



## **BLOOD-BORNE VIRUSES POLICY**

### **Policy & Guidance**

- Blood-borne viruses include hepatitis B, hepatitis C, and HIV.
- Students should not face victimisation or discrimination because they are infected by a blood-borne virus. The Equal Opportunity Act 2010 (Vic) provides protection against such discrimination on the basis of 'impairment', which may include a blood-borne virus.
- Schools must respect a student with a blood-borne virus has a right to confidentiality.
- Risks of contracting blood-borne viruses are negligible. Schools have a duty of care to provide first aid to students or staff with a blood-borne virus, with the standard precautions they follow for students and staff without a blood-borne virus.
- For further information about blood-borne viruses and other infectious diseases, consult the Department of Health and Human Services Communicable Disease Prevention and Control Unit.

### **Purpose**

- To outline how Footscray North Primary School will deal with blood-borne viruses (BBV). BBV's include Hepatitis B and C and Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV).
- To ensure the school complies with DET policy and guidelines and the legislative requirements of the
  - *Equal Opportunity Act 1995*
  - *Equal Opportunity (Gender Identity and Sexual Orientation) Act 2000*

### **Definition**

#### **BBV**

Blood-borne viruses are spread when blood from a person with a virus in the blood enters another person's bloodstream. In Australia, the most common way it is transmitted is through sharing unsterile injecting drug equipment. Other methods of infection are unsafe sex, and tattooing or other procedures that involve unsterile or reused equipment. Examples of BBV include hepatitis B and C.

### **Implementation**

#### **Health support planning**

A student with a blood-borne virus (BBV) (for example HIV) may require additional health support at school. Where appropriate a [Student Health Support Plan](#) should be developed in collaboration with the parent/carer and student, outlining how the school will support the student's health care needs.

#### **Privacy**

Students with a BBV are entitled to have their BBV status treated confidentially.

The BBV status of a student is a private matter between a student and his/her family doctor. If this information is shared with the principal as part of health support planning or otherwise, the Principal must:

- respect the student's right to confidentiality
- not share this information with others unless parent/guardian consent (and/or student consent where appropriate) is sought

Note: the above privacy principles also apply to school staff. Refer to the Department's policy on [Privacy and Information Sharing](#).

#### Protection from discrimination

Schools must avoid any form of discrimination of students with a BBV and protect students from victimisation or discrimination based on BBV infection. Examples of discrimination include:

- refusing to enrol the student
- excluding the student from attendance
- denying access to school programs or activities
- failing to protect the student from harassment or victimisation
- breaching confidentiality related to the BBV status
- differential application of school rules

Exclusion from school is not required for individuals with hepatitis B, hepatitis C, or HIV. Schools should consult with the [Communicable Disease Prevention and Control Unit](#) within the Department of Health and Human Services with further questions or concerns about disclosure or exclusion.

#### Risk of infection

The Department of Health and Human Services advises as long as standard hygiene, safety, infection prevention and control and first aid procedures are followed:

- risks of contracting blood borne viruses are negligible
- schools have a duty to provide first aid to students or staff with a BBV, with the standard precautions they follow for students or staff without a BBV

Blood spills from any student or staff member should always be treated as if the blood is potentially infectious, irrespective of whether the individual has a BBV or not.

#### BBV prevention and education

Immunisation provides the best protection against Hepatitis B and is part of the routine schedule of childhood vaccines in Victoria.

Prevention of other blood born infection is also supported by the health and physical education learning area delivered through the Victorian Curriculum F–10 that addresses health behaviours and BBV risk factors.

[Victorian Curriculum F–10](#)

[Guidelines for the control of infectious diseases](#)

For further information on preventing and controlling hepatitis specifically, refer to the Department's [Guidelines for Hepatitis](#).

- Please refer also to the school's *First Aid for Staff & Students Policy*, the *Duty of Care Policy*, *Bleeding Students & Open Wounds Policy*, *Bullying Prevention & Response Policy* and the *Privacy & Information Sharing Policy*.

#### Evaluation

- This policy will be reviewed as part of the school's three-year review cycle or if guidelines change (latest DET update mid-June 2020).

Reference:

<https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/blood-borne-viruses>