

COMMUNICABLE DISEASES

Date: August 10, 1999

The Columbia County Board of Education recognizes the importance of protecting the health and welfare of students and other employees from the spread of serious communicable diseases, while simultaneously respecting the right of an infected or contagious person to be treated with dignity and respect.

The administration will follow medical guidelines for communicable diseases as outlined in the Columbia County School System Emergency Guide. The emergency guide is approved and updated each school year by the medical advisor.

AIDS/HIV DISEASEI. Definitions

As used herein, the following terms shall have the meanings indicated.

- A. AIDS (Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome) - a condition characterized by:
1. one or more of the opportunistic diseases diagnosed by methods considered reliable, which are at least moderately indicative of underlying cellular immunodeficiency, and
 2. absence of all known underlying causes of cellular immunodeficiency (other than HIV infection) and absence of all other causes of reduced opportunistic diseases.

Despite satisfying the criteria set out above, a condition will not be considered AIDS if a reliable negative result on testing for serum antibody to HIV is obtained, there is no positive culture for HIV and both a normal or high number of T-helper (OKT4 or LEU3) lymphocytes and a normal or high ratio of T-helper to T-suppressor (OKT8 or LEU2) lymphocytes are present.

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- B. HIV Disease - A descriptive term to describe the disease spectrum, from infection with HIV, through an asymptomatic stage, to a symptomatic stage to an end stage AIDS diagnosis.
1. Clinical Abnormalities (continuing three months or more in the absence of other identifiable cause) and diagnosed by a physician.
 - a. Fever 100 degrees or higher
 - b. Lymphadenopathy
 - c. Diarrhea
 - d. Nightsweats
 - e. Fatigue
 - f. Weight loss - 10% or more than 15 pounds
 - g. Symptoms of the dementia and encephalopathy associated with AIDS
 - h. White spots or blemishes in the mouth
 - i. Opportunistic infections
 2. Laboratory Abnormalities:
 - a. Suppressed helper T-cell
 - b. Depressed helper/suppressor ratio
 - c. One of the following: leukopenia, thrombocytopenia, absolute lymphopenia or anemia
 - d. Elevated serum globulin
 - e. Depressed blastogenesis (pokeweek and PRA)
 - f. Abnormal skin tests (using multitest and equivalent)
- C. Infected student, infected employee, and infected superintendent - Any person who has HIV or AIDS. The term "infected person" may be used to refer to infected students, infected employees, and infected superintendents collectively.
- D. HIV - Human Immunodeficiency Virus

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- E. Reliable positive results on testing for the serum antibody to HIV - a determination made in the following manner: If, after a positive or equivocal result on an enzyme immunoassay (EIA) test, a blood sample is then subjected to a second and third EIA test. If two of the EIA tests have a positive or equivocal result, the Western Blot test is performed. A blood specimen is considered to have reliable positive results on testing for the serum antibody to HIV if it then has a positive Western Blot test result.
- F. Reliable negative results on testing for the serum antibody to HIV - a determination made based upon the following criteria: Negative results on both of two EIA tests or a negative result on the Western Blot test.
- G. Employee - Any employee of the Columbia County School System, except the Superintendent.
- H. Superintendent - Columbia County School Superintendent.

II. Students

The ADA protects students with HIV disease or perceived to have it against discrimination in both public and private school settings.

Students who have HIV disease shall be permitted to attend school as they are physically and mentally capable based on medical judgment of their personal physician and reasonable accommodation.

Reasonable Accommodation:

An accommodation is reasonable unless it imposes either an undue financial hardship or administrative burden on the school system.

After a determination of the student's or employee's medical condition has been made using the criteria set forth above, the school, after consultation with the student's or employee's physician, a public health official knowledgeable about HIV disease and/or the School Board's physician (at the school board's option), shall determine whether reasonable accommodation will allow the student to perform in the classroom.

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The term "undue hardship" is defined as a significant difficulty or expense taking into consideration the cost of the accommodation, the size and resources of the entity/business, the fiscal impact of the expense, etc.

Any infected students who because of their infection need special education and related services shall be referred to the local special education program. The Program for Exceptional Children shall adopt rules and regulations necessary for the delivery of a free appropriate public education to infected students who are in need of special education and related services.

III. Employees

- A. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA, U.S. Public Law 101-336, protects employees/job applicants against discrimination because of their HIV disease or "perception" of HIV disease. Protected areas include discrimination in job application procedures, the hiring or discharge of employees, employee compensation, advancement, job reassignments, job training and other terms, conditions and privileges of employment. Each school should follow ADA directives on employment issues.
 - 1. Workers who have AIDS or are known to be HIV infected shall be permitted to work as long as they are physically and mentally capable of performing the essential functions of their personal positions, as determined by their appointing authority and their personal physicians.
- B. Under the ADA, an employer is prohibited from using diagnostic tests to screen out job applicants or to deny services to clients/students.
 - 1. School staff are prohibited from requesting HIV tests on job applicants, current employees, prospective students or students currently enrolled in the school system.
 - 2. Employees who wish to be tested for HIV can have the test conducted at any local health department for little or no cost. School staff should not request the test results.

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3. Students may also be tested at local public health departments. Public health will encourage minors who wish to be tested to involve parents, guardians or custodians in the decision. However, public health AIDS policy permits testing of minors with or without parental consent. School staff should not request test results on students either.

C. Employee Responsibilities Toward People with HIV Disease:

1. Employees may not excuse themselves from teaching students with HIV disease. Nor may employees excuse themselves from working with other employees who may have HIV disease.
2. Employees, after having completed the HIV/AIDS education program, who have some concerns or questions about providing services to people with HIV disease, will be provided counseling, as directed by their appointing authority, concerning information on the disease and the HIV/AIDS policy. If the employee then refuses to perform the work assignment, the employee is subject to adverse action.
3. All HIV infected students and employees will be treated with dignity and compassion. Unless directed otherwise by their physician, employees/students with HIV disease shall not be segregated, sent home or deprived of privileges afforded other employees/students based solely upon determination of HIV disease or perception of HIV disease.

IV. Administrative Findings:

This School Board adopts the epidemiologic research findings of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and other worldwide health research organizations that HIV is not transmitted by casual contact in office or school settings.

Further, the school board adopts findings of the Georgia General Assembly that: "Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome (AIDS) and its causative agent, Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) ... is largely transmitted through sexual contacts and intravenous drug use, **not through casual contact**, and is preventable. The key component of the fight against AIDS is education. Through public education and counseling our citizens can learn how the disease is transmitted and, thus how to protect themselves and prevent its spread. The Department of Human Resources is

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encouraged to continue its efforts to educate all Georgians about the disease, its causative agent, and its means of transmission. In addition, voluntary testing should be encouraged for anyone who feels at risk of infection". --Georgia Law, Act 1440 (1988), p 1799, Section 1

V. HIV Testing and Reporting

- A. Under the ADA, an employer is prohibited from using diagnostic tests to screen out job applicants or to deny services to clients/students.
 - 1. School staff are prohibited from requesting HIV tests on job applicants, current employees, prospective students or students currently enrolled in the school system.
 - 2. Employees who wish to be tested for HIV can have the test conducted at any local health department for little or no cost. School staff should not request the test results.
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VI. AIDS Confidential Information

AIDS Confidential Information (ACI) is defined in Official Code of Georgia Annotated (O.C.G.A.) Section 31-22-9.1 (a) (2) as information which discloses that a person:

- 1. has been diagnosed as having AIDS;
- 2. has been or is being treated for AIDS;
- 3. has been determined to be infected with HIV;
- 4. has submitted to an HIV test;
- 5. has had positive or negative result from an HIV test;
- 6. has sought and received counseling regarding AIDS; or
- 7. has been determined to be a person at risk of being infected with AIDS;

and which permits the identification of that person. Notwithstanding anything else to the contrary herein, the Columbia County School System will maintain confidentiality.

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The Columbia County Board of Education shall not disclose medical information about a student or employee with HIV infection or other communicable disease without the consent of the employee or the student or his or her parent or guardian, whichever is applicable, or only as required by law or court order. Ref State Board of Education Rule 160-1-3-.03.

VII. Education

A. Students:

AIDS education shall be integrated into the health and/or science curriculum of the Columbia County School System.

In grades K-5, general information about the seriousness of AIDS should be included in the larger curriculum of personal hygiene, respect for your body, safety rules concerning medicines and drugs, development of positive self-concept, and accepting responsibility for your own health and that of others.

In grades 6 and 7, the curriculum shall be expanded to include the specific disease entity caused by the human immune deficiency virus and its effect on the normal immune system.

In grades 8-12, the curriculum shall be expanded to include modes of transmission and methods to prevent the spread of AIDS with emphasis on abstinence from sexual relations.

B. Employees:

Program on AIDS, its effects, and its spread as well as procedures for handling blood and other fluids shall be provided at least annually for all Columbia County Board of Education employees. The Superintendent of Schools shall assign responsibilities to ensure this policy is enforced and employees are trained.

VIII. Communicable Disease and Other Bloodborne Pathogens Exposure Plan

- Purpose:
- A. Identify personnel covered by the Standard.
 - B. Analyze potential job hazards.
 - C. Reduce the risk of exposure to bloodborne pathogens on the job.

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DEFINITION: Bloodborne pathogens exposure plan is an incident where the skin or mucous membranes comes in contact with a possibly infective bodily fluid without the protection of a barrier. If an exposure incident should occur, wash area with soap and water or if the mucous membranes are involved, flush area with water. Inform your supervisor to complete an accident report form and see a workman's compensation doctor within 24 hours.

PROCEDURE FOR HANDLING FIRST AID INCIDENTS AND BODY FLUIDS IN THE SCHOOL AREA:

1. Wear disposable gloves while attending any injury.
2. Treat all body fluids as if they are contaminated with the hepatitis B. Virus (HBV), Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) or other bloodborne pathogens.
3. Place soiled bandages, materials and gloves properly in a biohazardous container. Wash hands immediately with an anti-bacterial soap and water.
4. Never pick up broken pieces of a container with your hands, use gloves, broom and dust pan. Dispose of broken pieces properly in a biohazardous receptacle.
5. If cleaning vomit or other bodily fluids, wear disposable gloves and clean equipment used with a cleaner composed of one part bleach to ten parts water. Dispose of paper towels and absorbent materials in proper biohazardous containers.
6. Teach students and co-workers never to touch another person's blood or bodily fluids without a protection barrier between them and that person's bodily fluid.
7. Red biohazardous containers and red bags will be kept in a central location. Sealed red biohazardous bags may be placed in regular trash dumpster.

Worker's compensation physician to provide recommendations for those who report an occupational exposure to blood or other infection materials within 24 hours of incident.

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List of job titles or tasks which pose Risk "A" for bloodborne pathogens:

School Nurse - A

First Aid Person - Safety Person - A

Special Education Personnel who handle bodily fluids -A

Custodian who cleans up bodily fluid spills -A

Physical Education Teachers

All "A" classification jobs should be trained in bloodborne pathogen safety and protocol for exposure yearly.

Personal protective equipment to be supplied by the county:

1. Gloves
2. Disposable aprons for special education personnel
3. Biohazardous containers (marked bags) and red bags.

PROCEDURE: NO

ADOPTED: 07/26/94

REVISED: 11/22/94,02/23/99

Columbia County Board of Education