



St Brigid's Catholic School
New Norfolk

**INFECTIOUS DISEASES AND
CONDITIONS POLICY**

RATIONALE

Infectious diseases and conditions include those infectious diseases and conditions which can occur in a school environment, placing at risk the health and well being of others. Examples would include chicken pox; conjunctivitis; diarrhoea; hand, foot and mouth disease; scabies; head lice and hepatitis. Any member of the school community, staff, students and parents, may contract these diseases and conditions.

AIMS

- To provide a safe and healthy school environment.
- To provide information to staff and parents about infectious diseases and conditions.

PROCEDURES

- The Department of Health and Human Services has prepared a schedule entitled "*Infectious Diseases*" (Appendix A). The school acts in accordance with this schedule.
- The diseases listed in the schedule (Appendix A) are presently deemed to be infectious, contagious or harmful to the health of other people in a school. The minimum periods that the sufferer should not attend school are indicated. These recommended periods are a guide, which may be modified in individual cases. Further advice is available from the Department of Health and Human Services.
- Parents are asked to make themselves familiar with the guidelines in the schedule and are asked to follow them in relation to infectious diseases and conditions.
- Parents are asked to notify the school if their child/children exhibit symptoms of or have been diagnosed with an infectious disease or condition.
- The person/s concerned should be removed from the school environment until such time as the disease or condition has been treated and is no longer infectious, so that no further risk exists to the health and well being of others.
- If there is uncertainty about the diagnosis of a disease or condition, the person/s should be removed from the school environment until such time as a relevant authority has either positively diagnosed the condition or confirmed that the person/s do not have an infectious disease or condition. .

- If members of the school community have been placed at risk of infection, formal notification to this effect should be conveyed to all relevant members of the school community.
- Where notification is officially issued from the school, such notification will include, where available, a brief factual description of the disease or condition and the treatment required.
- When a person returns after being excluded from the school environment, written notification is required from a suitably qualified person, e.g. a medical practitioner, advising the Principal that the disease or condition has been treated and no further health risk remains.

This policy and associated practices will be reviewed as part of the St Brigid's Catholic School policy review cycle.

Implemented March 1993
Amended August 2008, May 2012, October 2013

APPENDIX A:

Infectious Diseases

Chicken Pox (Varicella)

Symptoms

An infection starting with a cold, headache and temperature. Small red pimples appear on the body first then on the limbs changing to yellow blisters that then scab and drop off after about 12 days.

Treatment

Calamine or soothing solution to relieve itching. See your doctor if concerned.

Notify School

Highly advisable. The school needs to be aware of contagious illnesses in the community. Also advise that your child will be absent.

Keep Child at Home

Your child will need to be at home until at least 5 days after the last spot appears or until well. (Some scabs may still be present when your child returns to school).

Other Comments

Incubation period from 2 to 3 weeks, commonly 13 to 17 days. Incubation period: the time between exposure to an infection and appearance of the first symptoms.

Conjunctivitis

Symptoms

Infection of the eye - eye is red and weepy and often has a discharge. Usually forms dry yellowish crust on eyelashes after sleep. Highly contagious.

Treatment

Drops or ointment prescribed by your doctor.

Notify School

Highly advisable. The school needs to be aware of contagious illnesses in affected students. Also advise that your child will be absent.

Keep Child at Home

Your child will need to be at home until your doctor treats the eye and the discharge from eyes has ceased.

Diarrhoea

Symptoms

Frequent, loose motions often accompanied with a feeling of unwellness and vomiting. There are many causes.

Treatment

If diarrhoea is persistent (more than 2 days) see your doctor.

Notify School

Advise the school that your child will be absent.

Keep Child at Home

Your child will be feeling unwell so will need to be at home until the diarrhoea has ceased.

Other Comments

Extra fluids need to be taken by mouth. Extra attention to hand washing is important to prevent further infection.

Diphtheria

Symptoms

Rare in Australia since the effective use of vaccination. A disease affecting the nose, tonsils and throat passages with symptoms of sore throat, swollen neck glands and discharge from the nose.

Treatment

See your doctor for diagnosis and specific treatment.

Notify School

Advise the school that your child will be absent.

Keep Child at Home

Your child will need to be at home until a medical certificate of recovery is received.

Other Comments

Immunisation is available and recommended in accordance with the current Immunisation Schedule.

German Measles (Rubella)

Symptoms

A viral infection usually starting with a fine rash on the body. The child is off colour and there may be some swelling of glands in the neck.

Treatment

Bed rest. See your doctor if concerned.

Notify School

Highly advisable because it is contagious. Rubella can cause deformities in babies if acquired during pregnancy. Female staff of child-bearing age should ensure their immune status is adequate.

Keep Child at Home

Even if your child does appear well, he/she may not attend school for four days after the rash appeared.

Other Comments

Immunisation is available and recommended in accordance with the current Immunisation Schedule.

Glandular Fever

Symptoms

An infectious illness caused by a virus. May have tender swollen glands, high temperature, headache, sore throat and loss of appetite.

Treatment

See your doctor for diagnosis and specific treatment.

Notify School

Advisable because the school needs to be aware of infectious illnesses in affected students. Advise the school that your child may be absent for a while.

Keep Child at Home

Your child will possibly feel unwell and need to stay at home until feeling better. Can attend school if feeling well.

Other comments

Your child may feel weak or tired for some time.

Haemophilus influenzae type b (Hib)

Symptoms

Hib was the most frequent life threatening infection in children before introduction of the vaccine. Can cause meningitis (fever, vomiting, headache, irritability, neck stiffness), pneumonia and infection of the joints.

Treatment

See your doctor for diagnosis and specific treatment.

Notify School

Advisable because the school needs to be aware of infectious illnesses in affected students. Advise the school that your child will be absent for a while.

Keep Child at Home

Your child will need to stay at home until a medical certificate of recovery is received.

Other Comments

Immunisation is available and recommended in accordance with the current Immunisation Schedule.

Hand, Foot and Mouth

Symptoms

A viral infection, mostly in young children. The child is mildly unwell with blisters in mouth and on hands and feet.

Treatment

Soothing lotion or bath for rash. See your doctor if concerned.

Notify School

Advisable because it can spread in the classroom situation.

Keep Child at Home

Your child should stay home if she/he is feeling unwell.

Other Comments

It is important for children to follow good hand washing and cleaning techniques.

Head Lice (Pediculosis)

Symptoms

Small insects that live on the head that feed by sucking blood. Their eggs (nits) stick tightly to the hair.

Treatment

Latest guidelines on head lice treatment

Other Comments

Remember, head lice are a nuisance, and are sometimes a source of embarrassment, but not a condition with a significant level of health risk.

Hepatitis

Symptoms

Inflammation of the liver. Hepatitis A is spread by food, drinks & water contaminated with infectious faecal matter. Hepatitis B is sexually transmitted & the virus can be present in all bodily fluids of an infectious person. Hepatitis C caused by blood to blood contact and occurs when infected blood enters another person's blood system through broken skin or mucous membrane.

Treatment

See your doctor for specific treatment and advice.

Notify School

Parents must advise the school of Hepatitis A because of its highly infectious nature. You do not have to tell anyone if your child is Hep B & C positive. If you do choose to tell anyone at school, then the information cannot be passed on unless you have given written permission.

Keep Child at Home

Hepatitis A virus is excreted in the faeces for up to 2 weeks before the onset of illness & for at least 1 week afterwards. Your child will be infectious for a week after the onset of jaundice (yellowing of the skin and whites of the eyes) & must be kept at home for at least this period.

Other Comments

Immunisation - Hepatitis B vaccine is recommended. Hep B vaccination is now part of the childhood immunisation regime in all states of Australia.

HIV/AIDS

Symptoms

AIDS is a condition in which the immune system, the body's natural defence against disease is attacked. HIV is the name of the virus that can cause AIDS.

Treatment

See your doctor for management and advice.

Notify School

You do not have to tell anyone if your child is HIV positive. If you do choose to tell anyone at school, then the information cannot be passed on unless you have given written permission.

Keep Child at Home

Your child may attend school unless feeling unwell. The HIV positive child is at risk of infection from other children's illnesses so may need to be kept at home if there is an outbreak of infectious illnesses (eg measles, flu).

Other Comments

There is no evidence that HIV/AIDS is spread from child to child in schools through normal social contact.

Influenza

Symptoms

Can be a serious viral infection starting with a temperature, dry cough and tiredness. Other symptoms include headache, muscle aches and pains, weakness, sore throat and running nose.

Treatment

No specific treatment but paracetamol can be used for the relief of temperature, headaches, muscle aches and pains. It is important to rest and drink plenty of fluids. See your doctor for accurate diagnosis and if symptoms do not improve.

Notify school

Highly advisable. The school needs to be aware of contagious illnesses in the community. Also advise that your child will be absent.

Other comments

A very effective vaccine is available.

Influenza is often confused with the common cold but is far worse than a cold or sinus and bronchitis infections. Most people recover from influenza within 2 to 7 days but while they are sick they are usually very unwell. The incubation period for influenza is 1 to 3 days.

Measles

Symptoms

An acute viral infection. Most people are quite ill, with fever, tiredness, coughing, runny nose, inflamed eyes and a dislike of light. A blotchy rash appears between the 3rd and 7th day and spreads over the whole body. A blood test is the most accurate way to diagnose measles.

Treatment

Bed rest. See your doctor if concerned. Non immunised contacts need to be excluded. Advice should be sought from the Department of Health and Human Services, 1800 671 738.

Notify School

It is highly infectious so school should be advised. Immunisation can be offered to contacts in times of epidemic.

Keep Child at Home

Your child has to stay at home until 5 days after the rash appears - or until your child is well.

Other Comments

Immunisation is available and recommended in accordance with the current Immunisation Schedule.

Meningitis

Symptoms

Inflammation of the lining of the brain due to bacterial or viral infections. Your child is unwell with headache, fever and neck stiffness. Can be life-threatening, but one type (HIB) can be prevented through immunisation

Treatment

See your doctor for treatment. Family and school contacts may also need treatment to prevent infection.

Notify School

It is advisable because some types of meningitis can be contagious and your child will be absent from school for a period of time.

Keep Child at Home

It is likely your child will feel unwell so will need to spend some time at home.

Other Comments

All children under 5 should be vaccinated with HIB Infection Immunisation.

Mumps

Symptoms

A viral infection causing a general unwell feeling. The glands between the ears and jaw bone become swollen and sore. It may affect one or both sides. In adult males it may affect the testicles.

Treatment

Bed rest and drink plenty of fluids. See your doctor if concerned.

Notify School

Highly advisable as with all infectious conditions.

Keep Child at Home

Your child has to stay at home for 9 days after he/she first became unwell or until swelling goes down (whichever is sooner)

Other Comments

Immunisation is available and recommended in accordance with the current Immunisation Schedule

Poliomyelitis (Polio)

Symptoms

A viral infection fortunately now rare as the result of immunisation. Polio may cause mild symptoms or very severe illness. It is a gastrointestinal virus that causes fever, vomiting and muscle stiffness, and can affect the nerves and cause permanent crippling.

Treatment

See your doctor for treatment. Polio is still a problem in countries overseas.

Notify School

It is highly contagious so the school should be informed.

Keep Child at Home

Your child will have to be away from school for at least 2 weeks from the onset of the illness. A medical certificate stating that the child is ready for return to school is necessary.

Other Comments

Immunisation is available and recommended in accordance with the current Immunisation Schedule.

Ringworm

Symptoms

A ring shaped, very itchy fungal skin infection that is contagious.

Treatment

Ointment obtained from chemist or doctor.

Notify School

It is advisable because ringworm can be passed on to other children in the class.

Keep Child at Home

Your child must stay at home until the day after treatment from your doctor or chemist has commenced.

Scabies

Symptoms

A very itchy, red skin infection caused by an itch mite. The itching is often more intense when very warm in bed.

Treatment

Application of recommended lotion as per directions. All household members must be treated at the same time.

Notify School

You should advise the school because scabies are easily passed from person to person by contact.

Keep Child at Home

Your child must stay at home until the day after treatment from your doctor or chemist has commenced.

Other Comments

Itching may continue for several days. This does not mean that treatment has been ineffective.

School Sores (Impetigo)

Symptoms

A very contagious skin infection. Starts as a red patch and develops into crusty yellow sores.

Treatment

See your doctor for treatment.

Notify School

You should advise the school because school sores are highly infectious and can spread quickly throughout your child's class.

Keep Child at Home

Your child must stay at home until treatment from your doctor has commenced. Sores on exposed areas must be covered with a dressing.

Slapped Cheek Syndrome (Fifth Disease)

Symptoms

A mild viral disease mainly occurring in late winter and early spring. Symptoms are fever, red cheeks and an itchy, lace like rash occurring on the body and limbs. Infected person often has a runny nose and sore throat. Virus gets passed through contact with respiratory droplets from the nose and throat of an infected individual.

Treatment

No specific treatment exists for this illness. Complications are rare, however those with blood disorders or weakened immune systems should, where possible, avoid exposure to potentially infected persons. Those caring for infected children are advised to wash hands frequently and avoid sharing utensils.

Keep Child at Home

Those infected don't need to be excluded from school because the most infectious period is before the rash appears and the diagnosis is made.

Other Comments

Good hand washing practices, not sharing food, utensils or handkerchiefs will assist in controlling the spread of this virus. Surfaces contaminated by respiratory secretions need to be cleaned thoroughly. Pregnant women should consult with their doctor if they have any concerns.

Tetanus

Symptoms

Caused by bacteria that can contaminate punctured wounds, cuts or burns. The disease attacks the nervous system, causing muscular spasms first felt in the neck and jaw muscles

Treatment

See your doctor for treatment.

Other Comments

Immunisation is available and recommended in accordance with the current Immunisation Schedule.

Whooping Cough (Pertussis)

The latest information from the Department of Health and Human Services.

Symptoms

A respiratory infection which can be very serious in infants. The cough usually persists for weeks. It is prevented through immunisation with 'triple antigen'.

Treatment

See your doctor for immediate treatment.

Notify School

You should advise the school. It is very contagious and all contacts should be informed. Advice should be sought from the Department of Health and Human Services 1800 671 738, Public and Environmental Health Service.

Keep Child at Home

Your child will be excluded from school for at least 5 days after antibiotic treatment has started and until well. Unimmunised family members under 7 years may also be excluded from school until they have received a course of antibiotics.

Other Comments

Immunisation is available and recommended in accordance with the current Immunisation Schedule. Close contacts (eg family members) should receive a course of antibiotics.