

Infectious Diseases Procedure

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1. Purpose

The purpose of this Procedure is to improve student, staff and community health by reducing the spread of infectious diseases, and to provide information to schools and other sites for educational provision, staff and parents about actions they should take if an infection is suspected or diagnosed.

2. Overview

If there is a suspected or confirmed case of infectious disease at a school, other site for educational provision, or at a school-approved activity, the site manager or staff member in charge is to contact the Tasmanian Department of Health (DHHS), Public Health Hotline on 1800 671 738, who will provide advice.

The site manager or staff member in charge must follow the advice provided by the DHHS Public Health hotline, with regard to issues including exclusion from educational sites, confidentiality and communication with parents, students and the community.

If an infectious disease case is confirmed, the site manager or teacher in charge must notify the relevant Learning Services Director Operations.

Education and care services (e.g. child care services) are required to have their own policies relating to infectious diseases, as per the *Education and Care Services National Regulations (Regulation 168)*.

3. Roles and Responsibilities

3.1 The Site Manager is to:

- Contact the Tasmanian Department of Health, Public Health hotline on 1800 671 738
- Provide any information required by the DHHS Public Health Service
- Follow the directions of the DHHS Public Health Service
- Notify the relevant Learning Services Director Operations as soon as practical if an infectious disease case is confirmed
- Complete an incident reporting form.

3.2 The staff member in charge of a school-approved activity is to:

- Contact the Tasmanian Department of Health, Public Health hotline on 1800 671 738
- Provide any information required by the DHHS Public Health Service
- Follow the directions of the DHHS Public Health Service
- Notify the educational site manager (e.g. Principal or program leader) as soon as practical
- Notify the relevant Learning Services Director Operations as soon as practical if an infectious disease case is confirmed
- Complete an incident reporting form in consultation with the site manager.

3.3 Parents/Carers are to:

- Notify the site manager as soon as possible, if
 - They have reasonable grounds for believing that their child may have an infectious disease
 - They have reasonable grounds for believing that their child has been in contact with person diagnosed with an infectious disease

- Their child has been diagnosed with an infectious disease.
- Comply with the directions given by the site manager, DHHS Public Health Services, and/or Learning Service.

3.4 The Learning Services Director Operations is to:

- Liaise with schools and site managers, where required
- Liaise with the Public Health Service, where appropriate
- Escalate information to the Department's Executive, where appropriate.

4. Process

- If there is a suspected case of infectious disease at a school, school approved activity, or site for educational provision, the site manager or staff member in charge must contact the Tasmanian Department of Health, Public Health Hotline on 1800 671 738.
- The site manager or staff member in charge is to provide the Public Health Service with any information requested or required by the Public Health Service regarding the suspected or confirmed case, and any other relevant information.
- The Public Health Service will provide information on the course of action to be taken, including required diagnosis, periods of exclusion from school, and contact tracing (where relevant).
- The site manager or staff member in charge is to provide the parent/carer of the student, or the student, with any information or direction provided by the Public Health Service regarding the suspected or confirmed case.
- If the site manager is not present (for example, the student is on a school-approved activity such as a camp or sporting event), the staff member in charge is to follow the process above, and notify the site manager as soon as practical.
- Prior to a case being confirmed, staff are not to circulate or publish information about suspected cases. This includes school newsletters, social media, or by sending letters to parents and the community. If a case is confirmed, Public Health will advise on whether the school/centre community should be notified. Schools should consider the best communication method for doing so, and may use the following phrasing if it is useful:
 - We would like to make our community aware that there has been a confirmed case of *<insert name of condition here>*. We are following Public Health advice on this matter. Please contact your doctor or the Public Health hotline on 1800 671 738 if you are concerned, or have the following symptoms : *<insert symptoms here>*.
- If the case is confirmed, the site manager or staff member in charge is to notify the Learning Services Director Operations as soon as practical.
- The Director Operations will liaise with the Public Health Service as required, and escalate information to the Departmental Executive, as appropriate (for example, in the event of a cluster or outbreak of infectious diseases).

5. Related policies

- [Learner Health Care and Safety Policy](#)

6. Related procedures

- [Duty of Care on Departmental Sites \(Staff Only\)](#)

7. Supporting information/websites

- [Tasmanian Department of Health – Public Health Services](#)
- [DHHS Infectious Diseases](#)

8. Legislation

- [Public Health Act 1997 \(Tasmania\)](#)

9. Definitions

Educational Site

A site for provision of educational activities, including schools, colleges, Child and Family Centres, trade training centres, sites for student re-engagement programs or flexible provision of education.

Infectious Disease

Diseases caused by organisms such as bacteria, viruses, fungi or parasites. These may be acquired from people, animals, by consuming contaminated food or water, or by environmental exposure. These diseases may pass between people and can make other people unwell.

School Approved Activity

An activity that is approved by and/or involves the school, that may occur on site or off site, during school hours or outside of school hours. Examples of school approved activities include excursions, camps and other school group trips.

Site Manager

A site manager is in charge of the site for educational provision. Examples of a site manager include a Principal, Child and Family Centre Leader or Program Leader (e.g. Tier 4 flexible education provision program). This may also be the delegate of the Principal or program leader if the usual site manager is offsite for any reason.

Staff member in charge

A staff member that is in charge of a site in the absence of the usual site manager, or a staff member that is in charge of a school-approved activity in the absence of the school site manager. An example of this includes the staff member in charge of an excursion (teacher in charge) or school group travel (travel leader).

Authorised by: Trudy Pearce, Deputy Secretary Learning

Contact: Learning Services – learning.services.nr@education.tas.gov.au, learning.services.s@education.tas.gov.au

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