

Infectious Diseases Policy

Policy Statement

UWCSEA is committed to working effectively to prevent and help to manage infectious diseases within the UWCSEA community and the context of Singapore.

This policy exists to help prevent and control the transmission of infectious diseases in UWCSEA, and to promote health within the school community. It applies to all community members coming onto our campuses and involved in our activities.

Policy Rationale

UWCSEA has an important role to play in supporting the prevention and control of transmission of infectious diseases in its community through:

1. Abiding by legislative requirements in regards to infectious disease surveillance, disease control.
2. Supporting the personal hygiene routines of students, for example, provision of hand hygiene facilities
3. Ensuring procedures are in place to safely manage the handling of spills of blood and other body fluids or substances.
4. Timely and evidence based reaction to infectious disease outbreak.

The College nursing teams provide advice and support however the primary responsibility for the prevention and control of infectious diseases lies with individuals, families and public health authorities.

UWCSEA is not expected to provide expert advice or treat students, which is the role of medical practitioners and health authorities.

Definitions and Clarifications

1. **An infectious disease** is a clinical condition resulting from the presence of pathogenic microorganisms, or germs, which do not usually inhabit the human body invading human tissue and resulting in signs and symptoms of infection e.g. redness, heat, swelling, fever. Several types of germs cause infection including bacteria, viruses, fungi, protozoa and parasites. Diseases can be spread, directly or indirectly, from one person to another, or from touching a contaminated surface.

UWCSEA-POL-09 Infectious Diseases Policy

Owner/s: Director of Operations and Facilities

Approved by: College Leadership Team

Last Revision: November 2019

Replaced notifiable Diseases Policy, Avian Flu, Swine Flu, HIV AIDS Policies

1.1 The Ministry of Health, Singapore has identified a number of infectious diseases that require mandatory notification under the Infectious Diseases Act and can be found [here](#).

1.2 Not all infectious diseases are contagious but are still covered within this policy e.g ear infections cannot be passed to another person.

2. Respiratory hygiene or cough etiquette are terms used to describe infection prevention measures. Practices include:

- covering the mouth and nose when coughing or sneezing
- using tissues and disposing of them appropriately
- attending to hand hygiene immediately after coughing, sneezing or blowing nose.

3. Standard precautions are the minimum infection prevention and control practices that must be used at all times for all people in all situations. The use of standard precautions aims to minimise and, where possible, eliminate the risk of transmission of infection.

4. Modes of transmission

It is important to understand how infections are transmitted as well as how they are not transmitted eg there is no evidence to suggest that being cold and wet causes a fever. Transmission of an infectious disease may be transmitted by six routes:

- 4.1. **Gastrointestinal route:** usually occurs when hands are contaminated after using the toilet and germs are passed to the mouth eg diarrhoea and vomiting, Hepatitis A and threadworm infestation
- 4.2. **Droplet route:** germs that live and multiply in the eyes, nose, mouth and lungs are easily passed when coughing, sneezing and nose blowing to our hands and from there to other objects. Examples include: common cold, influenza, meningococcal disease, mumps, rubella and pertussis (whooping cough). Other infections which are airborne spread include measles, chickenpox and tuberculosis.
- 4.3. **Direct contact:** passing of pathogens from person to person, from hard surfaces (eg tables and chairs, outdoor play equipment) and soft furnishings such as cushions, pillows and carpets eg gastric flu, conjunctivitis, impetigo, ringworm, and head lice infestation. Other infections require more intimate or prolonged contact for transmission such as glandular fever and cold sores.
- 4.4. **Blood and bodily fluids contact:** Hepatitis B, Hepatitis C and HIV/AIDS are three viral infections that are spread through contact with blood and body fluids.
- 4.5. **Contaminated food and water:** Food-poisoning is an illness that occurs when food or water which is contaminated by germs, or by toxic substances produced by germs, is consumed.

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- 4.6. **Vector-borne** eg as with malaria, dengue and chikungunya, the **vector** is a mosquito.

Protocols and Practices

5. Prevention and Control of Infectious Diseases

The College implements infection control protocols which are evidence based and sustainable in order to minimise transmission within the College, as well as the wider community.

5.1. Hygiene measures:

- 5.1.1. All blood and body fluids are treated as potentially infectious and barrier methods are employed eg gloves. Proper disposal methods are provided in clinics.
- 5.1.2. The Facilities department ensures bathrooms are provided with soap and hand drying facilities.
- 5.1.3. Facilities department ensures bathrooms, classrooms, shared areas are cleaned and ventilated daily.
- 5.1.4. Facilities are notified of confirmed infectious conditions and implement deep cleaning measures as recommended by the Ministry of Health eg use of sodium hypochlorite solution, cleaning and removal of soft furnishings etc.

5.2 Immunisation:

- 5.2.1. Under the Fourth Schedule of the Infectious Diseases Act (Cap 137) all individuals in Singapore must be vaccinated. As a prerequisite for application and continuing enrolment at the College, parents of students at the school are required to submit a hard copy of a suitable form of Verification of Vaccination Requirements. This can be in the form of the certificate issued by MOH/HPB for entry to Singapore or certification or a form from a Singapore licensed doctor

Proof of other immunisation may also be required for safe conduct of trips as determined by the College. Failure to provide proof or exemption may result in the student being excluded from the campus or school trips in line with the terms and conditions of admissions.

- 5.2.2. The College Clinic Nursing Team will assist the residential community with required vaccinations under specific instructions from parents or guardians.

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5.2.3. The College strongly recommends that all community members align with local recommended vaccination programmes. The Nursing Team will assist with vaccination advice and queries for the UWCSEA community as necessary.

5.2.5 The College will provide advice on vaccinations that are required for staff and scholarship students in the conduct of official business. The relevant trip or departmental budget will be required to pick up these costs.

5.3. Exclusion from school community:

5.3.1. The head nurse on each campus has the responsibility for ensuring students and staff are fit to remain in the general community. If a student or staff/contractor displays symptoms of an infectious disease eg vomiting, diarrhoea and/or fever or declare other asymptomatic conditions, the ability to participate in school activities, including school trips, remains with the head nurse or designate.

5.3.2. The student may return to school once all symptoms have been resolved for 24 hours eg body temperature 37.5°C or below, no vomiting or diarrhoea and able to tolerate a full diet.

5.3.3. In the case of bacterial skin infections, at least 24 hours of antibiotic treatment is required.

5.3.4. In some circumstances the College may request a medical certificate or memo certifying community members are no longer infectious and are fit to return to school, which must be sent to the College Clinic eg glandular fever, chicken pox, eye infections etc.

5.3.5. Students who feel unwell at school are examined and assessed by a college nurse in the College Clinic. A temperature above [37.5°C](#) with or without vomiting and/or diarrhoea, purulent discharge from an eye or skin lesion may indicate a contagious infection and so parents/guardians will be contacted to collect their child and take for medical review if necessary.

5.3.6. If an infectious disease is suspected, parents are asked to be socially responsible and take their child home and not return to school until a doctor is able to confirm they are well enough to attend school by providing a “Fit to Attend School” certificate, or an expired Medical Certificate.

5.3.8. Staff are also encouraged to stay home when unwell.

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- 5.3.9 Students who are unwell prior to a school trip are required to be symptom free for a minimum of 24 hours. Parents may be required to provide a “fit to participate” certificate from the family doctor.

6. Management of Infectious Diseases

In the event of an outbreak of disease in the school and in order to reduce the risk of spread of infection:

- 6.1. [All notifiable diseases](#) will be immediately communicated by the Head Nurse to the [MOH general hotline](#).
- 6.2. A medical advisory (see resources) of the specific disease will be sent by email to the class parents of students in the Primary School from K1 to Grade 5 so that any signs and symptoms can be monitored before sending their child to school. From Grade 6 upwards, outbreaks of infectious diseases will be treated on a case by case basis and the entire Grade or part of the school will be notified as necessary. The anonymity of the student concerned is protected at all times.
- 6.3. All UWCSEA staff should reinforce good personal hygiene practices and lead by example.
- 6.4. Head of Housekeeping ensures daily cleaning practices are being employed as well as deep cleaning following a confirmed diagnosis of an infectious disease or condition according to [UWCSEA-OCP-03 Facilities Housekeeping sanitizing Room and Spaces OCP](#)
- 6.5. Students in the Residential Community who are diagnosed with an infectious disease are admitted to a College Clinic isolation room or transferred to a hospital to be cared for until fully recovered.
- 6.6. To limit the spread of infection or to break the cycle of reinfection and on the advice of the Head Nurse, the Head of Campus can choose to close a class, school or specific location for a determined period of time.
- 6.7. The equipment needed for the management of infectious diseases will be provided by the College Clinic at the discretion of the Head Nurse.

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Associated Policies and Practices

[UWCSEA-OCP-23 INFECTIOUS DISEASES OCP](#)

[UWCSEA-OCP-03 Facilities Housekeeping sanitizing Room and Spaces OCP](#)

External Resources

[MOH general hotline](#)

References

- [Infection Control Guidelines for Schools and Child Care Centres, 2012 \(2nd Edition\)](#)
- [Singapore Statutes Online: Infectious Diseases \(Diphtheria and Measles Vaccination\) Regulations](#)
- [HPB - FAQ for Vaccination Requirements](#)
- [MOH: Documentation of Diphtheria and Measles Vaccination required for Foreign-born Children applying for Long-Term Immigration Passes in Singapore.](#)
- [ICA: Becoming a Student's Pass Holder](#)
- [Health Promotion Board: National Childhood Immunisation Schedule, Singapore](#)
- [MOH/Health Hub: Common Childhood Conditions](#)

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