



Helena College Communicable Diseases (Student) Policy

This policy is applicable to: Students & Parents

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Communicable Diseases (Student) Policy

This policy follows the authority provided in the Department of Education (WA) Guidelines.

The Hazard – Communicable Diseases

There are many communicable diseases that can affect children and young people, some common and others rare, including:

- Chickenpox and shingles* (and other Varicella-Zoster virus infections)
- Diphtheria*
- Gastroenteritis
- Haemophilus influenzae type b (Hib) infection (invasive)*
- Hepatitis A*
- Hepatitis B*
- Influenza
- Measles*
- Meningococcal infection (invasive)*
- Mumps*
- Pneumococcal infection (invasive)*
- Poliovirus infection*
- Rubella (German measles)*
- Tetanus*
- Whooping cough (Pertussis)*
- More information about these diseases can be found on the Western Australian Department of Health website.
- Diseases marked with a * are considered to be vaccine preventable notifiable infectious diseases as designated by the Department of Health.

Helena College's Policy

Helena College is committed to providing a safe environment for all our students.

It is our policy that:

- we implement clear guidelines for the management of communicable diseases



- we provide education, support and resources for staff, parents/guardians, students and the wider College community on dealing with communicable diseases
- administration first aid staff be trained to recognise symptoms of common communicable diseases and how to deal appropriately with students who become ill at the College
- we inform the relevant public health unit of the occurrence of any notifiable diseases.

Parent/Guardians Responsibility

Parents/guardians are required to inform the College of any communicable illness or disease that their child is diagnosed with and not allow them to attend school while infectious.

Immunisation

The College encourages all staff and students to be vaccinated to protect them against the outbreak of vaccine preventable diseases.

Staff vaccination is covered in the College Immunisation (Staff) policy in our Occupational Safety and Health Programme.

The College requirements relating to student immunisation is covered in our Immunisation (Students) policy.

Immunisation records are requested upon enrolment and stored in student medical records which are maintained in accordance with our Medical Records (Student) policy. Prospective students will not be excluded from attending school if they have not been immunised.

Infection Control

If there is an outbreak of a vaccine preventable disease, it may be necessary to restrict attendance of non-immune students, or implement restrictions to protect these students, to prevent further spread of disease.

Exclusion of student not immunised against a vaccine preventable notifiable infectious disease

The Western Australian Chief Health Officer (Chief Health Officer) may also direct the Principal to not permit a particular child to attend school or participate in an educational program of the school if the child has not been immunised against a vaccine preventable notifiable infectious disease. The College must comply with this direction. The Principal must also notify the parent/guardian of the child (or the student themselves if the student has turned 18) specifying the vaccine preventable notifiable infectious disease that the child has not been immunised against and the period of time during which the child must not attend school or participate in the educational program, as directed by the Chief Health Officer.

Reporting of student who has contracted a vaccine preventable notifiable infectious disease

The Principal may also be required to report an enrolled child who has, or is reasonable believed to have, contracted a vaccine preventable notifiable infectious disease, if directed to do so by the Chief Health Officer. The report must specify the relevant vaccine preventable notifiable infectious disease. The Principal must use the 'approved form' provided by the Chief Health Officer to provide the report.



Exclusion of student with an infectious or contagious disease

In addition, where the Principal based on advice from the Chief Health Officer or a registered medical practitioner, or based on their own reasonable belief, considers that a student's medical condition, given its infectious or contagious nature, poses a harm to others at the school, then the Principal may require that the student not attend the school or not participate in an educational programme of the College while the student is suffering from that medical condition. The Principal must make this direction in writing to the student's parent/guardian or to a student directly if they have turned 18.

Closure of school to limit or prevent the spread of a vaccine preventable notifiable infectious disease

Where directed by the Chief Health Officer, the Principal will close the whole or part of the College to limit or prevent the spread of a vaccine preventable notifiable infectious disease.

Incident Procedures

If a student becomes unwell with a communicable disease at the College, immediate medical treatment should be provided following the procedures outlined in the First Aid policy. Students should then be transferred to the care of their parent/guardians.

The Principal may consider whether the student is suffering from a medical condition which is infectious, contagious or otherwise harmful to the health of students and staff at the school or when participating in an education programme and require the student to not attend school or not participate in a school activity.

Notification of Communicable Diseases

If a student or staff member has a communicable disease, the college will take action in accordance with the advice provided by the Department of Health in managing communicable diseases.

If the communicable disease is notifiable then the college's Community Relations team or their delegate will:

- Report the matter to the local Public Health Unit and seek their advice on the appropriate course of action; and
- Act in accordance with the advice they provide.
- Send out any notification to the school community as directed by the Public Health Unit.
- A full list of notifiable communicable diseases together with the notification procedures and contact numbers can be found on the Department of Health website.

The College may also be required to provide Chief Health Officer with information about a child's or children's immunisation status, when directed to do so. See our Immunisation (Students) policy.



Critical Incident

The occurrence of a communicable disease incident under this policy may meet the definition of a “critical and emergency incident” as defined by the Standards for Non-Government Schools determined under section 159 of the School Education Act 1999 (WA) (Standards). The Standards define critical and emergency incidents as:

- death, or life-threatening injury, of a student or staff member at College, or following an incident that occurred at the College, or through a related College-based activity or circumstance
- circumstances that pose a critical risk to the health, safety or wellbeing of one or more students or staff
- receipt of an allegation of child abuse, including but not limited to sexual abuse, against a student by a staff member or student or other person, whether the abuse is alleged to have occurred recently or in the past
- issuing a formal warning to a staff member or ceasing the employment of a staff member for a breach of the staff Code of Conduct suspected to be grooming behaviour
- any incident requiring College closure, lockdown, or reduction of number of students or staff attending.

A circumstance posing a “critical risk” for the purposes of this definition is one which would, if action had not been taken or the risk otherwise averted, have resulted in death, life-threatening illness or life-threatening injury to one or more students and/or staff.

Our Critical and Emergency Incidents Notification Policy must be followed if a “critical and emergency incident” occurs at the College. This includes notifying the Minister for Education through the Department of Education Services.

Staff Responsibilities

Staff must:

- implement infection control practices to minimise the risk of exposure to communicable diseases for themselves and their students
- be aware of communicable diseases which they have been vaccinated against and keep their immunisation records up-to-date. For more information refer to our Immunisation (Staff) policy.

Implementation

This policy is implemented through a combination of:

- staff training and supervision
- maintenance of staff and student medical records
- effective incident notification procedures
- effective communication procedures with students' parents/guardians
- initiation of corrective actions where necessary.



Discipline for Breach of Policy

Where a staff member breaches this policy Helena College may take disciplinary action.

Record Keeping

College has established procedures to ensure all prescribed information on student immunisation is retained. Refer to our Record Keeping Policy.

Where a critical incident notification is made to the College Council and the Department of Education, written and dated notes of the notification should be recorded. The Critical and Emergency Incidents Register must also be updated.

Related Policies

Immunisation (Students)

Immunisation (Staff)

Head Lice

Further Information

Western Australian Department of Health – Infectious Disease Guidelines for Childcare and Schools

Review:

Authors	Date	Comments
Complispace	3/3/2020	Updated