

MELBOURNE HIGH SCHOOL

INFECTIOUS DISEASE POLICY



Help for non-English speakers

If you need help to understand the information in this policy please contact the school on 98260711

PURPOSE

To explain to Melbourne High School parents, staff and students the processes and procedures in place to support students with health care needs at our school.

OBJECTIVE

This policy outlines the strategies and actions that Melbourne High School is required to take to prevent the transmission of an infectious disease or control transmission of an infectious disease when a case/s is identified, this includes covid-19 and influenza

SCOPE

This policy applies to all staff, including casual relief teachers, students and parents/carers

POLICY

Infection control refers to the procedures used to minimise the risk of spreading infection. The principals of infection control are through the use of Standard and Additional Precautions.

Primary responsibility for the prevention and control of infectious diseases lies with individuals, families and public health authorities.

Although schools are not expected to provide expert advice or treat students, which is the role of medical practitioners and health authorities, Melbourne High School employs a full time Division 1 Registered Nurse, who has a scope of practice to undertake this role.

Schools have a legal responsibility to help manage infectious diseases in their facilities and have an important role to play in supporting prevention and control of disease transmission.

Standard Precautions: These are the basic level of infection control to be used at all times by everyone at Melbourne High School. They include hygiene and bodily fluid precautions. Hygiene precautions include – good hygiene practices, particularly washing and drying hands before and after contact with contaminated objects; the use of protective barriers such as gloves and masks; safe handling of sharps; use of sterile technique where prescribed.

Bodily fluid precautions: Interaction between people at schools should not allow contact with bodily fluids including – blood (dry or wet); secretions; excretions other than sweat; other bodily substances

Staff and students should: cover broken skin on hands, lower arms etc. with a dressing (available from the nurse in the Health Centre); treat blood and bodily fluids as being potentially infectious; be aware of the risks associated with spills; avoid direct contact with blood or other fluids; be familiar with recommended hygiene and standard precautions

Spills should be dealt with in a timely manner – use single use gloves; then wash hands thoroughly with soap and water and dry.

- Cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) - use a resuscitation mask, if available, if mouth to mouth resuscitation is required (The Australian Resuscitation Council has now advised that compression only CPR is adequate and preferable to no CPR at all)

Additional Precautions: are taken during the outbreak of infectious disease, as advised by Commonwealth or State Authorities and are to be used along side standard precautions; they aim to interrupt transmission of infection.

Schools have a legal responsibility to help manage infectious diseases in their facilities.

Schools also have an important role to play in supporting the prevention and control of transmission of infectious diseases through - abiding by legislated requirements for school exclusion and immunisation status recording; supporting the personal hygiene routines of students, for example, provision of hand hygiene facilities; ensuring procedures are in place to safely manage the handling of spills of blood and other body fluids or substances.

Support for Immunisation Programs: Schools have a role in helping health authorities and families prevent and control infectious diseases through the support of immunisation programs and through recording the immunisation status of each student.

Exclusion: Schools must be aware of and abide by exclusion requirements during an outbreak of an infectious disease. The School Exclusion Table-

- Is maintained by The Department of Health and Human Services
- Outlines the following – the minimum period of exclusion from schools for infectious disease cases; how long parents/carers of children who are not immunised against the outbreak should keep their children at home; contacts prescribed by regulations 13 and 14 of the Health (Infectious Diseases) Regulations {for example- close contacts with a covid positive person or a person who has chickenpox}

Send unwell children home as soon as possible: Ensure that unwell children do not attend your school. Isolate children who become unwell during the day and send the unwell child home as soon as possible.

During the Covid-19 Pandemic, an Isolation Room has been established and is an addition to The Health Centre. Infectious/potentially infectious staff and students can use this room for the following – undertaking a Rapid Antigen Test for Covid-19; awaiting a parent/carer to come and collect them

Notification of an infectious disease to DET via the Incident Support and Operations Centre: When a school is made aware of student illness that is a medically confirmed case(s) of pertussis, measles, mumps, rubella, meningococcal disease or polio, this should be reported to the [Incident Support and](#)

[Operations Centre \(ISOC\)](#). This is to assist the department (with DH) to monitor disease outbreak at a school level and to provide further guidance where required. For more information on how to report an incident via ISOC, refer to [Reporting and Managing School Incidents \(including emergencies\)](#).

Exclusion of a child with an infectious disease — Secondary school students: Secondary schools are not bound by the legislative exclusion requirements which apply to primary schools, but are encouraged to follow the same guidance to ensure the safety of their students.

In the event of a public health risk, such as an infectious disease outbreak, secondary schools may be required under the Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008 to comply with the directions of the Chief Health Officer or an authorised officer.

General responses to influenza, gastroenteritis, and other common infections at Melbourne High School: Schools should consider the following when responding to students affected by common infections: students with cold or flu-like symptoms or vomiting or diarrhoea should be encouraged to seek medical attention, limit contact with others and stay at home until symptoms have passed; if a child becomes ill at school with these symptoms, students should attend the Health Centre for an assessment by the School nurse, who will assess the student and contact the family and arrange for the student to go home; good general hygiene remains the best defence against infection and schools should encourage children to regularly wash their hands and cover their nose and mouth if sneezing and coughing; refer to the [Personal Hygiene Policy](#).

School community communication and additional advice:

It is not generally necessary to communicate with the broader school community about an infectious disease, unless there is an outbreak or the school has been directed to pursue specific action by health authorities. Doing so can cause unnecessary anxiety in the school community.

For advice on alerting parents, or displaying signage, in relation to case(s) of a notifiable infectious disease in the school, schools can phone DH on [1300 651 160](#) who may give advice on whether such as action is required.

In more general cases, where communication has been deemed necessary, the school should give consideration as to what should be communicated to the school community. In doing so, it should:

- maintain student confidentiality
- be fact based
- be written in a way not to cause alarm
- inform parents and guardians that a school community member/s has been diagnosed with an infectious disease
- name the condition
- suggest that they seek medical advice regarding their child's health if they have concerns.

Covid-19 at Melbourne High School:

The Covid-19 pandemic has caused considerable disruption to schools and the management of disease control and infection spreading has changed the way our school operates. Infection control measures have been communicated widely amongst our school community, reiterating the

importance of good infection control measures – hand and respiratory hygiene, the wearing of appropriate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) i.e., face masks and the use of hand sanitiser.

Melbourne High School continues to monitor the covid-19 pandemic and acts in accordance with the guidelines set out by The Department of Education via the Operations Guide and The Department of Health.

The School Nurses Role in Infection Control: The school nurse is responsible for the following-

- Assessing and monitoring staff and students according to their medical condition
- Maintaining a fully stocked Health Centre with PPE which is available for staff and students when required
- Maintaining a clean Health Centre and Isolation Room – each space is thoroughly cleaned by the nurse after each student/staff visit
- Recording all assessments and health care provided
- Informing parents/careers of students who have been treated in The Health Centre for illness when medication is administered or if the student needs to be excluded from school due to conditions such as covid-19, chickenpox, influenza
- The nurse can support the prevention and control of infectious disease transmission by – providing a prompt and consistent response to detected or suspected cases of disease; being vigilant to students who may have headlice (unlikely at MHS, but possible) or other public health condition.

COMMUNICATION

This policy will be communicated to our school community in the following ways:

- Included in staff induction processes and staff training
- Available publicly on our school's website
- Available on the Student Management System, Compass
- Discussed at staff briefings/meetings as required

Policy Review and Approval

Policy last reviewed	July 2022
Approved by	Principal – Dr Tony Mordini
Next scheduled review date	July 2026