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Infection Control Policy – Including Coronavirus (COVID-19) Addendum

St Aubyn's School



INFECTION CONTROL POLICY

The aim of this policy is the prevention of communicable diseases and their spread whilst interfering as little as possible with the attendance of children at school. The following guidance deals with First Aid procedures, good hygiene practices, pupils with an infectious disease, and the safe disposal of hazardous waste. Because infections can be passed on before a person is unwell, it is important that high standards of basic hygiene are always maintained.

All blood and body fluids, including respiratory droplets, should be treated as potentially infectious. Infections can be passed on even when a person looks and feels well. Reasonable steps should always therefore be taken to protect against exposure to blood, body fluids and respiratory emissions, regardless of an individual's infection status. These will provide protection against those diseases where infection may be spread by direct or indirect contact e.g. on hands or contaminated objects.

These basic precautions include:

- The use of proper handwashing procedures.
- Safe treatment of soiling and spills.
- The correct management of incidents involving blood or other body fluids.
- The safe disposal of hazardous waste and sharps (any sharp instrument like a needle).

First Aid Procedures

Under normal circumstances, disposable gloves should be worn for all tasks involving blood, vomit or urine. Disposable plastic aprons may also be required in certain situations.

- First Aiders should wash their hands before (if possible) and after giving First Aid. Any cuts, wounds, etc must be covered with a waterproof plaster.
- Disposable gloves are available in all First Aid Boxes.
- After giving First Aid, the gloved hands should be washed with soap and water to remove all traces of blood, gloves disposed of in a yellow bag and the hands washed again. The yellow bag should be taken to the Medical Room and disposed of in the orange hazardous waste bin.
- Any splashes of blood/body fluids to the eyes or mouth from another person should be washed out immediately with copious amounts of water. Splashes on the skin should be washed off with soap and water.
- Human bites/accidental inoculation (where the skin has been pierced and there has been possible contact with blood from another person): Encourage bleeding by gently squeezing the wound. Wash the area thoroughly with water and cover with a waterproof plaster.

All First Aid incidents must be reported either in person or in writing to the School Nurse. Any incident involving human bites/accidental inoculation or contamination by the blood of another person must be reported to the School Nurse immediately and an accident form completed. Human bites/accidental inoculation normally require medical treatment and in the absence of the School Nurse should be referred to the GP or A&E immediately.

Good Hygiene Practices

Good hygiene practices include personal hygiene, spillages of blood or body fluids and the safe disposal of hazardous waste.

Personal Hygiene

- Good personal hygiene, including proper hand washing, or the use of hand sanitiser is essential.
- Toilet facilities (including toilet paper) must be provided. Facilities for washing hands with soap and warm water, and drying hands must be available. Children should be encouraged to use them and be supervised where necessary. A continuous loop towel for drying hands is not recommended.
- Hands should be thoroughly washed/cleaned (using soap and water or hand sanitiser) and dried before meals, after using the toilet, after handling pets and whenever they become soiled.

Spillages of blood or body fluids

Again, under normal circumstances, disposable gloves should be worn for all tasks involving blood, vomit, faeces or urine. Disposable plastic aprons may also be necessary in certain situations.

- Spillages of blood, vomit, urine and faeces must be cleaned up as quickly as possible. Other persons should be kept away from the contamination until it is effectively dealt with.
- Any spillages onto clothing, carpet or upholstery must have any excess mopped up with a disposable cloth or paper towels and then sponged with warm soapy water. The Maintenance Department has a carpet cleaning machine that must be deployed as soon as possible. Clothing should be washed as soon as possible using as high a temperature as possible or dry cleaned.
- Any spillages onto a hard surface should have disinfectant (see below) poured onto the spill, covered with paper towels and be left for a short while. Any excess disinfectant should be mopped up with more paper towels and the area cleaned in the normal manner.

Body Fluid Disposal Kits: In an emergency, when the above steps cannot be undertaken, Body Fluid Disposal Kits can be used. Each Department has a kit which is in a yellow box. The kit contains clear instructions on dealing with a spill. Refills can be obtained from the School Nurse. One kit is also kept on the minibus.

Disinfectant solution: Use ordinary household bleach freshly diluted 1:10. Do not get this on your skin. If accidental contact occurs, flush with copious amounts of water. Always use freshly diluted disinfectant. Bleach can corrode metal and damage fabric if used at the wrong concentration.

Safe disposal of hazardous waste

Hazardous waste is defined as any materials coming into contact with body fluids, including disposable gloves and aprons. Yellow plastic bags are found in First Aid Bags/boxes. All hazardous waste must be disposed of in one of these bags which should be sealed, taken to the Medical Room and disposed of in the orange hazardous waste bin. Hazardous waste must be sent for incineration and not included with general refuse.

St Aubyn's School has a contract with Initial Medical Services for the collection of hazardous waste on a regular basis. Initial also provides the hazardous waste unit and large orange bags. In the event of the waste unit becoming full before the collection date, the bag should be removed, securely fastened and stored until the next collection date.

'Sharps' must be disposed of into the 'sharps' bin, which is supplied by Initial. 'Sharps' waste is collected on an 'as required' basis as very little 'sharps' waste is generated.

Infectious Diseases

From time to time children, and sometimes staff, may develop an infectious disease. The majority are short lived, but some may be long term and the individual may be a carrier of an infectious disease. Pathogens (micro-organisms that can cause disease) can be spread via several routes:

- Contact – direct or indirect
- Airborne
- Arthropods

Direct contact – pathogens may be spread through direct contact with the body fluids of an infected individual.

Indirect contact – methods of transfer include:

- Other people e.g. via hands
- Animals e.g. salmonella
- Water e.g. cholera
- Inanimate objects e.g. respiratory equipment, contaminated surfaces, NB, some viruses can survive for up to 72 hours on hard surfaces
- Food

Airborne – pathogens only travel via airborne particles:

- Respiratory droplets – coughing and sneezing e.g. influenza
- Dust, which can contain skin cells and bacteria
- Water – via aerosol e.g. Legionnaires disease

Arthropods – these include bugs, flies, fleas, midges, mites, mosquitoes, lice and ticks which can cause diseases such as scabies and malaria.

A child who has developed an infectious disease usually shows general signs of illness such as fever, headache, sore throat or general malaise before the development of a rash or other typical symptom. They are usually infectious before a diagnosis has been made. Carriers of certain diseases may have no symptoms at all and may not be aware of their infectivity. Some parents, for whatever reasons, may choose not to disclose information about their child's health. With this in mind, all blood and body fluids should be treated as potentially infectious and the precautions stated earlier followed.

St Aubyn's School follows Public Health England Guidance on Infection Control in Schools and Other Childcare Settings (see link below). A copy of this guidance is kept in the Medical Room. There are specific exclusion times for certain diseases. If a member of staff suspects an infectious disease, they should contact the School Nurse for further advice. In her absence, these guidelines are easily accessible in the Medical Room or via the link. If a parent informs the School that their child has an infectious disease, other pupils should be observed for similar symptoms. Parents with pupils returning to school after an infectious illness should be asked to see/contact the School Nurse.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/health-protection-in-schools-and-other-childcare-facilities>

The risk of an individual acquiring an infection is influenced by his or her susceptibility. This is determined by age (children have immature immune systems), physical wellbeing, medical interventions (certain drugs lower immunity) and natural immunity. If First Aid Procedures and Good Hygiene Practices are followed, the risk of transmission of infectious diseases is greatly reduced.

Coronavirus (COVID-19) Addendum - June 2020

COVID-19 is a disease caused by a type of coronavirus, and although Coronavirus' have been around for many years, COVID-19 is a new illness that can affect the lungs and airways. Coronavirus can spread from person to person by close contact, for example:

- an infected person can pass a virus to others through large droplets when coughing or sneezing or even talking within a close distance
- through direct contact with an infected person e.g. if you shake or hold their hand and then touch your own mouth, eyes or nose without washing your hands first
- by touching objects e.g. door handles, light switches that have previously been touched by an infected person, then touching your own mouth, eyes or nose. NB: viruses can live longer on hard surfaces than soft absorbent surfaces

The main symptoms of the infection include a high temperature (≥ 37.8 °C), a new, continuous cough and a loss or change to the sense of smell or taste. Other symptoms may include shortness of breath or breathing difficulties, sore throat, headache, diarrhoea and muscle and joint pains

Action to be taken in the event of a child or member of staff displaying symptoms of COVID-19

- Anyone who becomes unwell at school will be seen by the School Nurse. The threshold for sending a child (or staff member) home if unwell will be based on the current Government guidelines. A firm but cautious approach will be taken and in the event of equivocal symptoms, we will err on the side of caution. Currently, symptoms indicative of a COVID-19 infection that mandate isolation are:
 - A new continuous cough
 - A high temperature (≥ 37.8 °C)
 - A loss of, or change in, your normal sense of taste and smell
- Due to the highly infective nature of COVID-19, limits will be placed on the number of people allowed into the Medical Room at any one time to ensure social distancing can be maintained. The Nurses will be operating an “appointment system”
- Anyone at school displaying symptoms of COVID-19 should be sent to the Nurse, after first ringing to ensure they are able to be seen. If necessary, they will then be put into isolation and sent home as quickly as possible
- When seeing anyone with potential COVID-19 symptoms, the Nurses should wear appropriate PPE.
- Parents/carers and staff will be advised to follow appropriate isolation measures as specified in government guidelines:
- Appropriate cleaning measures will be undertaken (for further details please see the St Aubyn’s Return to School Plan – June 2020).

Infection Control

- Encourage hand washing for at least 20 seconds with soap and hot water, particularly after coughing or sneezing and after being in a public area. The use of hand sanitiser is encouraged if there is no access to soap and water.
- Minimise contact between a pupil’s hands and mouth/nose/eyes.
- Encourage pupils to cover their mouth and nose with a tissue when coughing and sneezing and then put the tissue in an appropriate bin, then wash their hands.
- If a tissue is not available, cough or sneeze into the crook of their elbow.
- The above applies to staff as well as pupils.
- Pupils and staff who have any symptoms should not attend school and should follow the government advice on self-isolation.
- Appropriate use of PPE: PPE will only be necessary where social distancing cannot be maintained e.g. during the administration of First Aid, or if a pupil displays any symptoms of COVID-19 (see above).

HAND WASHING IS THE SINGLE MOST IMPORTANT PART OF INFECTION CONTROL IN SCHOOLS