

REGULATION MONTGOMERY COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Related Entries: JEA-RB

Responsible Office: Deputy Superintendent of Schools

Related Source: *Code of Maryland Regulations* §10.06.04.03, *Required Immunizations*

Communicable Disease Control in Schools

I. PURPOSE

To assist school system staff in preventing and controlling the spread of specific diseases in schools.

II. DEFINITIONS

- A. *Blood and body fluids* are body components that are to be considered potentially infectious for communicable diseases. Blood and body fluids include amniotic fluids, feces, blood, blood products, breast milk, cerebrospinal fluid, menstrual blood, nasal secretions, peritoneal fluid, pleural fluid, purulent drainage, saliva, semen, synovial fluid, tears, urine, vaginal secretions, vomitus, and wound drainage.
- B. *Bloodborne pathogens* are microscopic organisms that are present in human blood or body fluids and can cause disease in humans.
- C. *Exposure* is contact with an infectious person, environment, or contaminated item or surface that may be capable of disease transmission.
- D. *Immunity* is the state of resistance to a communicable disease by a person due to natural body defenses or by defenses acquired through exposure to disease or vaccination.
- E. *Standard precautions* are guidelines recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to reduce the risk of transmission of bloodborne and other pathogens. They apply to blood, all body fluids, secretions, excretions (regardless of whether they contain blood), nonintact skin, and mucous membranes. The precautions are designed to reduce transmission of microorganisms from both recognized and unrecognized sources of infection.

- F. *Communicable disease* is an illness due to a specific infectious agent or its toxic products that arises through transmission of that agent or its products from an infected person, animal, or inanimate reservoir to a susceptible host, either directly or indirectly through an intermediate plant or animal host, vector, or the inanimate environment.

III. BACKGROUND

- A. Methods used to control the spread of communicable diseases in the school setting have limitations. Many diseases have periods of communicability that precede the onset of identifiable symptoms or are without symptoms throughout the entire contagious period. Consequently, efforts to prevent or control the spread of communicable diseases must continue on an ongoing basis.
- B. Exposures to blood and body fluids from all individuals are to be considered as potentially infectious for blood-borne pathogens. Standard precautions are to be used to minimize the possibility of transmission of infections from blood and body fluids (refer to Montgomery County Public Schools [MCPS] Bloodborne Pathogens Exposure Control Plan). These precautions include proper hand washing and the use of personal protective equipment such as gloves, masks, eye protection, face shields, lab coats or gowns, and/or protective barriers for performing mouth-to-mouth resuscitation, as well as the proper disposal of bloodborne pathogen waste material. The MCPS Bloodborne Pathogens Exposure Control Plan outlines procedures to minimize and/or eliminate potential exposures to blood or body fluids that contain blood in accordance with Occupational Safety and Health Administration/Maryland Occupational Safety and Health (OSHA/MOSH) regulation 29CFR 1910.1030. These procedures must be followed to be in compliance with the law.
- C. The State of Maryland requires students to show proof of immunization against certain infectious diseases; depending on the students' age and grade. To maintain effective immunity against certain diseases, booster doses may be necessary at intervals throughout life as recommended by a physician. Both education and health services staff should actively and continuously educate the students, parents, and community about the importance of such immunizations as an essential part of disease prevention and wellness.

IV. PROCEDURES

- A. The single most important technique for preventing the spread of disease is proper hand washing. Students and school staff will be encouraged to practice proper hand washing using soap and water. If soap and water are not available, alcohol-based hand cleansers can be used.

- B. Annual bloodborne pathogens training is conducted at schools and offices in accordance with OSHA/MOSH bloodborne pathogen regulations. This annual bloodborne pathogen training is conducted so that staff can implement measures to protect themselves from potential disease-causing microscopic organisms, use universal precautions, and clean up blood spills properly. The safety supervisor, Department of Facilities Management, is responsible for ensuring implementation of the MCPS Bloodborne Pathogens Program.
- C. The School Community Health Nurse (SCHN) should be apprised of all cases of communicable disease in the school population in order that she/he may initiate control measures and make reports as applicable.
- D. When a student is suspected of having a communicable disease, steps will be taken in accordance with *The Communicable Disease Summary: Guide for School and Child Care*, which is found at the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DHMH) Web site www.edcp.org/html/cd_guide.html. DHMH fact sheets from www.edcp.org/html/cdindex.html may be shared with parents and school staff.
- E. The SCHN will consult with the staff of Disease Control, Communicable Disease and Epidemiology (CD&E), Public Health Services, Department of Health and Human Services as needed. She/he will advise the principal regarding needed follow-up, such as verbal and/or written communication to school staff, the parent community, and/or students, and provide health teaching and counseling to MCPS staff about specific control measures.
- F. The staff at CD&E will investigate diseases of significance in an effort to determine the source, other contacts, and the mode of spread of infection and to assure that adequate health precautions are taken to prevent further spread.
- G. Both school, education, and health staff will actively and continuously educate the students, parents, and community about the importance of immunizations as an essential part of disease prevention and wellness. They will work cooperatively to assure that all students are immunized according to the State of Maryland's *Vaccine Requirements for Children Enrolled in Preschool Programs and in Schools*.

Regulation History: Formerly Regulation No. 525-6, revised October 1982; revised March 18, 2008.