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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
- providing information to all Department for Education, Children and Young People (DECYP) school and site staff, and parents/carers about actions they should take where a student is suspected of having or has been diagnosed with an infectious disease.

2 Overview

If there is a suspected or confirmed case of a notifiable infectious disease at a DECYP school or site, or at a school-approved activity, the site manager or staff member in charge must:

- contact the Tasmanian Department of Health (DoH), Public Health Hotline on 1800 671 738, and select the option to put the call through to the Communicable Disease Prevention Unit (CDPU) to receive advice
- follow the advice provided by the DoH Public Health Services CDPU team regarding issues including exclusion from educational sites, confidentiality and communication with parents /carers, students and the community
- notify the relevant Learning Services - Director, Operations, if an infectious disease case is confirmed.

Education and care services (for example, 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 DoH, Public Health hotline on 1800 671 738 and select the option to put the call through to the Communicable Disease Prevention Unit (CDPU)
- provide any information required by the Public Health Services
- follow the directions of Public Health Services
- provide the parent/carer of the student, or the student, with any information or direction provided by Public Health about the suspected or confirmed case
- notify the relevant Learning Services – Director, Operations, as soon as practical if an infectious disease case is confirmed
- report the incident using DECYP's Safety Reporting System.
 - If the case is suspected or confirmed during a school-approved activity, the staff member in charge is to follow the above steps and notify the educational site manager (for example, Principal or Program Leader) as soon as practical.

3.2 School staff are to:

- notify the site manager as soon as possible, if they have reasonable grounds for believing that a child may have an infectious disease
- if required by the site manager, contact:
 - the DoH, Public Health hotline on 1800 671 738 Communicable Disease Prevention Unit (CDPU) and provide any information required by the Public Health Services
 - provide the parent/carer of the student, or the student, with any information or direction provided by Public Health about the suspected or confirmed case.

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 a person diagnosed with an infectious disease.
 - their child has been diagnosed with an infectious disease.
- comply with the directions given by the site manager, Public Health, and/or Learning Services.

3.4 The Learning Services - Director, Operations is to:

- consult with schools and site managers, to ensure appropriate notifications and reporting has occurred, and supports for cleaning and/or communication are provided if needed, as outlined in this procedure.
- consult with the Public Health, to receive their guidance on management of the infectious disease/outbreak; and to provide any information that Public Health requires to complete its duties
- escalate information to the DECYP Executive, if requiring further advice on how to manage the situation.

4 Process

If there is a suspected case of infectious disease at a school, school approved activity, or site for educational provision, the following steps should be taken:

- The site manager or staff member in charge is to contact the Tasmanian Department of Health, Public Health Hotline on 1800 671 738 and select the option to put the call through to the Communicable Disease Prevention Unit (CDPU).
- The site manager or staff member in charge is to provide Public Health with any required or requested information about the suspected or confirmed case, and any other relevant information.
- Public Health 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 Public Health about 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.
- Staff are not to circulate or publish information about a suspected case before the case is confirmed unless advised to do so by Public Health. This includes in school newsletters, on social media, or by sending letters to parents and the school community.
- The confidentiality and privacy of the student is to be considered under the relevant professional codes of conduct. If a case is confirmed, Public Health will advise the parent/carer if the school/centre/community should be notified. Schools should consider the best communication method for doing so and may consult with the School Health Nurse where appropriate. The following wording may be used: 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 consult with Public Health as required. They will also escalate information to the DECYP Executive, as appropriate (for example, in the event of a cluster or outbreak of infectious diseases).
- The site manager to implement deep-cleaning, ventilation or other requirements as detailed in the Infectious Diseases section of the Security and Emergency Management Procedures.

5 Related policies

- [Infection Prevention and Control Guidelines](#)
- [Learner Health Care Policy](#)
- [Security and Emergency Management Policy](#)
- [Work Health and Safety Policy](#) (Staff Only)

6 Related procedures

- [Duty of Care for Students on Departmental Education Sites Procedure](#) (Staff Only)
- [Security and Emergency Management Procedures](#)

7 Supporting information/tools

- [COVID-19 Intranet Page](#) (Staff Only)
- [DECYP Safety Reporting System](#)

- [DECYP Infectious Diseases and your child](#)
- [Tasmanian Department of Health – Infectious Diseases guides and fact sheets](#)
- [Tasmanian Department of Health – Public Health Alerts](#)
- [Tasmanian Department of Health – Public Health](#)

8 Definitions

Educational site/learning setting

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

Infectious Disease

Infectious diseases are diseases that can spread from person to person. They are also called 'communicable' diseases. They can be caused by a specific infectious agent or its toxic products through transmission from an infected person, animal or other sources such as food or contaminated water.

Notifiable Disease

Notifiable diseases are those with a significance for public health. An example is coronavirus (COVID-19). By law, notifiable diseases must be reported to the Director of Public Health.

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 Learning Centre Leader or Program Leader (for example, 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).

9 Legislation

- [Education Act 2016](#)
- [Education and Care Services National Regulations \(Regulation 168\)](#)
- [Public Health Act 1997 \(Tasmania\)](#)

Authorised by: Trudy Pearce, Deputy Secretary - School and Early Years

Contact: Director of Nursing, School Health Nurse Program – Learning Services

Email: learning.services@decyp.tas.gov.au

Phone: (03) 6777 2440 (northern region) or (03) 6165 6466 (southern region)

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