



**HELENA RIVER  
STEINER SCHOOL**

# Communicable Disease and Pandemic Management Policy

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2		03/2018	Minor formatting amendments	TM
3		05/2020	Minor Amendments	TM
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## Table of Contents

1	Introduction .....	3
2	Policy .....	3
3	Procedure.....	3
3.1	Prevention of Communicable Disease .....	3
3.2	Attendance of Students who are Unwell.....	3
3.3	Communicable Disease .....	4
3.4	Pandemic.....	4
4	References .....	6
5	Appendices.....	7
5.1	Appendix I: Contact Numbers – Department of Health Metropolitan and Regional Public Health Units	7
5.2	Appendix II: Notifiable Diseases.....	8
5.3	Appendix III: Communicable Disease Guidelines, 2017.....	9
5.4	Appendix IV: Pandemic Influenza Guidelines, 2014. ....	9
5.5	Appendix V: Non-Government Schools Reportable Incident Report Form .....	9

## 1 INTRODUCTION

Helena River Steiner School (HRSS) may, at some time, be affected by a communicable disease and pandemic that could threaten the safety of staff, students, security of assets, the continuity of the school's operation and its reputation in the community.

Management within HRSS must be able to respond rapidly and effectively to such a situation, as action taken in the early stages will be crucial to achieving a successful outcome.

This Policy is essentially a Management Plan. The Management Plan is a framework for the management of, and recovery from, a communicable disease (possibly pandemic) that might affect the operation of the school.

The School communicable disease and pandemic management plan is designed to:

- Minimise sickness and death
- Maintain educational programs
- Minimise social and emotional disruption to students and staff
- Minimise economic disruption.

## 2 POLICY

HRSS is committed to providing a safe environment for its students and staff. The school takes daily action in promoting the prevention of disease and acts in accordance with the advice provided by the Department of Health in managing communicable diseases, if a student or staff member has a communicable disease.

## 3 PROCEDURE

### 3.1 Prevention of Communicable Disease

Procedures to minimise the risk of cross infection are to be in line with the recommendations outlined in Staying Healthy in Childcare (5th Ed.) and Health Department of Western Australia Communicable Disease Publication (2010):

- Hand washing
- Exclusion guidelines
- Immunisation
- Cleaning of the premises
- Dealing with spills of blood and bodily fluids

### 3.2 Attendance of Students who are Unwell

If a parent insists that their child attend school and the Principal believes that the child is not well enough to attend, the Principal can request the parent to provide a medical certificate to confirm that the child is fit to attend school (Section 27, School Education Act 1999).

### 3.3 Communicable Disease

#### Action by Parents

If parents suspect their child of having an infectious condition or early symptoms of illness, they will be asked to:

- Keep their child at home until symptoms have been checked by their local GP and therefore protecting their child and other children in the school from unnecessary exposure to illness. Children with a contagious disease must be kept at home until they are no longer contagious;
- The school must be notified immediately if a child is ill or diagnosed with having a contagious disease such as having any of the following: Head lice, Conjunctivitis, Gastroenteritis, Chickenpox, measles, Whooping cough, Ring worm, German measles, Mumps, Hand and Foot disease, Covid-19. (Refer Appendix II for an extensive list)
- If their child has commenced on a course of Antibiotics, they must be kept home until the medication has time to take effect before they return to the school (timeline to be advised by Health Department)

#### Action by Education Coordinator (currently the Principal)

If the communicable disease is detected at school and is a **Notifiable Disease** (Refer Appendix I, II and III), the Education Coordinator will take action in accordance with the advice provided by the Department of Health in managing communicable diseases:

- Report the matter to the local Public Health Unit and seek their advice
- Act in accordance with advice provided by the local Public Health Unit staff
- Contact the parents and ask that the child be taken home
- Notify employees and parents that there has been a notifiable disease reported in the school;
- Inform employees and parents of the symptoms of the notifiable disease
- Complete an Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Report Form (Refer also to Records Management Policy) and where relevant a Non-Government Schools Reportable Incident Report Form is to be forwarded to the Department of Education (refer Appendix V)

### 3.4 Pandemic

A **pandemic** (from Greek πᾶν *pan* "all" + δῆμος *demos* "people") is an epidemic of infectious disease that is spreading through human populations across a large region; for instance a continent, or even worldwide. (Source: Wikipedia)

**Seasonal (or common) influenza** is a respiratory illness that can be transmitted from person to person. Most people have some immunity, and a vaccine is available.

**Avian influenza** (or bird 'flu) is caused by influenza viruses that occur naturally among wild birds. The H5N1 variant is deadly to domestic fowl and can be transmitted from birds to humans. There is no human immunity and no vaccine is available.

**Pandemic (H1N1) 2009** is a new virus that has not circulated among humans before. This virus is different from previous or current human seasonal influenza viruses.

**Pandemic influenza** is virulent human influenza that causes a global outbreak, or pandemic, of serious illness. Because there is little natural immunity, the disease can spread easily from person to person.

**Covid-19** is a new coronavirus that has not circulated among humans before. This virus is different from previous or current human seasonal influenza viruses and much more contagious.

#### School Closures and Student Exclusion

During a pandemic, it may be necessary to close a classroom or a school in order to prevent the spread of an outbreak. Medical evidence on the spread of influenza shows transmission in schools is a

significant factor in the disease's spread. Once influenza is in the school environment it can spread quickly, impacting families and the local community.

Advice on school closures will be provided at the time. In general:

- Children with flu-like symptoms should not attend school
- If a child becomes sick with flu-like symptoms at school, they should be sent home
- School exclusion for children returning from particular countries overseas may be applicable, dependant on Health Department direction.
- Children displaying Covid-19 symptoms are to be tested and if positive remain in isolation for the recommended period.
- The school will seek advice from the Health Department as to whether part or all of the school is to close in event of a confirmed case of Covid-19.

### **Looking out for Outbreaks**

- Influenza is a mild disease in most cases but a severe disease in some people. Prompt action will be taken if pandemic influenza is suspected. This includes being able to recognise an outbreak as early as possible so that immediate steps are taken to prevent the spread of illness
- Sign of likely outbreak of influenza would be the occurrence of three new cases of flu-like illness within a 3 day period in a single class within the school
- Any suspected outbreaks of influenza will be reported promptly to the local Public Health Unit in our state.

### **If Students are ill**

Children who are ill with flu-like symptoms should be cared for at home and not return to school or childcare till medication is no longer needed to suppress their fever. Once the fever subsides without medication students should wait 24 hours before returning to school. Siblings of ill children can still attend the facility. For a case of positive Covid-19, the child and family are to be isolated for the requisite period.

### **Staff**

Staff caring for students with flu-like symptoms should limit contact with other staff and students until the ill student's symptoms have resolved. Staff do not need to stay away from educational facilities unless they also develop flu-like symptoms.

### **Parents**

Do not need to stay away from educational facilities unless they develop flu-like symptoms.

### **Department of Health**

The Department of Health (DoH) is the department responsible for developing and implementing measures to respond rapidly and effectively to pandemic influenza. DoH will be the source the school uses for information on pandemics

### **Student Immunisation**

The Principal or their nominees will:

- collect and record immunisation history upon enrolment and ongoing as required.
- provide information regarding the immunisation record of all students to the Department of Health annually as required.

Parents have the right not to have their child immunised, however, parents will be advised that during outbreaks of vaccine preventable diseases such as measles, their child may be excluded from school for an extended period of time (WA Health Act 1911).

## 4 REFERENCES

<b>Related Documents</b>	<p>Other school policies relating to Student Health Care:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Asthma Policy</li> <li>• Anaphylaxis Policy</li> <li>• Administration of Prescribed Medication Policy</li> <li>• Emergency &amp; Critical Incident Policy</li> <li>• Students with Extraordinary Health Conditions Policy</li> <li>• Records Management Policy</li> <li>• Safeguard for Students Policy</li> <li>• OHS Policy</li> <li>• Child Protection Policy</li> </ul>
<b>Links With</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staying Healthy in Childcare (5th Ed.) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Available</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <a href="https://www.nhmrc.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/reports/clinical%20guidelines/ch55-staying-healthy.pdf">https://www.nhmrc.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/reports/clinical%20guidelines/ch55-staying-healthy.pdf</a> Health Department of Western Australia Communicable Disease Guidelines (2017): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Available <a href="http://ww2.health.wa.gov.au/Articles/A_E/Communicable-disease-guidelines">http://ww2.health.wa.gov.au/Articles/A_E/Communicable-disease-guidelines</a></li> </ul> </li> <li>• Hard copy in Policies folder in the school office</li> </ul>
<b>Related Legislation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Occupational Safety and Health Act 1984</li> <li>• Occupational Safety and Health Regulations 1996</li> <li>• Health Act 1911</li> <li>• Emergency Management Act 2005</li> <li>• Quarantine Act 1908</li> <li>• Emergency Management Regulations, 2006</li> <li>• School Education Act 1999</li> <li>• School Education Regulations 2000</li> <li>• Privacy Amendment (Private Sector) Act 2012</li> <li>• Industrial Relations Act 1979</li> <li>• Standards Australia AS/NZS ISO 3100;2009 Risk Management Principles and Guidelines</li> <li>• Standards Australia AS 3745:2010 Planning for Emergencies in Facilities</li> <li>• Standards Australia HB 292: 2006 A Practitioners guide to Business Continuity Management.</li> </ul>
<b>Appendices</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Appendix I: Contact Numbers – Department of Health Metropolitan and Regional Public Health Units</li> <li>• Appendix II: Notifiable Diseases</li> <li>• Appendix III: Communicable Disease Guidelines, 2017 Government of WA, Department of Health.</li> <li>• Appendix IV: Pandemic Influenza Guidelines, 2014, Government of WA, Department of Health.</li> <li>• Appendix V: Non-Government Schools Reportable Incident Report Form</li> </ul>

## 5 APPENDICES

### 5.1 Appendix I: Contact Numbers – Department of Health Metropolitan and Regional Public Health Units

<b>Location</b>	<b>Town</b>	<b>Telephone</b>
Great Southern	Albany	(08) 9842 7525
Kimberley	Broome	(08) 9194 1630
South West	Bunbury	(08) 9781 2350
Midwest/Gascoyne	Geraldton	(08) 9956 1985
North Metropolitan	Perth	(08) 9222 8588
Goldfields	Kalgoorlie	(08) 9080 8200
Wheatbelt	Northam	(08) 9622 4320
Pilbara	South Hedland	(08) 9172 8333
South Metropolitan	Fremantle	(08) 9431 0200

## 5.2 Appendix II: Notifiable Diseases

- Chickenpox
- Cryptosporidiosis
- Diarrhea – Campylobacter, Salmonella, Shigetta, Rotavirus, Cryptosporidium. **All infections of the intestines.**
- Haemophilus influenza Type B (Hib)
- Hepatitis A
- Hepatitis B
- Hepatitis C
- HIV/AIDS
- Influenza
- Measles
- Meningococcal Disease
- Mumps
- Pertussis (Whooping Cough)
- Pinworm
- Pneumococcal Disease
- Rubella (German Measles)
- Scabies
- Shingles
- Tuberculosis
- Typhoid
- Covid-19



### **5.3 Appendix III: Communicable Disease Guidelines, 2017.**

Government of WA, Department of Health.

A link to the PDF booklet of Communicable Disease Guidelines 2017 can be found here:

[http://ww2.health.wa.gov.au/Articles/A\\_E/Communicable-disease-guidelines](http://ww2.health.wa.gov.au/Articles/A_E/Communicable-disease-guidelines)

### **5.4 Appendix IV: Pandemic Influenza Guidelines, 2014.**

Government of WA, Department of Health.

A link to information regarding pandemic influenza can be found here:

<http://www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/ohp-pandemic-influenza.htm>

### **5.5 Appendix V: Non-Government Schools Reportable Incident Report Form**

Click on the below link to access this form

<https://www.education.wa.edu.au/ongoing-obligations>