

**JAMES BAY LOWLANDS  
SECONDARY SCHOOL BOARD**

**ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURE  
GENERAL ADMINISTRATION: NO. 116**

Effective	August 21, 2019
Last Revised	June 0, 2023

## BLOOD-BORNE PATHOGENS (HIV, HEPATITIS B & C)

### PURPOSE

The James Bay Lowlands Secondary School Board recognizes that it has an obligation to foster the health and well-being of students and staff in relation to blood-borne pathogens, including Human Immunodeficiency Virus, Hepatitis B & C, and other similar communicable/infectious diseases. The Board also recognizes the rights of the staff and students to privacy of medical information.

The Board has an obligation to deal with each student and staff member in an equitable manner that shows due regard for privacy while also providing protection, where possible, from harmful contact with bloodborne pathogens.

This administrative procedure has been developed to inform the staff about the nature of blood-borne pathogen infections, the need for confidentiality when cases occur, and the appropriate measures required to prevent transmission of blood-borne pathogen infections.

### DEFINITIONS

**Blood-borne Pathogens:** Blood-borne pathogens refer to pathogenic microorganisms, such as viruses and bacteria, which can exist in blood and cause disease in humans. These pathogens are spread from one person to another through contact with infected bodily fluids. There are many different blood-borne pathogens, including Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV), Hepatitis C Virus, and Hepatitis B Virus.

**HIV:** Human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) is a retrovirus which attacks the immune system, causing the individual who does not obtain treatment to be vulnerable to other infections over the course of many years. Without treatment HIV leads to severe immune dysfunction, and results in AIDS. HIV is transmitted from an infected person by body fluids such as blood, semen, vaginal and rectal fluids, and breast milk.

**Hepatitis B:** Hepatitis B is a highly contagious disease, caused by a virus, which attacks the liver, causing permanent liver damage (cirrhosis or liver cancer). Hepatitis B is more infectious than HIV or Hepatitis C. Infection with HBV may be acute or chronic. The virus is found in the body fluids of people with Hepatitis B (e.g., the body fluids may include blood, semen, vaginal and rectal fluids, and to a much lesser extent, saliva). The virus can be passed on to another person through contact with an infected person's blood and other body fluids. It is vaccine-preventable.

**Hepatitis C:** Hepatitis C is a highly contagious disease, caused by a virus, which attacks the liver causing permanent liver damage. Hepatitis C is transmitted when HCV+(positive) blood comes into contact with the bloodstream of an HCV-(negative) person via direct blood-to-blood contact (e.g. shared syringes, tattoos, piercings), or via contact with HCV+(positive) blood and the mucus membrane of an HCV-(negative) person (e.g. sharing needles, illicit drug inhalation equipment). Other ways of transmission include blood transfusions prior to the year 1990, and mother-to-child during childbirth.

**Universal Precautions:** As a general measure to minimize the risk of infection, universal precautions such as the wearing of vinyl gloves should be taken when handling human blood or other bodily fluids capable of transmitting blood-borne pathogen infections. Universal precautions are described in detail in Section 5 of this administrative procedure.

## PROCEDURES

### 1. Consistent Approach

- 1.1. The Board recognizes its obligation to develop and maintain a consistent approach to the management of communicable disease, including its role in protecting the staff and students from the transmission of blood-borne pathogens. The principal and all supervisors are responsible for implementing the procedures related to these diseases and for promoting staff awareness.
- 1.2. If the principal is aware of the presence of a communicable/infectious disease such as HIV/AIDS and Hepatitis B & C, the principal must report that information to the Medical Officer of Health as set out in Section 265 of the *Education Act*.
- 1.3. The *Health Protection and Promotion Act* is the principal's authority to disclose the information to the Medical Officer of Health that a pupil in the school has or may have a communicable/infectious disease.
- 1.4. Notice of Collection Section 29 (2) of the *Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* requires that when personal information is collected, either directly or indirectly, the individual to whom the information relates must be notified that the collection has occurred. The principal must advise the individual that the collection has occurred and that the information is being referred to the Medical Officer of Health, as authorized by the *Health Protection and Promotion Act*, Part IV, Section 28.

### 2. Confidentiality of Information

#### Medical Officer of Health:

- 2.1. The identity of any student or staff member within the James Bay Lowlands Secondary School Board with HIV/AIDS or Hepatitis B & C shall be protected unless the Medical Officer of Health deems it necessary that the principal or supervisory officer be informed.

- 2.2. Where the Medical Officer of Health decides it is necessary to inform the principal or supervisory officer of a student's infection, the student, where appropriate, must be made aware of the intention and appropriate consent must be obtained from the parents/guardians.
- 2.3. The records of any meeting will remain confidential to those attending. Dissemination of any information shall be restricted to "those who need to know" as determined by the Medical Officer of Health in consultation with the principal or supervisory officer.

**Principal:**

- 2.4. The *Health Protection and Promotion Act, Part IV, Section 28* states: "The principal of a school who is of the opinion that a pupil in the school has or may have a communicable disease shall, as soon as possible after forming the opinion, report thereon to the Medical Officer of Health of the Health Unit in which the school is located."
- 2.5. The identity of a person affected with a blood-borne pathogen infection or living with a related disease is strictly confidential. This information **will not be disclosed** by the Board or by any Board employee to any other person without the prior written consent of the affected person, except where disclosure is otherwise required or authorized by law. Any person who violates this confidentiality by disclosing information, even if it is accidental, will be held liable for **breach of confidentiality**.
- 2.6. Information for which written consent has been given may only be disclosed within the limits of the consent.
- 2.7. Principals and other staff members will protect the person with the infection from fear and discrimination. All staff members and students will be treated with dignity and respect at all times.

**3. No Exclusion from Regular Program or Employment**

- 3.1. There is no evidence that blood-borne pathogens are transmitted through casual contact with affected individuals. As a general measure to minimize the risk of infection, staff members should take universal precautions when handling human blood or other bodily fluids capable of transmitting blood-borne pathogens.
- 3.2. Students with HIV/AIDS or Hepatitis shall not be excluded from the regular instructional programs unless the Medical Officer of Health advises otherwise.
- 3.3. If class exclusion becomes an issue, a further meeting of the Medical Officer of Health, the student (if appropriate), the family physician, the principal or supervisory officer, and the parents/guardians will be held.
- 3.4. In the rare event of an exclusion from the regular program, alternative instructional programming shall be made available.

3.5. There is no reason to exclude staff members from employment unless the Medical Officer of Health so advises.

#### 4. Staff Training

4.1. Information on blood-borne pathogens shall be provided by the Board as part of training required by the *Occupational Health & Safety Act*.

4.2. Instruction will be provided regarding the appropriate measures required to prevent transmission of blood-borne pathogen infections.

4.3. The Board shall provide resource materials and precautionary equipment in sufficient quantities to minimize exposure to blood-borne pathogen infections, e.g., disposable gloves, CPR mouthpiece airways, cleaning materials. Location of these materials is to be determined by the Health and Safety committee.

4.4. It is the responsibility of the staff to use such materials and equipment in all situations where there is the possibility of personal contact with other people's body fluids.

#### 5. Universal Precautions

5.1. The staff must observe universal precautions and must take all measures outlined in the *Ontario Occupational Health and Safety Act and Regulations* to prevent contact with blood-borne pathogens. The following guidelines shall be followed.

5.2. Accidents that lead to bleeding or the release of blood-containing body fluids shall be handled as follows:

- Disposable gloves shall be used when cleaning or removing all blood or body fluid spills suspected of containing blood.
- The area shall be cleaned using an approved disinfectant.
- Persons involved in cleaning contaminated surfaces shall avoid exposure of open skin lesions or mucous membranes to blood or body fluids suspected of containing blood and to wound or tissue exudates.
- Hands and/or other contaminated parts of the body shall be washed immediately and thoroughly after exposure to blood or body fluids suspected of containing blood.
- Disposable towels or tissues shall be used and properly discarded in a double bagged garbage bag, and mops shall be rinsed in disinfectant.
- Blood-contaminated articles shall be placed in a plastic bag with a secure tie for disposal.
- Sharps shall be disposed of in special containers supplied by the board.

**6. Support for Students**

- 6.1. Support for students is important and needs to begin early. The school community will support students whose lives are affected with blood-borne pathogen infections and will assist them to access any support program established in the community.
- 6.2. Confidentiality must be an essential component of any support program provided.
- 6.3. The support program for an affected student should promote a compassionate, humane, and understanding environment that will allow the student to be a valued and productive member of the school community.

**REFERENCE DOCUMENTS****Legal:**

*Education Act, Section 265 Duties of Principal: Attention to Health of Pupils*  
*Education Act, section 265 Duties of Principal: Report Communicable Disease*  
*Health Protection and Promotion Act*  
*Occupational Health & Safety Act*  
*Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*  
*Ontario Human Rights Code*

**Board:**

Board Policy GOV-24 Occupational Health and Safety  
Administrative Procedure 143 Student Accidents and Illness  
Administrative Procedure 321 Administration of Medication