

1. PURPOSE

To provide information to principals, teachers and other staff working within a school setting with communicable disease such as Fifth Disease and to ensure that the concerns of the employees who are pregnant are dealt with in a timely and consistent manner.

2. BACKGROUND – FIFTH DISEASE

Fifth Disease is a common and harmless condition which afflicts young children. A child who has contracted Fifth Disease will display a rash on their face which gives the appearance of a hand slap (a more widespread rash will appear a few days later). However, like chicken pox, the contagious period for this disease is before the rash appears. Consequently, other children will often have been exposed prior to an outbreak being detected. The outbreak is considered over once 20 days have passed with no further confirmed cases. While the disease is relatively harmless, and in fact is not legally reportable according to the Health Department, it can present some serious risks to the fetus of a pregnant woman infected with the disease.

The most pressing concern, during an outbreak of Fifth Disease, is how to deal with pregnant teachers in the school. For this reason, the following protocol has been developed to ensure that the Board is responding in a responsible fashion and to ensure that the teachers are treated in a fair and consistent manner.

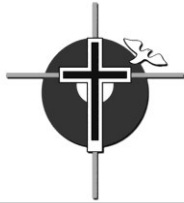
PROTOCOL

a) EDUCATION

- Principals should educate teachers and students (parents) about the symptoms of Fifth Disease and ask that symptoms be reported to the school office.
- Principals should educate teachers about the measures to be taken to reduce exposure to the disease.
- Principals can obtain current literature from the Regional Health Department regarding symptoms and how to reduce exposure and distribute this information to the schools.

b) DETECTION OF OUTBREAKS

- When a physician-diagnosed case is identified within the school, the principal shall contact/email the Human Resources Department to notify them of the outbreak and they shall report all subsequent physician diagnosed cases to the Human Resources Department.
- The principal will also advise the Occupational Health and Safety Coordinator when a



physician-diagnosed case is identified.

- The Principal will inform all school staff of any physician-diagnosed case of Fifth Disease within the school.
- The Human Resources Department will inform occasional teachers of any physician-diagnosed cases of Fifth Disease at a school.

c) REASSIGNMENT OF STAFF AT RISK

Where necessary, due to health reasons,

- Pregnant teachers and teachers who are considering a pregnancy should be encouraged to obtain the blood test which will confirm whether or not they have the antibodies against Fifth Disease. Teachers should consult their own doctor regarding the test (costs for such a test will be at no cost to the Board). Teachers who are immune from the disease are considered not a risk and are not the subject of this protocol.
- When an outbreak of Fifth Disease is confirmed, and a pregnant teacher has not yet been tested for the antibodies, the teacher can use her sick leave while she meets with doctors to obtain the required test and results. If the pregnant teacher has already been tested and does not have the anti-bodies against Fifth Disease, the Board will reassign her to another school or department until the outbreak is over (20 days with no confirmed cases).
- Where a pregnant teacher has been tested and found not to have the antibodies against Fifth Disease, and if the teacher does not wish to remain in a school for fear of potential exposure (even when there is no presence of the disease) the Board will grant an unpaid leave of absence for the period requested.

d) ONGOING REVIEW

- The Human Resources department will periodically reach out to the Public Health Unit to determine if any new studies or research suggesting heightened risks to Fifth Disease exposures have been identified.