

VIRGINIA SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF AND THE BLIND

TITLE: <i>Communicable Disease</i>	POLICY NUMBER: SH08
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Policy Statement: The Virginia School for the Deaf and the Blind will not accept students with communicable diseases unless a licensed healthcare provider certifies that the VSDB is capable of providing care to the student without jeopardizing the health and well-being of students and staff.

VAC22.1-272 Contagious and infectious diseases
VAC32.1-37 Reports by persons other than physicians
VAC32.1-39 Surveillance and investigation

Procedure:

1. The VSDB must be aware of the required treatment for the student with a communicable disease and the procedures to protect students and staff. VSDB adheres to the Virginia School Health Guidelines regarding selected contagious and infectious diseases, VAC 22.1-272.
 - a. Any student enrolled at the VSDB who is suspected of having a communicable disease/infection will be brought for evaluation to the Student Health Center. A VSDB nurse will assess the student. Based on the nursing assessment, the student may be quarantined in the Student Health Center until the parent arrives to take the student home.
 - b. The VSDB contract physician will be contacted for guidance in managing the communicable disease and any subsequent guidance to monitor the health and potential exposure of other students and staff.
 - c. The parent/guardian will be notified to pick up their child. The parent/guardian may decide to follow up with their child's own primary healthcare provider.
 - d. The VSDB contract physician, the student's primary healthcare provider, and/or the public health department will determine the student's required treatment and provide recommendations for the student's length of exclusion from school.
 - e. Prior to the student's return to the VSDB, the parent/guardian must have the *Medical Release Form for Students Returning to VSDB Following a Serious Illness, Communicable Disease, Injury, or Surgery* completed and signed by the treating healthcare provider.
 - f. The student's local school division will be notified of the exclusion from school due to communicable illness and the amount of time expected to be out of school.

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2. The VSDB nurses will notify and submit applicable reports to the local health department in accordance with VAC 32.1-39.
 - a. An outbreak is the occurrence of more cases of disease than expected. There is no strict definition of an outbreak or specific number of cases that need to occur to be considered an outbreak. If the VSDB nursing staff sense that more people are sick with similar symptoms than is usually seen, then an outbreak should be reported to the local health department.
 - b. An unusual level of activity of any illness that may be spread from one person to another or that may be caused by a common exposure should be reported.
 - i. The diseases that most commonly cause outbreaks in group settings are respiratory illnesses such as influenza, gastrointestinal illnesses that cause vomiting and/or diarrhea, rash illnesses such as chickenpox or scabies, and COVID-19.
 - c. The local health department should be consulted if an outbreak is suspected, even if no specific disease has yet been diagnosed.
 - d. The health department staff will collect and assess information about each ill person, such as the date the illness began, symptoms experienced, and exposure history. The health department staff may interview students or staff to aid in identifying factors that may be associated with the illness.
 - e. Specimens may be collected as requested by the VSDB contract physicians or local health department personnel.
 - f. The local or state health department officials will recommend steps to follow to stop the outbreak and reduce the risk of disease.
3. Students with skin lesions like pimples, rashes, and pus-filled boils, particularly when warm, painful, red or swollen, may have a serious skin infection.
 - a. Students with skin lesions will report to the Student Health Center for assessment and for proper treatment/dressing.
 - b. The student's parent/guardian will be notified of any skin lesion that appears to be infected. The parent/guardian will need to take their child to a healthcare provider for diagnosis and treatment. Cultures may be obtained for proper diagnosis.
 - c. If a student is diagnosed with MRSA (Methicillin Resistant Staphylococcus Aureus), the VSDB nursing staff will contact the VSDB contract physician to inform and discuss directives for other VSDB students and staff.

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- d. The VSDB nursing staff will stress to the family and to all VSDB employees the importance of wearing gloves when handling a student's blood, body fluids, secretions, excretions, and any item that may have come into contact with these fluids. Gloves should be used before touching mucous membranes and non-intact skin. Gloves should be removed after use, and hands washed thoroughly.
 - e. Clean any contaminated areas with a bleach solution (1/4 c. bleach: 1 gallon water).
 - f. VSDB students should avoid sharing personal items, such as towels, clothing, or water bottles.
 - g. VSDB coaches need to encourage students to wash and dry their uniforms and equipment on a daily basis to prevent the spread of any infection.
4. VSDB employees are encouraged to promptly see a healthcare provider and obtain treatment for any type of skin lesions. It is important to keep lesions covered with a bandage until properly healed or as advised by a healthcare provider.

<i>Rescission:</i> Effective Date: June 2015 BOV Approved: June 8, 2016; Revised: August 1, 2022
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