

J-19 PLACEMENT OF STUDENTS AND EMPLOYEES INFECTED WITH ACQUIRED IMMUNODEFICIENCY SYNDROME (AIDS) AND RELATED CONDITIONS

While it is not possible to list all diseases or conditions that might be affected by this policy, the policy, which follows, is an example of the Board's efforts to do what is best for all persons concerned. This detailed policy could be used for any communicable disease or condition, if severe, by changing the name of the disease.

Preamble

The Opelika City Schools shall strive to protect the safety and health of children and youth in our care, as well as their families, our employees, and the general public. Staff members shall cooperate with public health authorities to promote these goals.

The evidence is overwhelming that the risk of transmitting human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) is extremely low in school settings when current guidelines are followed. The presence of a person living with HIV infection or diagnosed with acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS) poses no significant risk to others in school, day care, or school athletic settings.

School Attendance

A student with HIV infection has the same right to attend school and receive services as any other student, and will be subject to the same rules and policies. HIV infection shall not factor into decisions concerning class assignments, privileges, or participation in any school-sponsored activity.

School authorities will determine the educational placement of a student known to be infected with HIV on a case-by-case basis by following established policies and procedures for students with chronic health problems or students with disabilities. Decision makers must consult with the student's physician and parent/guardian; respect the student's and family's privacy rights; and reassess the placement if there is a change in the student's need for accommodations or services.

School staff members will participate in planned HIV education programs that conveys factual and current information; provides guidance on infection control procedures and informs about current local, state and federal laws concerning HIV.

School staff members will always strive to maintain a respectful school climate and not allow physical or verbal harassment of any individual or group by another individual or group. This includes taunts directed against a person living with HIV infection, a person perceived as having HIV infection or a person associated with someone with HIV infection.

Employment

The Opelika City School System does not discriminate on the basis of HIV infection or association with another person with HIV infection. In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, an employee with HIV infection is welcome to continue working as long as he/she is able to perform the essential functions of the position, with reasonable accommodation if necessary.

Privacy

Pupils or staff members are not required to disclose HIV infection status to anyone in the education system. HIV antibody testing is not required for any purpose.

Every employee has a duty to treat as highly confidential any knowledge or speculation concerning the HIV status of a student or other staff members. Violation of privacy is cause for disciplinary action, criminal prosecution, and/or personal liability for a civil suit.

No information regarding a person's HIV status will be divulged to any individual or organization without a court order or the informed, written, signed, and dated consent of the persons with HIV infection (or the parent or guardian of the legal minor). The written consent must specify the name of the recipient of the information and the purpose for disclosure.

All health records, notes, and other documents that reference a person's HIV status will be kept under lock and key. Access to these confidential records is limited to those named in written permission from the person (or parent or guardian) and to emergency medical personnel. Information regarding HIV status will not be added to a student's permanent educational or health record without written consent.

Infection Control

All employees are required to consistently follow infection control guidelines

in all settings and at all times, including playgrounds and school buses. Schools will operate according to the standards promulgated by the U.S. Occupational Health and Safety Administration for prevention of blood-borne infections. Equipment and supplies needed to apply the infection control guidelines will be maintained and kept reasonably accessible. School nurses shall implement the precautions and investigate, correct, and report on instances of lapse.

A school staff member is expected to alert the person responsible for health and safety issues if a student's health condition or behavior presents a reasonable risk of transmitting an infection.

If a situation occurs at school in which a person might have been exposed to an infectious agent, such as an instance of blood-to-blood contact, school authorities shall counsel that person (or, if a minor, alert a parent/guardian) to seek appropriate medical evaluation.

HIV and Athletics

The privilege of participating in physical education classes, athletic programs, competitive sports, and recess is not conditional on the person's HIV status. School authorities will make reasonable accommodations to allow students living with HIV infection to participate in school-sponsored physical activities.

All employees must consistently adhere to infection control guidelines in locker rooms and all play and athletic settings. Rulebooks will reflect these guidelines. First aid kits must be on hand at every athletic event.

All physical education teachers and athletic program staff will complete an approved first aid injury prevention course that includes implementation of infection control guidelines. Student orientation about safety on the playing field will include guidelines for avoiding HIV infection.

HIV Prevention Education

The goals of HIV prevention education are to promote healthful living and discourage the behaviors that put people at risk of acquiring HIV. The educational program will:

- Be taught at every level, Kindergarten through grade twelve;
- use methods demonstrated by sound research to be effective;

- be consistent with community standards;
- follow content guidelines prepared by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC);
- be appropriate to students' developmental levels, behaviors, and cultural backgrounds;
- build knowledge and skills from year to year;
- stress the benefits of abstinence from sexual activity, alcohol, and other drug use;
- include accurate information on reducing risk of HIV infection;
- address students' own concerns;
- include means for evaluation;
- be an integral part of a coordinated school health program;
- be taught by well-prepared instructors with adequate support; and
- involve parents and families as partners in education.

Parents and guardians will have convenient opportunities to preview all HIV

prevention curricula and materials. School staff members shall assist parents or guardians who ask for help in discussing HIV infection with their children. If a parent or guardian submits a written request to a Principal that a child not receive instruction in specific HIV prevention topics at school, and assures that the topics will be discussed at home or elsewhere, the child shall be excused without penalty.

The education system will endeavor to cooperate with HIV prevention efforts in the community that address out-of-school youth and youth in situations that put them at high risk of acquiring HIV.

Related Services

Students will have access to voluntary, confidential, age and developmentally appropriate counseling about matters related to HIV infection. School administrators will maintain confidential linkage and referral mechanisms to facilitate voluntary student access to appropriate HIV counseling and testing programs, and to other HIV-related services as needed. Public information about resources in the community will be kept available for voluntary student use.

Staff Development

All school staff members will participate in a planned HIV education program that conveys factual and current information; provides guidance on infection control procedures; informs about current law and state, district, and school policies concerning HIV;

assists staff to maintain productive parent and community relations; and includes annual review sessions. Certain employees will also receive additional specialized training as appropriate to their positions and responsibilities.

General Provisions

On an annual basis, school administrators will notify students, their family members, and school personnel about current policies concerning HIV infection, and provide convenient opportunities to discuss them. Information will be provided in major primary languages of students' families.

This policy is effective immediately upon adoption. In accordance with the established policy review process, or at least every three years, the Assistant Superintendent of Administration shall

report on the accuracy, relevance, and effectiveness of this policy and, when appropriate, provide recommendations for improving and/or updating the policy.

ADOPTED: May 11, 2004

LEGAL REF: Code of Alabama 16-1-30