

POLICY #5209
BLOODBORNE PATHOGENS AND OTHER COMMUNICABLE
DISEASES

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. The Surrey Board of Education is committed to providing a safe and healthy learning environment for its students.
- 1.2. The board believes that all employees have the right to continue their employment as long as they are able to fulfill their roles properly without risk to themselves or others.
- 1.3. The board also understands the necessity of maintaining confidentiality about student and employee medical conditions. Although confidentiality in all medical situations is required, it is also important to remember that the public expects school personnel to behave responsibly in the care of all children. Students, administrative, teaching and support staff, parent(s)/guardian(s), volunteers and others in attendance in school settings all have the same fundamental right to confidentiality of personal health information.
- 1.4. The board believes that persons living with chronic bloodborne disease such as HIV, hepatitis B virus or hepatitis C virus have the right to protection of privacy. Provided that appropriate Standard Precautions (infection control) are followed, people living with a chronic bloodborne disease do not present an increased risk of infection to others in school and educational settings. Therefore, an individual infected with a bloodborne pathogen is not required to disclose his or her bloodborne disease to any other individual or to any school staff.

2. POLICY

- 2.1. If an individual self-discloses personal health information concerning a bloodborne pathogen to school staff, that individual has a duty to maintain confidentiality and to not disclose this information to any other person(s) without the informed consent of the disclosing individual. The person in trust may wish to consult the MHO or designate for advice.

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- 2.2. If the individual is a student, their parent(s) or legal guardian(s) may voluntarily disclose personal health information of the student to school staff. In such instances involving students, school staff has the same duty to maintain confidentiality or seek informed consent from the parent(s)/guardian(s).
- 2.3. An individual or a student's parent(s)/guardian(s) may also voluntarily disclose information about a communicable illness other than a bloodborne infection to a school staff who may contact the school medical officer or designate, such as the school nurse, for guidance. Alternatively, the school medical officer may contact a school staff concerning a communicable illness involving one or more individuals in the school setting, with recommendations for special actions, such as a school health letter or post-exposure prophylaxis. School staff must treat this personal health information and the identity of the involved person(s) in a manner that respects the privacy of the affected individual(s). If wider notification is contemplated, consultation should occur with the affected individual(s) or, in the case of students, their parent(s)/guardian(s). The school medical officer or designate may also be consulted for assistance in such matters.
- 2.4. Personal health information that an individual or parent(s)/guardian(s) discloses to a school staff should only be retained by the school where permitted and in accordance with provisions of applicable statutes and regulations, such as the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act and School Act. Health information that is disclosed to a school staff by a third party without an individual's or the parent(s)/guardian(s) knowledge or informed consent should not be used, disclosed or retained by the school.
- 2.5. The responsibility for the maintenance of current AIDS/HIV, HBV, HCV and any other communicable disease related information lies with the district medical health officer and the superintendent of schools.

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