



COMMUNICABLE DISEASE POLICY

Purpose

This policy outlines the responsibilities of student illness for students, parents/guardians, and teachers. This policy will assist the staff, parents and associated members of Pioneer Village School to identify infectious and communicable diseases within the school community.

By adhering to the measures outlined below, the school will be able to reduce the transmission of such diseases amongst its students, staff and parents.

Student Illness:

It is preferable that any student who is unwell remain at home until fully recovered to prevent the spread of infection to other students, their families, and to the school staff. It is a Department of Education requirement that parents of students who are absent for three or more consecutive days are to provide the school with a written explanation for the absence. A doctor's certificate is to be included if relevant.

Communicable Diseases

Preventing the transmission of infectious and communicable diseases in the school environment is a fundamental concern for PVS.

While it is often difficult to prevent the transmission of common respiratory (colds/flu) and gastroenteritis infections that occur, every effort should be made to minimise the spread of infection by encouraging:

- staff and students to stay home in early stages of illness as at this stage they can be infectious;
- staff and students who are ill should remain absent until they are symptom free if they have a cold or flu; and for at least 24 hours if they have had gastroenteritis (diarrhoea and/or vomiting); and/or
- parents to seek medical advice if their child has ongoing symptoms of illness.

Strategies to Prevent Transmission of Infection

The most important ways to break the chain of infection and stop the spread of diseases are:

- effective hand hygiene;
- exclusion of ill children, educators and other staff;
- immunisation.

Other strategies to prevent infection include:

- cough and sneeze etiquette;
- use of appropriate cleaning tools and use of protective personal equipment (eg. gloves, masks);
- effective environmental cleaning.

Immunisation

The World Health Organization considers immunisation to be the most effective medical intervention we have to prevent deaths and reduce disease in our communities. PVS supports immunisation of its students (appropriate to their age and health status) and follows current laws in regards to immunization of children in schools. On enrolment a record (no older than two months) of each child's immunisation history will be included with enrolment documents.

PVS recognises that some parents do not wish their children to be immunised, or there may be a medical reason as to why their child cannot be immunised. If a student has not been immunised the parent is requested to provide a copy of their 'Australian Childhood Immunisation Register (ACIR) Exemption Form' completed by an eligible health professional upon enrolment.

Should an outbreak of a vaccine preventable communicable disease occur, non-immunised students may be excluded from school. The student will be permitted to return to school at the discretion of the principal.

Symptoms and Signs of Infection

A communicable disease may be suspected when one or more of the following symptoms are present:

- Abnormal behaviour eg: persistent crying, drowsiness, lethargy, limpness, irritability
- Elevated temperature/fever – 38.5°C or higher
- Vomiting
- Diarrhoea
- Headache
- Sore throat
- Cough
- Skin rash or eruptions
- Watery, inflamed eyes and nose
- Purulent nasal discharge

Exclusion

Many infectious diseases require student/staff to be excluded from school for a recommended period of time. Students with non-immunisation against specific diseases that are known to be highly transmissible will be excluded.

A student with symptoms or signs of infection should be kept at home.

In the event that parents/carers overlook these symptoms, a teacher may exclude a student from contact with other students. The student will be isolated from other students to minimise the risk of infection, made comfortable, and kept under close observation. The parent/carer will be contacted as soon as possible for the student to be collected and taken home.

Exclusion Guidelines

The school may request that a student or staff member does not attend school if the student or staff member is suffering from a medical condition that is infectious, contagious or otherwise harmful to the health of persons at the School.

Recommended minimum periods of exclusion from school for contacts of and cases with infectious diseases:

Condition	Exclusion
Chickenpox	Exclude until all vesicles have crusted, approximately 5 days.
Conjunctivitis	Exclude until discharge from eyes has ceased.
Diarrhoea	Exclude until diarrhoea has ceased for 24 hours. For high risk groups (early childhood areas) exclude for 48 hours after symptoms cease.
Hand, Foot and Mouth Disease	Exclude until vesicles have crusted/dried.
Hepatitis A	Exclude until 14 days after onset of illness or 7 days after jaundice appears.
Cold Sores (Herpes Simplex)	Not excluded if the person can maintain hygiene practices to minimise the risk of transmission. If the person cannot comply with these practices (e.g. because they are too young), they should be excluded until the sores are dry. Sores should be covered with a dressing where possible.
Impetigo (School Sores)	Exclude until after antibiotic treatment has commenced. Lesions on exposed skin surfaces should be covered with a waterproof dressing. Young children unable to comply with good hygiene practice should be excluded until sores are dry.
Measles	Exclude for 4 days after the onset of rash.
Meningococcal Infection	Exclude until after treatment completed.
Molluscum Contagiosum	Do not exclude.
Mumps	2 days prior, to 5 days after parotitis (swollen salivary glands).
Parvovirus (B19 Erythema Infectiosum, Fifth Disease)	Exclusion not necessary.
Ringworm, Scabies, Pediculosis (Lice), Trachoma	Exclude until person has received antifungae treatment for 24 hours. For head lice exclude until hair is treated, lice removed. For scabies, trachoma, exclude until person has received treatment.
Rubella (German Measles)	Exclude for 4 days after onset of rash.
Streptococcal Infection (including Scarlet Fever)	Exclude until person has received antibiotic for 24 hours.
Whooping Cough	Exclude until 5 days after an appropriate antibiotic treatment or for 21 days from the onset of coughing.
Worms (intestinal)	Exclude until diarrhoea has ceased.

Information from 'Control of Communicable Disease manual', WA Department of Health (updated January 2022)

For more specific information regarding infectious and communicable diseases, refer to the above WA Department of Health publication, at:

Returning to School

For every student that has had time away from school due to an illness that requires exclusion, parents are required to supply a letter stating the child's condition, exclusion period, treatment undertaken and readiness to return to school. The principal or class teacher may request that a child have a medical examination by a medical practitioner to determine readiness to recommence school.

Medication

If the need to administer medication at school arises a 'Medication Permission Form' must be completed with written instructions and consent to administer provided. Medications must be handed directly to the school administration. Medications must not be left in the student's bag.

Prescription medications will not be administered by staff without appropriate written instructions from the prescribing doctor or pharmacist. Homeopathic medications will not be administered by staff without appropriate written instructions from the prescribing homeopath.

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