TO: All Employees

TOPIC: PRECAUTIONS TO PREVENT THE SPREAD OF INFECTIOUS DISEASES IN THE SCHOOL SETTING

The San Juan Unified School District is committed to assuring a safe, clean, secure environment for all of its students and staff. In keeping with this commitment, this memorandum has been developed and disseminated to all district employees. It incorporates guidelines from the California Department of Education and the Centers for Disease Control. The basic principle promoted by these guidelines is to use Universal Precautions. The memorandum should be read carefully and retained in a place that is readily accessible for future reference.

The epidemic of Human Immunodeficiency Virus/Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome (HIV/AIDS) infection has created great interest in what precautions can be taken to prevent the spread of all infectious diseases. The spread of HIV and Hepatitis B infections has been the impetus for taking a critical look at how the spread of all infections can be prevented in schools.

Because of the concern generated by HIV/AIDS infection, the California Legislature has mandated that schools inform their employees annually about appropriate methods for preventing the spread of all infectious diseases with specific suggestions about HIV/AIDS and Hepatitis B infections (Health and Safety Code, Part 1 of Division 1, Section 199.81).

In addition, on January 8, 1993, Cal-OSHA adopted the Bloodborne Pathogens Standard (8-CCR-5193) which requires employers to develop plans and adopt practices which protect employees from unnecessary exposure to blood and contaminated body fluids. In compliance with this Bloodborne Pathogens Standard, a District Committee developed an Exposure Control Plan which covers the following areas:

1. Exposure determination for employee infection control
2. Hepatitis-B vaccination
3. Control methods including:
   - Universal Precautions
   - Engineering controls
   - Work practice controls
   - Personal protective equipment
4. Post exposure evaluation and follow-up
5. Regulated waste disposal
6. Labels and bags
7. Housekeeping practices
8. Laundry practices
9. Training and education of employees
10. Record-keeping

A copy of the Exposure Control Plan is available for review at every school site and program office within the school district. The Exposure Control Plan is part of the district’s Illness and Injury Prevention Program and can be found at each school site in the same binder.

Your continued good health is important to the district. It is recommended you review the attached guidelines and incorporate the Universal Precautions into your daily routine.

UNIVERSAL PRECAUTIONS

Universal Precautions are precautions used in all situations and not limited to use with individuals known to be carrying a specific virus such as HIV or the virus causing Hepatitis B. In the school setting, those precautions should include: handwashing, using gloves, careful trash disposal, using disinfectants, and modifications of cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR).

It is critical that Universal Precautions be used in every instance when handling blood and body fluids because (1) there may be situations where we do not know that a person is infected; (2) we should not wait until we encounter an
identified infected student or adult before practicing infectious disease prevention techniques; and (3) for legal reasons related to confidentiality, there is no requirement that health officials notify school authorities of the results of blood tests for antibodies to HIV or Hepatitis B infections.

The term "body fluids" includes: blood, semen, vaginal secretions, drainage from scrapes and cuts, feces, urine, vomitus, respiratory secretions (such as nasal drainage) and saliva.

HAND WASHING
1. Thorough HAND WASHING is the single most important factor in preventing the spread of infectious diseases and should be practiced routinely by all school personnel and taught to students as a routine hygienic practice.

2. All staff should wash their hands in the following circumstances:
   - Before handling food, drinking, eating or smoking.
   - After toileting.
   - After contact with body fluids or items soiled with body fluids.
   - After touching or caring for students, especially those with nose, mouth, or other discharges.

3. Scheduling time for students to wash hands before eating is suggested to encourage the practice.

4. **How to wash hands:** Wet hands with running water and apply soap from a dispenser. Lather well and wash vigorously for 15 to 20 seconds. Soap suspends easily-removable soil and microorganisms, allowing them to be washed off. Running water is necessary to carry away dirt and debris. Rinse well under running water with water draining from wrist to fingertips. Leave water running. Dry hands well with a paper towel and then turn off the faucet with paper towel. Discard the towel.

5. Classroom instruction about proper hand washing can be integrated into health instruction at all grade levels.

6. **Warning:** If soap and water are not available and an alcohol–based hand sanitizer is used as an alternative, please caution students to not lick their hands or ingest any of the hand sanitizer. Although rare, there are some reported cases in very young children of alcohol poisoning from consumption of hand sanitizers.

FIRST AID INVOLVING BODY FLUIDS AND CPR
1. Avoid direct skin contact with body fluids. Allow the student or staff person to clean his/her own body fluid spill when this can be done safely. If direct skin contact occurs, hands and other affected skin areas should be washed with soap and water immediately after contact has ended.

2. An "occupational exposure incident" is defined as: specific eye, mouth or other mucous membrane, non-intact skin or parenteral contact with BLOOD or blood-tinged body fluids resulting from the performance of an employee's duties. If an "incident" occurs, the following steps should be taken by the affected employee:
   - Immediately wash the skin area exposed to body fluids with soap and running water. If it is the eye or mouth, flush repeatedly with water.
   - Report the incident to your Supervisor and include the names of everyone directly involved.
   - Call the Risk Management Department (979-8800) to report the incident and to complete the appropriate forms.
   - The employee may be directed to seek medical evaluation from a local clinic or his/her personal physician to determine the need for Hepatitis B vaccination or other treatment.

3. Disposable single-use latex or vinyl gloves should be used when contact with body fluids is anticipated (such as bloody nose, diapering, etc.). Gloves are standard components of first aid supplies in the schools so they are readily accessible for emergencies and regular care given in school health offices.

4. Devices that prevent backflow of fluids from the mouth of a victim being given CPR should be used by rescuers in the school setting. These devices are available through local office and medical supply companies.

5. Any soiled clothing should be placed in a plastic bag, sealed and placed in a second plastic bag, labeled with the student’s name, and sent home with the student. Use a red biohazard bag, available from your custodian, if soiled with "fluid" blood.

TRASH DISPOSAL
1. All wastebaskets should be lined with disposable plastic bags. In areas where blood is present, physical care is provided or personal care occurs (e.g., health office, restrooms, locker rooms, science classrooms, etc.), disposable plastic bags should be replaced daily.
2. If needles, syringes, or lancets are used in the school setting or found on the school premises, a special puncture-proof container is available from the custodian for disposal of used materials. Place intact needles and syringes in the designated container. Do not bend or break needles and do not recap needles. The Custodial Supervisors will pick up filled containers. Health Services will dispose of the containers with a medical waste hauler.

3. Waste which contains recognizable "fluid" blood is considered biohazardous waste and must be double bagged with the outside bag color coded red and appropriately labeled. Any filled red bags will also be picked up by the Custodial Supervisors.

   Please note: band aids, feminine hygiene products or dressings with a small amount of dried blood are NOT considered biohazardous waste and may be disposed of in plastic bags as regular trash.

USING DISINFECTANTS
1. Environmental surfaces contaminated with body fluids should be cleaned promptly with disposable towels and approved disinfectant. Disposable gloves should be worn. Disposable items should be discarded in a plastic-lined wastebasket.

2. Mop solution used to clean up body fluid spills should consist of the district approved disinfectant. Used mops should be soaked in this solution 30 minutes and rinsed thoroughly before reusing.

3. After clean up, remove gloves and wash hands.

4. If carpet is soiled, clean up immediately with absorbent material and disinfect with district approved disinfectant.

INFECTION DISEASES

WHAT IS HIV/AIDS INFECTION?
AIDS (Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome) is the advanced stage of HIV (Human Immunodeficiency Virus) infection. The virus attacks the body's immune system, leaving it vulnerable to life-threatening opportunistic infections and malignancies. The virus also may directly attack the central nervous system. Persons infected with HIV frequently have no apparent symptoms for many years and may appear to be in good health. More than half of the persons in the United States who have been diagnosed with AIDS (the advanced stage of HIV infection) have died. There is no known cure for AIDS.

HOW IS HIV INFECTION SPREAD?
Everyone infected with HIV, even a person without apparent symptoms, is capable of transmitting the infection. HIV infection can be transmitted by:
1. Sexual activity involving direct contact with blood, semen, or vaginal secretions of someone who is infected.
2. Sharing intravenous (IV) needles and/or syringes with someone who is infected.
3. Accidental needle sticks with needles containing infected blood.
4. Direct contact with infected blood on broken skin or mucous membranes (eyes, nose, mouth).
5. Receiving a blood transfusion or blood products from someone who is infected (a screening test has been used since 1985 that has reduced this risk significantly).
6. Sharing unsterilized instruments for tattooing, ear piercing, shaving or acupuncture with someone who is infected.
7. Being born to or breast fed by an infected mother.

THE HIV/AIDS VIRUS CANNOT BE TRANSMITTED OR SPREAD

- Through air or water.
- By coughing or sneezing.
- On surfaces such as phones, door knobs, office equipment, tools, etc.
- By using drinking fountains, toilets, sinks, etc.
- Through kissing or hugging.

SYMPTOMS OF HIV/AIDS
A person could be infected with HIV and not know it because it can take years to damage the immune system enough for symptoms to appear. When symptoms do appear, they often seem like many common illnesses and may include:

- Fever
- Swollen Glands
- Loss of Appetite
- Night Sweats
- Diarrhea
Only a blood test will identify the presence of HIV. As the HIV infected person becomes unable to fight off infections and certain illnesses, they are diagnosed with AIDS. There is no cure for HIV or AIDS.

HIV/AIDS INFORMATION RESOURCES

Education/Prevention: Sacramento County HIV and Communicable Disease Prevention Program (875-6022).
Testing: Sacramento County Anonymous Test Site (874-7720) by appointment only.
Information: Suicide Prevention Hotline (368-3111).

WHAT IS HEPATITIS B?
Hepatitis B is an infection of the liver caused by a virus present in blood and other body fluids of infected persons. Less than 50 percent of persons who become infected show symptoms of illness. The onset of symptoms may appear 6 weeks to 6 months after becoming infected with the virus. Death is uncommon in Hepatitis B, but 5 to 10 percent of those infected become long term virus carriers. Up to 25 percent of carriers may develop serious chronic liver disease.

HOW IS HEPATITIS B SPREAD?
An infected person can transmit Hepatitis B as long as the virus remains in the blood. Transmission may occur as early as 4 weeks before any symptoms occur. A small number of people will carry the virus in their blood for years and are known as chronic carriers. Hepatitis B is transmitted by:
1. Sexual activity involving direct contact with blood, semen, or vaginal secretions of someone who is infected.
2. Sharing unsterilized instruments used for tattooing, ear piercing, shaving or acupuncture with someone who is infected.
3. Sharing intravenous (IV) needles and/or syringes with someone who is infected.
4. Direct contact with infected blood on broken skin or mucous membrane (eyes, mouth, nose).
5. Accidental needle sticks with needles containing blood from a virus carrier.
7. Sharing toothbrushes contaminated with infected blood.

SYMPTOMS OF HEPATITIS B
The symptoms of Hepatitis B may include:
- Mild Fever
- Fatigue
- Loss of appetite
- Abdominal pain
- Nausea
- Muscle aches
- Joint aches
- Skin becomes yellowish (Jaundice)
- Vomiting
- Urine turns dark

HEPATITIS B VACCINATION
The Cal-OSHA Bloodborne Pathogens Standard requires employers to offer the Hepatitis B vaccination series free to those employees who are determined to be occupationally at risk for exposure to blood or potentially infectious materials as a result of their job duties. The following district employee groups are considered to be eligible for the vaccinations: Laurel Ruff (all staff), Marvin Marshall (special education), Richardson Center (all staff), Rio Americano (special education), Starr King (special education), MSH substitutes, special education bus drivers and bus attendants, Orange Grove (all staff), ED staff at La Vista and other sites, school nurses, LVN’s, health assistants, plumbers, custodians, ILS teachers, coaches, elementary and middle school secretaries, adaptive P.E. teachers, speech therapists, Children’s Receiving Home staff, noon-duty aids, campus monitors, and full inclusion staff at designated sites.

New employees in the groups listed above are eligible and may request the vaccine at the time of employment. Employees listed above who initially declined the vaccinations may opt to take them at any time. District Health benefit plans, (WHA and Kaiser) provide San Juan employee members with Hepatitis B vaccinations as a covered benefit.

Other employees not listed above may wish to discuss the need for Hepatitis B vaccine with their primary care physician.
POLICIES AND LAWS

The student/employee with HIV/AIDS not only deserves our support but our confidentiality as well. The law states that information regarding the HIV/AIDS status of an individual may only be shared with specifically named persons.

- While adults may grant their own written permission to share their HIV/AIDS status, parents or guardians of children must grant written permission to share information about students under 18 years of age.
- Sharing information about HIV/AIDS infected persons without consent is prohibited by law, and that person is subject to a civil penalty and a fine not to exceed $5000.
- Students must not be excluded from school or placed specially or solely because of their HIV/AIDS status.
- Only a student's physician may determine if school attendance is inappropriate due to the student's vulnerability to infectious diseases present at school.
- The current law does not require parents or physicians to inform school officials of the student's HIV/AIDS status. If disclosure by student or parent is made, it must be kept confidential unless written permission is given.
- Regarding the legalities of testing, it is a misdemeanor to disclose blood test results of HIV/AIDS except by written authorization.

Board Policies: 4119.41, 4119.42, 4219.41, 4219.42, 4319.41, 4319.42, 5141.22, 5141.23, 5112.2
Health & Safety Codes: 199.20-199.27, 199.30-199.4

Questions regarding this memorandum may be directed to Linda Bessire, Ed.D., Director, Health Services (971-7643), or Amy Northam, Risk Manager, (971-7062).

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