

THE WELLINGTON CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

SECTION:	Foundations and Basic Commitments
SUBSECTION:	The Dignity of Person
POLICY:	Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS)
CODE:	P.FBC.B.2

As Christians and Catholics we are called to support one another at all times, especially in difficult circumstances with love, compassion, and understanding.

The Wellington Catholic District School Board recognizes that pupils infected with Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV), including Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) have the right to an education.

The Board recognizes the need to give attention to the health and safety of all staff and students within the board, and to co-operate with all Provincial and County health officials to insure the most current medical information on HIV/AIDS is available to Board staff, students and parents.

The Board will maintain, in co-operation with the Ministry of Health and the Medical Officer of Health, and in accordance with the Acts and Regulations of Ontario, confidentiality for students or staff who are HIV positive or who have HIV/AIDS.

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1. HIV/AIDS – General
 - 1.1 AIDS stands for Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome. AIDS is caused by a virus called HIV (Human Immunodeficiency Virus) which attacks and seriously disrupts the body’s immune system. Without the protection of their immune system, people with AIDS can develop life-threatening infections and cancers.
 - 1.2 A person may be infected with HIV and remain perfectly healthy for many years. This is because the virus can lie dormant for long periods of time and then become active. Some people with HIV have gone for more than ten years without developing AIDS. It is possible that some people with HIV infection will never develop AIDS. As the virus weakens the immune system, a person with HIV may experience a variety of symptoms. Eventually, the immune system may become severely damaged and the person may begin to experience the signs and symptoms which lead doctors to make a diagnosis of AIDS. As treatment methods improve, HIV infection is becoming a long-term or chronic illness.
 - 1.3 It is part of the nature of HIV infection and AIDS that a person can experience periods of illness followed by periods when the person is relatively healthy. Most people with HIV infection are perfectly able to carry on with normal activities, including work. Many individuals diagnosed with AIDS are fully capable of working.
 - 1.4 HIV is a fragile virus. It survives only a short time outside the human body, where common disinfectant such as alcohol or bleach will destroy the virus. HIV is difficult to spread. It has been transmitted in very specific ways:
 - through unprotected sexual intercourse with a person who is infected;
 - by sharing needles or syringes with an infected person;
 - from an infected woman to her infant in the womb or during the birth process;
 - through transfusions or injections of infected blood or blood products;
 - by contact with bodily fluids which may contain blood.
 - 1.5 When individuals are required to deal with potentially infectious substances, Standard Precautions should be used to prevent skin and mucous membrane exposure to blood and other body fluids containing visible blood. (See Appendix A for Standard Precautions)
 - 1.6 Information with respect to HIV/AIDS, Hepatitis B, and Hepatitis C, including medical updates, appropriate safety precautions, and relevant Board policies and procedures will be made available to all staff.
2. The Wellington Catholic District School Board establishes its policy in consideration of students or staff with HIV/AIDS infection.

- 2.1 In dealing with the students who are entrusted to its care and with its employees the Board shall be guided by gospel values which call for love, compassion, understanding and support for people.
 - 2.2 Any student who is infected with HIV/AIDS shall have the right to continue to attend school until health deterioration requires the student to withdraw partially or completely (as identified by the Medical Officer of Health). Decisions regarding alternative instruction shall be made on an individual basis with the Superintendent of Education, in consultation with the Medical Officer of Health (or designate), the parent(s)/guardian of the student if under 18, or the student, if 18 years of age or over.
 - 2.3 Any employee infected with HIV/AIDS has the right not to be discriminated against pursuant to the Ontario Human Rights Code. Where a staff member with HIV/AIDS related illness can no longer perform their duties, full access to sick leave, long-term disability and medical benefits shall be in accordance with the Sick Leave Policy.
 - 2.4 The counselling and pastoral care offered by the Board shall be available to any student or employee who is infected with HIV/AIDS.
3. The Wellington Catholic District School Board, with the assistance of the Medical Officer of Health, will respond to the presence of any reportable communicable disease in staff or students under the following guidelines, in accordance with:
 - The Education Act 1993; Section 265, Subsection (K); Section 266, Subsection (2.1)
 - Health Protection and Promotion Act, 1983; Section 28; Section 38
 - Freedom of Information and Individual Privacy in Municipalities and Local Boards Act, 1992
 - Occupational Health and Safety Act, Revised 1993
 - Any other relevant requirement (as determined)
 4. Reporting

With respect to a student, a staff member and any other person in a school:

 - 4.1 The principal of a school who has reason to suspect the existence of any reportable communicable disease shall promptly report to the Medical Officer of Health.
 - 4.2 The principal of a school who has reason to suspect the existence of any exposure to HIV/AIDS shall promptly report to the Medical Officer of Health.
 - 4.3 The principal shall upon request by the Medical Officer of Health give identifying information which include name, address, telephone number, and in the case of a student (minor), name of parent(s)/guardian.
 - 4.4 The principal shall promptly report to the Superintendent of Education
 - 4.5 With respect to the obligation to report to the Board of Trustees, only the use of non-identifying information shall be transmitted subject to the provisions of the Education Act, 1993 or as amended.
 5. Response of and to the Medical Officer of Health

It is recognized in these guidelines that the Medical Officer of Health has a key role to play and that the Board and its officials will co-operate fully with him/her in the discharge of his/her duties as required in the Acts and Regulations.

 - 5.1 The Medical Officer of Health may or may not know of the presence of HIV/AIDS in any staff member or pupil because of options in reporting procedures for this disease.
 - 5.2 According to the Health Protection and Promotion Act, the Medical Officer of Health has considerable responsibility to investigate and act to reduce or eliminate the risk

- to health. This includes the giving of such orders to the school board, the school, the principal or others within the school system, parent(s)/guardian of one or more students, or any one else described in that order to accomplish his/her mandate.
- 5.3 Except as to communication of information necessary to carry out his/her duties, it is not expected that the Medical Officer of Health will confirm to any person within or outside the school system, the presence of HIV/AIDS in any staff person or student, except as otherwise provided by law.
6. Universal Blood and Body Fluid Precautions and First Aid Procedures shall be posted and implemented in all schools as standard practices for all staff members. (Appendix A)
 - 6.1 The Board shall co-operate with employee organizations in providing information to members about HIV/AIDS and the ways in which the disease is transmitted, and how it can be prevented.
 - 6.2 The Board shall take all reasonable steps to ensure confidentiality of information where a student or an employee may be infected with HIV/AIDS.
 - 6.3 The Board recognizes its responsibility to parents, students and employees to maintain a safe and healthy environment for all those who learn or work with those who have HIV/AIDS.
 - 6.4 As a Catholic School System, the Board accepts the Church's teaching that abstinence motivated by chastity is the best way to the prevention of the spread of HIV/AIDS.
 7. The Superintendent of Education shall keep the Board informed as new information becomes available on the incidence of the disease and on methods of transmission and prevention. School principals shall be responsible for initiating staff awareness and for implementing board policy and regulations.
 - 7.1 School principals shall be responsible for initiating awareness of Catholic Church teaching regarding HIV/AIDS (Appendix B and C).