



Infectious Diseases Policy

Rationale

Heritage College (the school) is committed to the care, safety and welfare of staff and students. The school seeks to ensure that it remains free of infectious diseases and where necessary, treatment and exclusion policies and procedures will be applied.

Principles

The school and its staff have a duty of care towards its students.

The school will provide a safe working environment and adequate facilities for the welfare of all staff members, so far as is reasonably practicable[1].

Aims

To provide a 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[2]
- Health (Immunisation) Regulations 1999 (Vic)
- Health (Infectious Diseases) Regulations 2001 (Vic)
- Public Health and Wellbeing Regulations 2009 (regulation 85)
- Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004 (Vic)
- Occupational Health and Safety Regulations 2017 and Equipment (Public Safety) Regulations 2017 (came into force on 18th June 2017)

Guiding Principles

The school refers to Worksafe Victoria's compliance code 'First Aid in the Workplace'[3].

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 his or her parents. The school and its staff are not expected to give expert medical advice or to medically treat students.

The school is required to provide and maintain a working environment that is safe and without risks to health, so far as is reasonably practicable[4]. These responsibilities[5] include (but are not limited to):

- to make arrangements for the use, handling, storage or transport of substances
- to provide information, training and supervision to employees to ensure the workplace is without risks to health
- the requirement for the school to monitor the health of its staff.

The school will communicate clear guidelines to parents in relation to their child(ren)'s attendance at school when they have or have been in contact with someone with an infectious disease[6] e.g. chickenpox.

Parents are required to notify the school if the student has, or has been in contact with someone with, an infectious disease listed in Schedule 6 of the Health (Infectious Diseases) Regulations 2001 (Vic)[7].

Principals are required to notify the parents of the student and the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS)[8] 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)[9].

In the event of a national or regional outbreak of an infectious disease, all visitors to the School from that region (or staff or students returning from that region) will be subject to appropriate quarantine procedures.



The Principal will regularly access the Federal Department of Health, the Federal Department of Home Affairs and the Victorian Department of Health & Human Services websites to monitor the occurrence and status of such outbreaks.

Upon receiving professional advice an appropriate quarantine period may be applied before the student or staff member commences or returns to the school.

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. Only an Immunisation History Statement from the Australian Immunisation Register can be accepted as proof of immunisation status on school entry. The school must keep a record of each student's immunisation status for the period that the student is enrolled in the school[10]. The secondary school will keep a record or copy of each student's immunisation status certificate.

The Principal will ensure that the immunisation status of students attending the school is recorded[11].

During outbreaks of diseases prescribed in Schedule 6 of the Health (Infectious Diseases) Regulations 2001(Vic)[12], Principals will direct parents of students who are not immunised, or for whom the immunisation status is unknown, to keep their children at home for the recommended period.

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 will take reasonable steps to ensure such members of staff and students are not exposed to contact with someone who is medically infectious.

Protocols for safe work practices will 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
- cleaning, disinfection, sterilisation and hand washing.
- Proper disposal of biological waste

The school will ensure 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 refer to 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.

Some medical conditions for which the student is infectious can carry a stigma and potentially lead to bullying and ostracisation. The school will 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 Primary and Secondary school staff and parents. The Early Learning Centre operates under their own regulations and specific guidelines.

Roles and Responsibilities

The Adventist Schools Victoria Board of Directors (governing body) is responsible for the approval of the Health and Safety Policy and the First Aid policy, of which this policy is a subsection.

The Principal is responsible for ensuring the school and staff fulfil their duty of care to students.

The Principal is responsible for ensuring:

- appropriate procedures are in place to manage infection control
- staff are aware of the procedures to manage infection control and,
- parents have guidelines to help them make decisions about school attendance.

The Principal is responsible for the provision of appropriate training for staff and particularly for first aid staff to ensure infection control.

The Principal is responsible for notifying the parents of the student and the authorities if they believe the student has or has been in contact with a notifiable infectious disease. Please refer to this [link](#) for a detailed list of infectious diseases. Privacy issues related to existing medical conditions are covered under the school's Privacy Policy, available on the school website.

The Principal is responsible for 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 keeping policy.

Parents are required to notify the school if the student 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.

Refer to other policies

- Duty of Care
- First Aid Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Privacy Policy
- Record Management Policy.

Communication of the policy

The school will ensure all staff are aware of the need to take precautions to avoid the spread of infection.

The infection control policy and procedures will be communicated to first aid staff.

The school will publish guidelines for parents to follow when deciding attendance at school for a child who has an infectious disease.



Policy Implementation Documents

The documents setting out the strategies and actions required to implement this policy are:

- protocols for safe work practices
- first aid procedures for the use, handling, storage or transport of blood or bodily fluids
- procedures for parents to notify the school of infectious diseases
- section 6 of Health (Infectious Diseases) Regulations 2001 (Vic)[13] lists the infectious diseases for which the parent must notify the school and the minimum period of exclusion that the Principal must apply to the student
- immunisation Records procedures
- regulation 5 (Schedule 2) of the Health (Infectious Diseases) 2001 (Vic)[14] lists infectious diseases which the Principal must report.

Sources

[1] Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004 (Vic).

http://www.legislation.vic.gov.au/Domino/Web_Notes/LDMS/PubStatbook.nsf/edfb620cf7503d1aca256da4001b08af/750e0d9e0b2b387fca256f71001fa7be!OpenDocument&Highlight=0,Occupational,Health,Safety,Act,2004. Accessed 1 May 2019.

[2] Worksafe Victoria is an important reference point for the Compliance Codes and related Occupational Health and Safety legislation. <https://www.worksafe.vic.gov.au/laws/ohs> (Accessed 1 May 2019)

[3] Worksafe Victoria is an important reference point for the Compliance Codes and related Occupational Health and Safety legislation. <https://www.worksafe.vic.gov.au/laws/ohs> (Accessed 1 May 2019)

[4] Occupational Health and Safety Regulations 2017 (Vic).

http://www.legislation.vic.gov.au/Domino/Web_Notes/LDMS/PubStatbook.nsf/95daf3d8286def33ca256da4001bc4e8/48df26a181afc2a5ca2572ff00259bd2!OpenDocument&Highlight=0,occupational,health,safety,regulations. Accessed 1 May 2019.

[5] Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004 (Vic).

[6] Health (Infectious Diseases) Regulations 2001 (Vic).

http://www.legislation.vic.gov.au/Domino/Web_Notes/LDMS/PubStatbook.nsf/95daf3d8286def33ca256da4001bc4e8/40be3961273d5cb7ca256e5b0021aa36!OpenDocument. Accessed 1 May 2019.

[7] Health (Infectious Diseases) Regulations 2001 (Vic) Schedule 6.

The table of infectious diseases is also found on the DHHS website Public Health and Wellbeing Regulations 2009 (regulation 85).

[8] Information regarding the role of school in managing infection control can be found on the DHHS website at

<https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/public-health/infectious-diseases/school-exclusion/exclusion-periods-role-of-schools-and-child-care-services> (Accessed 1 May 2019). Prior to exclusion of the child the school should call the DHS Communicable Disease Control Unit on 1300 651 160 to obtain further information relating to the suspected disease

[9] Health (Infectious Diseases) Regulations 2001 (Vic) Schedule 2, Regulation 5.

[10] Health (Immunisation) Regulations 1999

(Vic)http://www.legislation.vic.gov.au/Domino/Web_Notes/LDMS/PubStatbook.nsf/95daf3d8286def33ca256da4001bc4e8/5be462d8c61b332cca256e5b0021a6c0!OpenDocument Accessed 1 May 2019.

[11] Victorian Department of Education and Training, Immunisation (2019) Victorian Department of Education and Training

<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/Principals/spag/health/Pages/immunisation.aspx> (Accessed 1 May 2019).

[12] Health (Infectious Diseases) Regulations 2001 (Vic) Schedule 6.

[13] Health (Infectious Diseases Regulations) 2001 (Vic).

[14] Health (Infectious Diseases) Regulations 2001 (Vic).

(This policy document has been adapted from the Independent Schools Victoria - 'Infection Control Model Policy' cited at iSconnect, 2019.)



Evaluation

This policy will be reviewed as part of the College's two year review cycle.

Approved for release by the School Executive on 13/2/2020

Ratified by Heritage College School Council _____

TO BE REVIEWED - Jan 2021