



CONTAGIOUS/SEVERE DISEASES (i.e. Meningitis or Invasive Group A Strep Including Necrotizing Fasciitis or Streptococcus Toxic Shock)

Responsibility:	<i>Superintendent, Human Resource Services</i>
Legal References:	<i>Health Protection & Promotion Act, 1990</i>
Related References:	<i>Region of Waterloo Public Health</i>
Revisions:	January 2016
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1. Preamble

The procedures that follow provide guidelines and expectations regarding the communication responsibilities of, and steps to be followed by, the various parties involved in situations of reported cases of contagious/severe diseases.

2. Rationale

In cases of a Waterloo Region student contracting a serious, contagious disease, the Waterloo Region District School Board and the Region of Waterloo Public Health (<http://chd.region.waterloo.on.ca/en/>) work in close co-operation to take steps to protect the health and safety of all students and staff and to provide parents and the concerned public with accurate information about the appropriate medical course of action.

In order to carry out these responsibilities, lines of communication and areas of responsibility in communicating need to be defined.

2.1 The Waterloo Region District School Board and school administration have the responsibility of:

- 2.1.1 Informing the Medical Officer of Health of suspected cases (Health Protection & Promotion Act, 1990);
- 2.1.2 Acting as liaison between the Health Department and parents of children who might have been exposed to the disease and conveying the Health Department's recommended public health actions to the parents;
- 2.1.3 Working co-operatively with the public health nurse dispatched to the school in establishing the school contacts of the infected student;
- 2.1.4 Maintaining close communication during the incubation period of the disease with parents and health officials;
- 2.1.5 Responding to media inquiries about school procedures and co-operation with the health department, and referring all inquiries about the disease and public health actions to the Medical Officer of Health for response. This will be done in consultation with the Superintendent, Communication & Engagement, Waterloo Region District School Board.

2.2 The Region of Waterloo Public Health of the region has the responsibility of:

- 2.2.1 Confirming the suspected case;
- 2.2.2 Determining an appropriate public health and disease control action;

- 2.2.3 Conveying the recommended disease control or prevention actions to the school administration and to the Director's Office. The Superintendent, Communication & Engagement, will work with the Community Health and the school throughout this process.
- 2.2.4 Recommending who should be informed, in consultation with the school personnel (i.e. parents of students in the affected class(es) or parents of all students);
- 2.2.5 Writing the letter, if required, that informs parents of the occurrence (this is not to be done by the school principal);
- 2.2.6 Dispatching a public health nurse to the school to determine, along with school personnel, who has been in contact with the disease;
- 2.2.7 Carrying out the public health actions necessary (may include a school-based immunization clinic or dispensing of prescribed antibiotic medications);
- 2.2.8 Responding to media inquiries about the disease and the public health actions, the close liaison with the District School, and referring all inquiries about school procedures to Board officials (Superintendent, Communication & Engagement).

3. Procedures

- 3.1 School Personnel
 - 3.1.1 Principal contacts the Medical Officer of Health (519-883-2000) to report information that a student has been hospitalized or died as a result of a serious communicable disease.
 - 3.1.2 Principal informs the Family of Schools Superintendent and the Superintendent, Communication & Engagement, of the case and reports the contact with the medical officer.
 - 3.1.3 The Region of Waterloo Public Health, in consultation with the school principal and superintendent, prepares an information letter to be sent home to parents. Principals are to distribute the letter to all parents as recommended by the Health Department.
 - 3.1.4 Principal refers all media inquiries to the Region of Waterloo Public Health (519-883-2244) regarding the case. The Health Department will refer all inquiries about school procedures to the Director's Office/Executive Officer.
- 3.2 Board Personnel
 - 3.2.1 Superintendent informs Director's Office of reported case.
 - 3.2.2 Contact is established and maintained between the Director's Office and the Health Department to share updated information.
 - 3.2.3 Director's Office refers all media inquiries to the Region of Waterloo Public Health the case and public health actions. The Director's Office responds to inquiries about contact and liaison activities between the Board personnel and health department authorities and the steps the school is taking to work with the public health staff.
- 3.3 Medical Officer of Health
 - 3.3.1 Upon receipt of the report about the suspected or confirmed case, he/she determines the appropriate public health course of action
 - 3.3.2 The public health nurse is sent to the school to determine which staff and students were in contact with the student(s) and to determine who should receive antibiotic treatment or the Medical Officer of Health proposes any other public health intervention if such a procedure.
 - 3.3.3 The community health Department may prepare an information letter, in consultation with school personnel, to be sent home to parents.
 - 3.3.4 The Medical Officer of Health will contact both the school personnel (principal) and the Director's Office to indicate the public health course of action.
 - 3.3.5 The Medical Officer of Health responds to media inquiries about the disease and the public health course of action. He/she refers inquiries about the school's and Board's response to the situation to the Director's Office of the Waterloo Region District School Board.

During the incubation period, as established by the Health Department, the school, the Board and the Community Health Department, will maintain frequent and ongoing communication.

Communication with the media will emphasize the close liaison between the Region of Waterloo Public Health and the Waterloo Region District School Board.