace'. The compliance code is drafted with the first aid needs of employees in mind, but the guidance is also relevant to schools in meeting the first aid needs of students including control of infection guidance. Although non-mandatory, 'evidence of a failure to observe the

compliance code may be used as evidence in proceedings for an offence under the OHS Act or Regulations’.

The school is required to provide and maintain a working and learning environment that is safe and without risks to health, so far as is reasonably practicable. These responsibilities include (but are not limited to):

- supporting the personal hygiene of students, for example, hand washing, cough etiquette;
- making arrangements for the use, handling, storage or transport of spills of blood and other body fluids or substances;
- providing information, training and supervision to employees to ensure the workplace is without risks to health; and
- the requirement for the school to monitor the health of its staff.

Protocols for safe work practices need to be in place to reduce the risk of infection. The procedures and practices may cover:

- exposure to blood and bodily fluids;
- needles and syringes;
- linen and other disposable items;
- protective clothing e.g. gloves, face masks; and
- cleaning, disinfection, sterilisation and hand washing.

The school will arrange that First Aid Officers undergo appropriate training to ensure they understand how infections are transmitted in the workplace and know what preventative measures to follow.

The school will have procedures giving guidance in responding to a localised or state-wide outbreak of infectious disease or public health emergency involving transmittable diseases, for example, measles.

The school will consider whether first aid officers need to be offered hepatitis B immunisation if they are likely to have contact with blood or bodily fluids.

Members of staff who have an infectious disease or have been in contact with someone with an infectious disease should seek medical care and take appropriate sick leave. Where the school as employer reasonably believes that a member of staff’s state of health may make the employee a danger to staff or students, the school may require the member of staff to take personal leave until certified by a medical practitioner that they are fit to return.

The school should be aware of staff and students in the school who have a compromised immune system e.g. as a result of cancer treatment. The school should take reasonable steps to ensure such members of staff and students are not exposed to contact with someone who is medically infectious.

Some medical conditions for which the student is infectious can carry a stigma and potentially lead to bullying and ostracisation. Schools need to take particular care to support students in such a situation and to do everything they can to protect the student's privacy.

SCOPE

The application of the policy is relevant to school staff and parents/carers.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The **school board** is responsible for:

- reviewing and endorsing the Infection Control Policy.

The **principal** is responsible for:

- ensuring the school and staff fulfil their duty of care to students;
- ensuring appropriate procedures are in place to manage infection control;
- ensuring parent/carers have guidelines to help them make decisions about school attendance;
- ensuring the provision of appropriate training for staff and particularly for first aid staff to ensure infection control;
- notifying the parents/carers of the student if they believe the student has or has been in contact with a notifiable infectious disease;
- excluding a primary student if they believe the student has, or has been in contact with a person who has, an infectious disease;
- ensuring that the immunisation status of children admitted to the school is known and, for those students who have been immunised, that a copy of the Immunisation History Statement has been retained in accordance with the school's Record Management Policy; and
- the provision of appropriate training for staff and particularly for first aid staff to ensure infection control.

Parents/carers are required to notify the school if a child has, or has been in contact with a notifiable infectious disease.

Members of staff are responsible for their own health and for adopting safe work practices.

First aid staff are responsible for adopting safe work practices and for raising the awareness of infection control in the school community.

PROCEDURES

Parents/Carers

Parents/carers are required to notify the school if a child has an infectious disease, or has been in contact with someone with an infectious disease listed in Schedule 6 of the *Health (Infectious Diseases) Regulations 2001* (Vic).

Based on the current Department of Health guidelines of notifiable infectious diseases, the school will:

- notify the community of the infectious disease;

- notify parents/carers of students who have not been immunised, and follow stipulated exclusion procedures;
- protect the privacy of the family who notified the school of the infectious disease;
- follow Department of Health guidelines regarding the stipulated exclusion period of the student;
- request evidence from a medical practitioner to show the student is fit to return to school, where applicable; and
- follow Department of Health guidelines regarding school closure, in extreme cases.

The School

The school is required to notify the parents/carers if they believe on reasonable grounds that a student is suffering from an infectious disease listed in regulation 5 (Schedule 2) of the Health (Infectious Diseases) Regulations 2001 (Vic).

The school will:

- notify the parents/carers and request that the student be picked up and taken to see a health practitioner immediately.
- notify the community of the suspected, or confirmed infectious disease;
- protect the privacy of the student with the suspected, or confirmed infectious disease;
- follow Department of Health guidelines regarding the stipulated exclusion period of the student; and
- follow Department of Health guidelines regarding school closure, in extreme cases.

COMMUNICATION OF POLICY

The school will ensure that the Infection Control policy and procedures are understood by staff and parents/carers by:

- making the policy accessible via the schools website and intranet; and
- providing information to staff during staff meetings and onboarding.

RELATED POLICIES

- First Aid Policy
- Distributing Medicine Policy
- Anaphylaxis Management Policy
- Record Management Policy
- Privacy Policy

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

- [School exclusion table for primary schools and children's services](#)
- [Notifiable infectious diseases, conditions and micro-organisms](#)
- [Public health and wellbeing operations](#)
- Health (Infectious Diseases) Regulations 2001 (Vic) Schedule 6
- Health (Infectious Diseases) Regulations 2001 (Vic) Schedule 2, Regulation 5

POLICY REVIEW

The school board and principal will review the Distributing Medicine Policy every second year, or following a major incident.

ENDORSEMENT

Updated date	May 2023
Endorsed by	School Board
Endorsed on	June 2023