St Mary’s College

Communicable Diseases Guidelines

Notification of Communicable Diseases

If a student or students are found to have:

- Measles
- German Measles (Rubella)
- Mumps
- Whooping cough (Pertussis)

The school needs to contact the:

Department of Health and Human Services Population and Health Communicable Diseases Prevention Unit
Phone: 1800 671 738
Email: public.health@dhhs.tas.gov.au
Website: http://www.dhhs.tas.gov.au/

The Department of Health and Human Services also provides the following resource for parents:

24 hour Parenting hotline: 1300 808 178

Information about Preventing the Spread of Meningococcal Infection

Meningococcal disease is only one type of illness which can be transferred via saliva, others being hepatitis A, influenza and colds.

Musical Instruments

Sharing the mouthpiece of a musical instrument is regarded as the same as sharing a glass or drink bottle, especially if this should occur within a short time span and saliva could be transferred from one person to another.

However, current advice is that meningococcal bacteria are fairly fragile organisms and do not survive for long outside the human body. Therefore, cleaning and drying the mouthpiece would be expected to remove the risk of transfer of viable organisms.

This being the case, normal cleaning procedures would be regarded as sufficient to remove or inactivate any meningococcal bacteria present in the mouthpiece. Cleaning the mouthpiece or instrument with either a mild detergent or soap and warm water would be acceptable. If you wish to use a disinfectant, this must be used after thorough cleaning of the mouthpiece as these compounds work most effectively on clean objects. Any effective disinfectant can be used as long as it does not leave an objectionable or toxic residue.
As a general rule the sharing of instruments should be minimized where possible. Where sharing takes place, cleaning is always necessary.

**Sharing pencils, pens, drawing / painting tools**
Sharing writing, drawing and painting tools is considered to be safe, except in those instances where there is an opportunity for students to have close sequential oral contact with such tools. It is preferred that students are provided with their own pencil/drawing/painting tool container.

**Communal serving of food and drinks**
In those instances where food and drinks are served to groups of students, they should be supervised so that they do not contaminate the food by handling more than one piece, breathing over the food or by placing partially eaten or discarded food back on the serving device. Students should not share drinking devices, or eating utensils. A receptacle should be provided for discarded food.

**Drinking Water Fountains**
Access for students to adequate supplies of fresh water is essential. Drinking water fountains which are fitted with a guard which prevents oral contact with the water nozzle, and which are supplied with sufficient pressure to ensure water projection beyond the guard, are not considered to pose a health risk.

**Swimming Pools**
Meningococcal infection is not associated with swimming pools.

**Head Lice Guidelines**
These guidelines give direction for the management of head lice infestation within school communities. It has been developed by the Head Lice Working Party and is a joint statewide guideline agreed between DoE and DHHS.

Although the head louse (Pediculosis capitisitis) can cause significant irritation, it has not been known to transmit disease. Head lice have been common in the community throughout history and will spread anywhere that a number of people work, play or live together. School communities, by their nature, are therefore vulnerable to infestations.

**Detection:**
- Parents have prime responsibility to check their children for head lice on a regular basis.
- Community Health Centres and Services are an available resource.
- 24 hour Parenting hotline 1300 808 178
Treatment:

- Parents have responsibility for the purchase and application of treatment.

- Detailed information about appropriate treatment of lice and nits (eggs) will be supplied by the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS). The information will include the current recommended treatment/s.

RETURN TO SCHOOL:
Students may return to school following one application of a recommended product

Roles:

Parent:

- Parents have prime responsibility for the detection and treatment of head lice. The removal of eggs in the hair is desirable. Parents have a responsibility to seek education and support when required.

- Parents must notify the Deputy Principal/Head of Junior School when head lice (or nits) have been detected so the Deputy Principal/Head of Junior School can request that other parents check their children.

Teachers:

- Teachers do not need to be involved in checking heads of children for head lice. When notified that a child has head lice (or nits), the Deputy Principal/Head of Junior School is responsible for sending relevant information to the parent of that child and as well to the parents of the children who are likely to be contacts so they can be checked by their parents.

- If a teacher by chance sees head lice (or nits) in a child’s hair, the parents should be notified as soon as possible and appropriate support material (supplied by DHHS) will be provided to them.

- If a teacher suspects a child may have head lice, the Deputy Principal/Head of Junior School should be informed and the parent should be requested to check the child as soon as possible and treat any head lice present.

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