DDSB Ignite Learning

PROCEDURE

School Operations (SCO)

PR SCO 04-01

Title: **Communicable Diseases: Prevention and Control**
Adopted: October 6, 2026
Effective: November 16, 2026
Amended/Reviewed: N/A

This procedure must be interpreted, applied, and implemented in ways that uphold Indigenous and human rights and responsibilities, promote accessibility, and prevent and address (and do not reinforce) discrimination/discriminatory barriers.

1.0 RATIONALE

School settings may increase opportunities for the transmission of communicable diseases due to the close interaction of students and shared spaces and materials. This Procedure establishes responsibilities and requirements for preventing and responding to communicable diseases in DDSB schools and workplaces.

This Procedure is implemented in accordance with the requirements under the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (MFIPPA) and the Personal Health Information Protection Act, 2005 (PHIPPA), as well as the Ontario Health Protection and Promotion Act and the Ontario Occupational Health and Safety Act.

2.0 DEFINITIONS

2.1 Communicable Disease: An illness caused by an infectious agent, such as germs, a virus, bacterium, fungus, or parasites, that can be transmitted directly or indirectly from one person, animal, or surface to another.

2.2 Diseases of Public Health Significance: A list of diseases (as per the Ontario Health Protection and Promotion Act) that requires notification to the local Medical Officer of Health (Durham Region Health Department).

2.3 Personal Health Information: Information about an individual that pertains to health care, including information about an individual's physical or mental health, receipt of health care services and health number.

2.4 Routine Practices: A system of control measures that are utilized to prevent and limit the transmission of infections between people.

2.5 Infection Prevention and Control (IPAC): A collection of evidence-based methods and public health standards used to reduce the spread of germs, including hand hygiene, environmental cleaning, and proper ventilation.

3.0 RESPONSIBILITY

3.1 Operations

The Operations Department is responsible for the ongoing review of this procedure. The Operations Department will consult with the Health and Safety Department to ensure the information remains aligned with current public health guidance and legislative requirements.

The Operations Department will communicate updates regarding the procedure, as needed.

3.2 Health and Safety

The Health and Safety Department will provide education resources and training materials to promote infection prevention and control practices and suggestions to stay healthy.

The Health and Safety Department will review and approve all personal protective equipment provided to DDSB employees.

3.3 School Administrator

The School Administrator is responsible for:

- communicating the requirements of this procedure to employees under their supervision;
- reporting communicable disease and absenteeism concerns in accordance with section 5.3;
- working with the Durham Region Health Department, the Family of Schools Superintendent and other appropriate DDSB departments when responding to communicable disease concerns or outbreaks;
- confirming a process is in place to record occasional staff and visitor sign in;
- ensuring that required personal protective equipment is provided to and used by employees under their supervision, in consultation with Health and Safety, as needed.

3.4 Custodial Supervisor

The Custodial Supervisor is responsible for:

- communicating the requirements of this Procedure to employees under their supervision;
- providing information and instruction to Custodians to support infection prevention and control practices and ensuring applicable cleaning protocols are implemented and maintained; and

- ensuring required personal protective equipment is provided to and used by employees under their supervision, in consultation with Health and Safety, as needed.

3.5 Custodian

The Custodian is responsible for:

- following DDSB Facilities Services Cleaning Protocols and using Board-approved cleaners and disinfectants as directed; and
- working with the School Administrator to ensure hand hygiene supplies, including soap and/or alcohol-based hand sanitizer, are available throughout the school building, where required.

3.6 DDSB Employees

All DDSB employees are responsible for:

- maintaining confidentiality regarding an individual's health and medical information;
- completing required training applicable to their role, including Infection Prevention and Control (IPAC) training, where required;
- following Routine Practices and using required personal protective equipment when there is potential exposure to blood or bodily fluids; and
- reporting exposures to blood or bodily fluids to their Supervisor.

4.0 APPLICATION AND SCOPE

This Procedure applies to all DDSB schools, workplaces and employees and establishes requirements related to the prevention, reporting and management of communicable diseases affecting DDSB school and workplace environments.

5.0 PROCEDURES

5.1 Education Resources

The DDSB Communicable Disease Resource provides information about communicable diseases that may occur in school settings and measures to reduce or prevent transmission.

Additional infection prevention and control and routine practices resources are available to employees through DDSB Spark. School Administrators may use these resources to support infection prevention and control practices within their schools.

5.2 Training

Training is available to all DDSB employees on the Professional Learning Hub and includes information on:

- Infection Prevention and Control (IPAC)
- Routine Practices
- Care and Use of Personal Protective Equipment
- Cleaning and Disinfection

The school administrator and supervisor may identify employees under their supervision to complete the above training.

5.3 Reporting to Durham Region Health Department

In accordance with the Health Protection and Promotion Act, a School Administrator who is of the opinion that a student has or may have a communicable disease shall report the matter to the Durham Region Health Department. Refer to Appendix B for diseases of public health significance.

The Medical Officer of Health has the authority under the Health Protection and Promotion Act to provide direction on exclusion, or isolation, for any person who has or may have a communicable disease.

The School Administrator shall report increased absenteeism among employees and/or students to the Durham Region Health Department when overall school absenteeism exceeds approximately 30% above the school's usual baseline level. Schools are also encouraged to contact the Durham Region Health Department and DDSB Health and Safety when a single classroom experiences a notable increase in illness-related absenteeism above its typical baseline. Early reporting of classroom-level concerns allows for consultation, assessment of the situation and infection prevention and control (IPAC) guidance, as needed.

It is the responsibility of the Durham Region Health Department to declare an outbreak and direct any action for the school to take. These actions could include communication to families, additional infection prevention and control (IPAC) measures and ongoing monitoring of absences.

5.4 Alternate Instruction

Alternate instruction may be provided if the student is required by public health to be excluded from school due to communicable disease illness. Decisions regarding alternate instruction shall be made on a case-by-case basis.

5.5 Privacy and Personal Health Information

Information about an individual's health or medical condition must only be collected, used, disclosed, retained and protected in accordance with applicable privacy legislation and the DDSB Privacy Procedure.

Employees must protect the confidentiality of personal information and personal health information and must only access, use or disclose such information as authorized or required in the performance of their duties.

When communicating information about a communicable disease or outbreak, identifying information about an affected student or employee must not be disclosed except where authorized or required by law.

5.6 Routine Practices

Routine practices are a system of control measures that are utilized to prevent and limit the transmission of infections between people. Routine practices are based on the premise that all blood, body fluids, secretions, excretions, mucous membranes, non-intact skin or soiled items are potentially infectious.

In a school setting, Routine Practices are applied in situations including:

- assisting students with personal care;
- providing first aid where there may be contact with blood, bodily fluids, mucous membranes, secretions or excretions; and
- cleaning blood or bodily fluid spills.

Key components of routine practices include:

- risk assessment;
- hand hygiene;
- use of personal protective equipment (PPE)

The adherence to routine practices will protect students and staff without requiring the release of personal health information.

Additional information related to routine practices is available in the Communicable Disease Resource.

6.0 RECORDS MANAGEMENT

Any records related to this Procedure will be managed in accordance with the Board's Records and Information Management (RIM) Procedure and the Records Retention and Classification Schedule (RRCS).

7.0 APPENDICES

Appendix A – DDSB Communicable Disease Resource

Appendix B – Durham Region Health Department – Diseases of Public Health Significance

8.0 REFERENCE DOCUMENTS

- Education Act
- Ontario Health Protection and Promotion Act
- O. Reg. 135/18: Designation of Diseases
- Occupational Health and Safety Act
- Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (MFIPPA)

- Personal Health Information Protection Act (PHIPPA)
- DDSB Privacy Procedure (PR GOV 06-01)