

ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURE – AP408-1

Disease Management and Prevention

Area: Operations
Policy Reference: Disease Management and Prevention (PO408)
Approved: May 6, 2019
Revised: October 15, 2025

1. Purpose

The purpose of this administrative procedure is to support the Disease Management and Prevention Policy (PO408) and provide a framework for staff to manage and prevent the spread of infectious diseases in the learning and working environment. In addition, this administrative procedure provides guidance for school staff regarding the reporting of diseases within school settings.

2. Definitions

Communicable Disease (*Health Protection and Promotion Act*) - a disease designated as a communicable disease by regulation made by the Minister.

3. Procedures

3.1 The Board shall:

- 3.1.1 work in partnership with the Durham Region Health Department to support a healthy and safe learning and working environment for students and staff;
- 3.1.2 promote 'Healthy Schools' initiatives to support the management and prevention of communicable diseases identified and known to exist in school settings as supported by the local health authority;
- 3.1.3 support mandatory immunization programs in schools offered by the Durham Region Health Department;
- 3.1.4 support the role of the public health nurses who visit all Board schools; and
- 3.1.5 cooperate with the Medical Officer of Health in the case of an emergency directive.

3.2 Superintendents shall:

- 3.2.1 support the school principal with local health authority contacts and resources as needed or requested;
- 3.2.2 in coordination with the People & Culture department, reassign staff who for safety reasons (i.e., exposure to communicable disease that could put an employee at risk) need to be re-assigned to a different school setting;
- 3.2.3 work closely with the Durham Region Health Department and Medical Officer of Health in the case of an emergency situation that requires relocation of students and/or staff or the temporary closure of the school site; and
- 3.2.4 contact relevant school principals if the Director or designate has been notified by the Durham Region Health Department of any communicable diseases (e.g., rabies, measles, etc.) that the Durham Region Health Department has determined requires public awareness.

3.3 Principals shall:

- 3.3.1 be familiar with the 'Diseases of Public Health Significance' that list 'reportable diseases' (<https://www.durham.ca/en/health-and-wellness/fact-about.aspx>);
- 3.3.2 when of the opinion that a student in the school has or may have a communicable disease, as soon as possible after forming the opinion, report thereon to Durham Region Health Department as required by section 28 of the [Ontario Health Protection and Promotion Act](#);
- 3.3.3 work in partnership with public health nurses assigned to their school to assess the needs of the school, develop strategies to meet the school's identified health needs and link school curriculum to healthy living and disease prevention;
- 3.3.4 promote healthy school initiatives (e.g., Durham Region Health Department's Healthy Schools Toolkit) to support the prevention of the spread of disease;
- 3.3.5 work in collaboration with elementary and secondary school administrative assistants so that clear lines of communication are established between the school and the Durham Region Health Department for the reporting of applicable communicable diseases, the scheduling of immunization clinics and for public health information sessions for students, parents/guardians and the greater community;
- 3.3.6 where applicable, collaborate with on-site childcare staff to relay relevant information about communicable diseases, including updates from Durham Region Health Department;

- 3.3.7 follow directives or orders from the Medical Officer of Health or Durham Region Health Department authorities related to a disease outbreak in their school, when such officer or authority has determined that there is risk to health associated with the outbreak for students or staff;
- 3.3.8 confidentially notify their Family of Schools Superintendent if they have contracted a communicable disease that could put students or staff at risk (e.g., Fifth disease, Measles);
- 3.3.9 ensure that parents/guardians and the Durham Region Health Department have been notified if a student has been bitten by an animal;
- 3.3.10 notify parents/guardians if they have been informed by the Durham Region Health Department that rabies has been confirmed in the school area;
- 3.3.11 inform a local Animal Control Officer if wild or domestic animals are found on school property during regular school hours; depending on the circumstances, additional notification may be required (e.g., Family of Schools Superintendent, Health and Safety, Facilities Services);
- 3.3.12 communicate disease prevention strategies (e.g. Lyme Disease, Hand Foot Mouth etc.) to staff by referring to the appropriate Durham Region Health Department Fact Sheet, which can be found at:
<https://www.durham.ca/en/health-and-wellness/fact-about.aspx>.
- 3.3.13 post the current diseases of public health significance as updated annually by the Durham Region Health Department on the school website;
- 3.3.14 share best practices with staff, students and parents/guardians in relation to disease management and prevention; and
- 3.3.15 ensure that the handwashing resource poster is posted in staff and student washrooms.

3.4 Teachers shall:

- 3.4.1 communicate regularly with parents/guardians to promote open lines of communication related to their students' health and well-being;
- 3.4.2 report to the principal or designate details of any disclosures from students or their parents/guardians of any reportable communicable diseases;
- 3.4.3 collaborate with the Durham Region Health Department public health nurse assigned to their school to promote the health and wellness of their students;
- 3.4.4 confidentially notify their principal or designate if they have contracted a communicable disease that could put students or staff at risk (e.g., Fifth disease, Measles);

- 3.4.5 participate in 'Healthy Schools' initiatives and teach the applicable Health and Physical Education curriculum if required for their teaching assignment;
 - 3.4.6 encourage students to wash their hands as part of a daily routine (see Appendix A - Facts About Handwashing) and post the handwashing resource poster in their classroom as provided by the Board;
 - 3.4.7 be familiar with disease prevention. Please refer to the Durham Regional Health Department link at <https://www.durham.ca/en/health-and-wellness/fact-about.aspx>; and
 - 3.4.8 report to their principal or designate if a student discloses that they have been bitten by an animal.
- 3.5 School Administrative Assistants shall:
- 3.5.1 under the direction of the principal, cooperate with the local health authority relating to Immunization protocols;
 - 3.5.2 collaborate with the principal to establish lines of communication with the local health authority relating to mandatory reporting of diseases in a timely manner as identified on the Diseases of Public Health Significance list (<https://www.durham.ca/en/health-and-wellness/fact-about.aspx>); and
 - 3.5.3 refer parents/guardians to the Durham Region Health Department website to access the communicable disease fact sheets upon request at <https://www.durham.ca/en/health-and-wellness/fact-about.aspx>.
- 3.6 Parents/Guardians and adult students shall:
- 3.6.1 inform school officials forthwith of any diagnosis of illness and/or communicable diseases contracted by their child(ren) or themselves; and
 - 3.6.2 follow directives from the local Medical Officer of Health or Durham Region Health Department if it is deemed that their child/they is/are to remain at home because of a diagnosis of a communicable disease.
- 3.7 Blood-borne Infections
- 3.7.1 When school/board staff have been notified that a student or employee of the Board is infected with a blood-borne disease (e.g., Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV)/Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS), Hepatitis B or C), the Board shall seek recommendations from the Durham Region Medical Officer of Health where it has been determined by the Medical Officer of Health that the student or employee poses a potential risk to themselves or others. Communication between the Board and Medical Officer of Health is to be done in a strictly confidential manner.

- 3.7.2 Students infected with a blood-borne disease shall have the right to attend regular classes, and the identity and health information relating to such students shall be strictly confidential.
- 3.7.3 Employees infected with a blood-borne disease who are unable to work due to illness as supported by medical documentation from a licenced health practitioner, will be entitled to applicable supports under their collective agreement or terms and conditions of employment and will be offered support through the Board's Disability Management Policy and Administrative Procedure.

3.8 Prevention of Blood-borne Infections

- 3.8.1 Blood-borne infections are very rare in children and the risk of transmission in school settings remains extremely low. However, it is important to assume that all blood is potentially infectious and use the following practices when there is a possibility of contact with blood or blood-tinged body fluids:
- a) School staff that come into contact with blood or other potentially infectious bodily fluids in the course of providing first aid or caring for a student should follow the key steps in handling blood or other bodily fluids that contain visible blood, or any objects that have been contaminated with blood as follows:
 - i. Wash Your Hands - Hand washing remains the best defense against any infection, including blood-borne infections. If at all possible, wash hands before and after exposure to blood or any other bodily fluids and before and after removing gloves. Washing with plain soap and water or alcohol-based hand rub is effective;
 - ii. Wear Gloves - Wear disposable gloves whenever applying first aid or cleaning up blood or bodily fluid spills from surfaces. Clean, non-sterile vinyl or latex gloves protect any open areas on hands that could be exposed to blood or bodily fluids. It is important to wash hands well after removal of gloves;
 - iii. Cleaning Contaminated Surfaces - School custodial staff, wearing gloves, immediately wipe up spills of blood or bodily fluids with paper towels and dispose of them into a plastic lined garbage receptacle. Wash the area according to Board cleaning protocols. (Visit [Cleaning Blood or Bodily Fluids](#) for more information);
 - iv. Disposal of Contaminated Articles - Dispose of any blood-soiled articles into a plastic bag and then tie it at the top. Dispose of bag into the garbage;
 - v. Sharps - Any object that could break, cut or puncture the skin can be considered a "sharp". Examples are needles, blades, knives or broken glass. Any object that has caused a puncture of a person's skin must be considered contaminated and handled with caution. Remember to:

- Wear gloves when handling sharps
- Dispose of sharps in a puncture resistant container
- Dispose of any sharps according to custodial workplace protocols
- Diabetic syringes and lancets must be disposed of in approved biohazard containers

3.9 Response to Serious Illnesses in School Settings

- 3.9.1 A sudden and serious illness or death within the school community due to an infectious disease is very rare. When such cases do happen, there is a natural concern around whether classmates or staff may also become ill or at a risk of carrying or acquiring the infection. In these cases, the Durham Region Health Department under the direction of the Medical Officer of Health will work closely with Board staff to provide information and assist in the development of any communication if needed.

4. Sources

- 4.1 Health Protection and Promotion Act - (Ontario Reg.135/18)
- 4.2 Immunization of School Pupils Act
- 4.3 Education Act., sec 265 –Duties of Principal
- 4.4 Regulation 298 s20 – Duties of Teachers
- 4.5 Occupational Health and Safety Act
- 4.6 Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act

5. Appendices

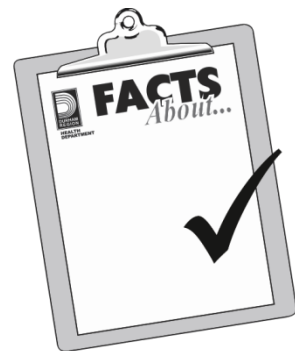
- 5.1 Appendix A – Durham Health Department – Facts About Handwashing

6. Related Policies and Administrative Procedures

- 6.1 Disease Management and Prevention Policy (PO408)



FACTS *About...*



HEALTH DEPARTMENT



Handwashing

Why is handwashing so important?

Handwashing is the simplest and MOST important thing that you can do to stay healthy and not spread germs to others. Washing your hands with liquid soap and warm water will loosen dirt, oils, and germs off your skin.

What happens if you do not wash hands frequently?

Handwashing removes germs you picked up from other people, dirty surfaces, or from animals. If dirty hands are not washed properly, these germs can make you sick or cause an infection when you touch your eyes, nose, mouth or open sores. Your dirty hands can also spread germs to other people or to the surfaces that you touch.

When should you wash your hands?

Germs are too small to be seen with the naked eye. So, frequent and proper handwashing is strongly recommended:

- After using the washroom, changing a baby's diaper or helping someone with toileting
- After contact with blood or body fluids, sneezing, coughing or blowing your nose
- After handling garbage, animals or animal waste
- After removing single-use gloves (gloves are not a substitute for handwashing)
- When you get home from being away or outside
- Before, during and after food handling or preparation
- Before eating or feeding someone
- Before and after touching eyes, nose or mouth
- Before and after providing first aid, direct care or personal service to someone
- More frequently when someone in your home is sick
- Whenever hands are visibly dirty or feel dirty

Note: Alcohol-based hand sanitizer with 70-90% alcohol can be used when water and soap are not available and when your hands are not visibly dirty.

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For more information

Durham Region Health Department

905-668-2020 1-800-841-2729 durham.ca

If you require this information in an accessible format, contact 1-800-841-2729.

**Handwashing
can prevent
illness**

What is the correct way to wash your hands?

1. Wet hands with warm running water.
2. Apply soap.
3. Rub hands together and scrub all surfaces of the hands for at least 20 seconds to loosen dirt and germs. Don't forget finger tips, between fingers, back of hands, and base of thumbs.
4. Rinse hands under water using a rubbing action to remove everything.
5. Dry hands with a clean towel, paper towel or an air dryer.
6. Taps should be turned off using the towel, if available.

Wash your hands properly and frequently!

Handwashing poster available upon request

8 ½" x 11" and 5 ½" x 8 ½" posters available



More information can be obtained from

Durham Region Health Department, Durham Health Connection Line
905-668-2020 or 1-800-841-2729

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