



Communicable Disease Policy

Purpose

The purpose of the policy is to outline provisions that maximize protection against communicable diseases in the PLCS school setting.

Reporting

Reportable diseases, as defined by the state health department and designated on the communicable disease chart in the parent student handbook, will be reported to the local health department (Washington County Health and Human Services). These diseases include, but not limited to: chickenpox, measles, pertussis, meningitis, hepatitis A, shigella, salmonella, mumps, T.B., E. coli, and hepatitis B. see link to [Exclusion Guide](#)

Exclusion From School For Health Reasons

The guidelines below have been developed for the exclusion of students who have communicable or contagious diseases. These regulations are in compliance with the requirements of the Washington County Health and Human Services.

- A student with any of the following symptoms will be excluded from school until such time as the student is free of symptoms, has been satisfactorily treated, or submits a signed physician's statement that he/she is no longer contagious.
 - A temperature of 100.4 degrees or more. Student must be fever free for 24 hours, without medication, before re-entry.
 - A deep, barking, unusually persistent cough/fits of coughing, or productive cough of colored mucus.
 - An undetermined rash, blisters, or scaly patches over any part of the body.
 - Nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea. A student must be symptom free for 24 hours without medication before re-entry.
 - Red, draining eyes.
 - Sore throat with fever.
 - Intense itching with signs and symptoms of secondary infection.
 - Open, draining lesions.
 - Jaundice-a yellowish tint to eyes or skin for unknown reason.
 - Pain and/or swelling at angle of jaw.
 - An unusual behavior change such as irritability, lethargy, or listlessness.

- The school will separate the ill child from well children at the school until he/she can go home to limit the spread of disease.
- Parents of children possibly exposed to infectious diseases, as well as staff, will be informed.
- The school will adhere to the exclusion and readmission recommendations.
- The staff will watch for signs and symptoms of communicable diseases in classrooms where one is identified.

Communicable Disease Transmission Routes

- Airborne
- Respiratory droplets from an infected person spread by sneezing, coughing and speaking.
- Direct skin contact with wounds or discharges from an infected person.
- Fecal-oral route when effective hand washing is not done after toileting and there is contamination of hands, food, drink, or of objects put in mouth.
- Indirect contact when microorganisms linger on objects such as door knobs, faucet handles, desk tops, phones, handrails, and computer keypads.

Common Infectious Diseases

- Flu

- Flu season is typically from October through March. Preparation is the key. Management is a team effort between staff, parents, students, and health care professionals.

- PLCS helps by:

- Teaching/encouraging proper hand washing technique.
 - Teaching effective coughing and sneezing techniques such as coughing in a sleeve or Kleenex.
 - Posting signs around campus as a visual reminder.
 - Encouraging staff to remain home when ill.
 - Keeping records of the number of flu cases to determine if there is an epidemic at the school.

- Parents help by:

- Having a family vaccinated against the flu if recommended by their doctor.
 - Encouraging proper hand washing, sneezing, and coughing techniques at home.
 - Consulting health care providers when flu-like illness symptoms begin. Flu-like symptoms include: fever, cough, sore throat, body aches, fatigue, and nasal congestion.
 - Keeping children home when ill.

- Students help by:

- Washing hands with soap and water before and after eating, after sneezing or coughing in hands, after using the restroom, after playing outdoors, and any other time their hands are dirty.
 - Using tissues for sneezing and coughing or sleeve.
 - Not sharing food or drink.
- Noroviruses:
 - The most common cause of epidemic gastroenteritis and is extremely contagious. Characterized by an acute onset of non-bloody diarrhea, nausea, vomiting, and abdominal cramps. There may also be a low-grade fever and body aches.
 - Transmission: Person-to-person might occur through the fecal-oral route, by ingestion of aerosolized vomitus or by indirect exposure via environmental surfaces. All food service workers will wear gloves when serving food to avoid transmission.
- MRSA (Methicillin-resistant staphylococcus aureus): Staph is a bacterium commonly found on skin or in the nose of healthy people.

MRSA is a type of staph bacteria that can cause skin and other infections and is also resistant to certain antibiotics. Community-associated MRSA cases are usually manifested as skin infections such as pimples, boils, and abscesses. People might describe an initial lesion as a “spider bite.” The involved area is swollen, red, and painful and pus may be present. MRSA is usually spread through direct skin-to-skin contact between an infected person and another individual often on contaminated hands or by contact with surfaces that have come into contact with someone else’s infection.

 - Factors related to transmitting staph from one person to another include:
 - Poor hygiene, especially the lack of hand washing.
 - Close physical contact and crowded conditions.
 - Sharing personal products (towels, razors).
 - Puncturing boils with fingernails or tweezers
 - Activities that result in burns, cuts, or abrasions or require sharing equipment.
 - Exclusion of students with MRSA infections from school and extracurricular activities will be:
 - Implemented if directed by an M.D.
 - Reserved for those with wound drainage (pus) that cannot be covered and contained with a clean, dry bandage and for those who cannot maintain good personal hygiene.
 - Advice for teachers:
 - If a student is observed with an open, draining wound, they are to be referred to the school office.
 - Enforce hand washing with soap and water before /after eating, after using the restroom, and playing outside.
- Meningitis:
 - Meningitis is an inflammation of the covering of the brain and spinal cord. It can be caused by viruses, parasites, fungi, or bacteria. Most people with viral meningitis fully recover. Parasitic and fungal meningitis are rare. Bacterial meningitis is very serious.
 - Symptoms: can progress rapidly in a matter of hours.
 - Severe headache, high fever
 - Vomiting
 - Sensitivity to bright lights

- Neck stiffness, joint pains
 - Drowsiness or confusion
 - Possible tiny red-purple spots or bruises caused by bleeding under the skin.
 - In some cases of bacterial meningitis, the illness can be fatal or may result in permanent disability such as deafness, blindness, amputations, or brain damage.
 - Transmission: It is transmitted when people exchange saliva (such as kissing, sharing drinks or utensils). The highest risk group for the most serious form, meningococcal meningitis, is children 2-18 years.
- Pertussis: Pertussis is also known as whooping cough. It is a highly contagious bacterial infection. The bacterium is sprayed into the air when an infected person sneezes, coughs, or talks.
 - Symptoms:
 - Runny nose.
 - Sneezing that progresses to cough, followed 1-2 weeks later by spasms of coughing characterized by a series of short convulsive-like coughs, followed by a high-pitched gasp of air called a whoop, and might be followed by vomiting.
 - Fever can be minimal or absent.
 - Symptoms wane gradually over weeks to months.
 - Duration of classic pertussis is 6-10 weeks in children.
- Lice
 - Scientific evidence supports that exclusion from school for nits alone is not indicated.
 - When it is determined live lice are present:
 - The parent will be contacted for treatment to begin
 - After treatment has begun and no live lice are present, the student should be checked by the school prior to re-entry.
 - The school will remind parents to check their child's hair periodically, especially after overnight visits with other children. Parents should educate their child to avoid the spread of lice by head-to-head contact, sharing of hats, combs, brushes, pillows, etc.

Prevention Strategies For Communicable Diseases

- The school environment:
 - Cleaning and disinfecting surfaces to reduce the risk of spreading infection.
 - If surfaces or objects are soiled with body fluids or blood, gloves and other standard precautions are to be used to avoid coming in contact with fluid. Remove spill, then the surface is to be cleaned and disinfected.
 - Custodians are called for episodes of vomiting, large amounts of blood, feces, or urine that contaminate the floor, carpet, or restroom to be cleaned by an approved disinfectant.
 - Material soiled with vomit, blood, feces or other body fluid will be double bagged to throw away. Extra attention to periodic vigilant cleaning will be utilized in common areas such as desks, tables, drinking fountains and in high touch areas, such as computer keyboards, doorknobs and handles, and telephones.
 - Kleenex and protective equipment such as gloves will be kept available.

- Staff will be reminded about infection control and blood borne infection control procedures annually.
- Universal Precautions: a set of guidelines that assume all blood and certain other bodily potentially infectious. Universal precautions are to be followed when providing care to any individual whether or not the person is known to be infectious. These include:
 - Hand washing: Hand washing is one of the best tools for controlling the spread of infections. Hands are to be washed thoroughly with running water and soap for at least 15-20 seconds with scrubbing between fingers, under fingernails and around the tops and palms of hands. Hand washing should be done before and after eating, after using the restroom, after playing outside or sports, and after field trips to farms or places with animals. A shower is recommended for those students involved in contact sports as soon as possible
 - Personal protective equipment.
 - Gloves are to be used when in contact with blood or body fluids.
 - Protective eyewear or masks should be worn in situations where it is possible body fluids could come in contact with eyes or mouth.
- Cleaning:
 - Blood or body spills are to be wiped up as soon as possible.
 - Spills are to be double bagged and disposed of in trash.
 - The area is to be cleaned with an approved disinfectant or bleach solution.
 - All soiled clothing should be double bagged and sent home with the person.
 - Immunizations:
 - The state health regulations require students attending school to be up-to-date on all immunizations.
 - A notarized waiver is required for a valid exemption (medical, religious, or personal exemption).
 - The school will keep documentation of the immunization status of all students on file.
 - If a reportable communicable disease is known, parents of students without that vaccine will be notified to check with their doctor regarding exclusion from school for a designated time.