

School District of Escambia County Health Services

Communicable Disease Guidelines

Purpose: The purpose of this procedure is to provide guidelines for managing communicable diseases in the school environment including disease control in individuals as well as disease outbreaks among groups.

Definitions: **Bacteria** - Unicellular microorganisms.

CDC – Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

Communicable disease - An illness due to a specific infectious agent or its toxic products that arises through the transmission of that agent or its products from an infected person, animal, or inanimate reservoir to a susceptible host; either directly or indirectly through an intermediate plant or animal host, vector, or the inanimate environment. (Synonym: infectious disease)

Communicable period - The time or times during which an infectious agent may be transferred directly or indirectly from an infected person to another person, from an infected animal to man, or from an infected person to an animal, including arthropods.

Contact - A person or animal that has been in such association with an infected person or animal or a contaminated environment as to have an opportunity to acquire the infection.

DOH-Escambia – Florida Department of Health in Escambia County

Epidemic - The occurrence, in a community or region, of cases of an illness (or an outbreak) with a frequency clearly in excess of normal expectancy.

Host - A person or other living animal, including birds and arthropods, that affords subsistence or lodgment to an infectious agent under natural (as opposed to experimental) conditions.

Incubation period - The time interval between initial contact with an infectious agent and the first appearance of symptoms associated with the infection.

Infection - The entry and development (of many parasites) or multiplication of an infectious agent in the body of persons or animals.

Infectious agent - An organism (virus; minute organism) that needs a living cell in order to reproduce.

Infectious disease - A clinically manifested disease of humans or animals resulting from an infection.

Organism - Any living thing, plant, or animal. The principal causes of infection are organisms (i.e., infectious agents) belonging to the following groups: bacteria, virus, parasites.

Report of a disease - An official report notifying an appropriate authority of the occurrence of specified communicable or other diseases in humans or animals.

Transmission of infectious agents - Any mechanism by which an infectious agent is spread from a source or reservoir to a person. These mechanisms are as follows:

- A. **Direct Transmission:** Direct and essentially immediate transfer of infectious agents to a receptive portal of entry through which human or animal infection may take place.
- B. **Indirect Transmission:** Indirect transfer of infectious agents through contaminated inanimate materials or objects.
- C. **Airborne:** The dissemination of microbial aerosols, suspensions of particles in the air to a suitable portal of entry, usually the respiratory tract.

Viruses: Minute organisms that require a living cell for reproduction and growth.

Procedure:

- I. For disease-specific guidelines, including recommendations regarding exclusion from school refer to the American Public Health Association's *Control of Communicable Diseases Manual* or CDC website.
- II. Students who are deemed to have a communicable disease and are excluded from school may typically be required to wait 24 hours after cessation of symptoms to return to school. Exclusion period may be longer depending upon disease or outbreak status.
- III. A physician statement may be required before the student is to return to school.
- IV. Students with communicable diseases for which immunization is required by Section 1003.22, Florida Statutes, will be temporarily excluded from school while ill and during recognized periods of communicability and until specified by the contracted health services vendor's Medical Director or their designee, in consultation with the DOH-Escambia, as needed. Any student in the school who does not have adequate immunization documentation will be excluded from the school during a period of outbreak.
- V. Reportable diseases will be reported by a licensed RN or physician as required by Florida Administrative Code 64D-3.030 to DOH-Escambia at 850-595-6683. See pages 51-52 for the list of Reportable Diseases/Conditions in Florida. Direction to clinic will be given by School District Health Services Coordinator.
- VI. A Communicable Disease Tracking Tool will be initiated at a school when a number of students clearly in excess of normal expectancy, (not in the same family), are seen in the school health clinic with the same or similar health symptoms. The clinic staff will notify their RN Supervisor, who will notify the School District Health Services Coordinator. The Health Services Coordinator will notify the School Health Supervisor, Florida Department of Health in Escambia County. If requested, clinic staff will send the Communicable Disease Tracking Tool to DOH-Escambia School Health Supervisor, or designee who will then forward to DOH-Escambia Epidemiology Program.
- VII. If the School District of Escambia County desires to send a parental notification letter of

a communicable illness to a classroom or school, the following practice will be followed:

A. Superintendent or designee will notify DOH-Escambia School Health Supervisor of intent to distribute letter.

B. DOH-Escambia will offer consultative services to the School District, if requested. There are many authoritative resources available on the internet such as the CDC's website, www.cdc.gov and in print such as the American Academy of Pediatrics' Red Book. Other resources include: www.kidshealth.org, www.mass.gov/eohhs/gov/departments/dph/programs/id/epidemiology/factsheets.html, and www.health.ny.gov.

C. The School District will send a notification letter, under School District letterhead, as indicated. It is

appropriate to copy the CDC's fact sheet on the reverse side of the parent/guardian letter.

D. School Nurses and Health Technicians will not send home notification letters without approval from the School Administrator and the School District Health Services Coordinator

E. The list of reportable diseases in Florida can be found at:

[http://www.floridahealth.gov/diseases- and-conditions/disease-reporting-and-management/ documents/reportable diseases/ documents /Reportable Diseases List Practitioners.pdf](http://www.floridahealth.gov/diseases-and-conditions/disease-reporting-and-management/documents/reportable-diseases/documents/Reportable_Diseases_List_Practitioners.pdf)