

POLICY OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION

ADMISSION AND MANAGEMENT OF STUDENTS WITH ACQUIRED IMMUNE
DEFICIENCY SYNDROME (AIDS)

Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) is one of a number of communicable diseases which require special precautions to prevent transmission in the school environment. Because there is no cure for AIDS and because it is a life-threatening disease, it is imperative that specialized procedures be followed in the management of a student who is diagnosed as carrier of the AIDS virus.

Because the mode of transmission of AIDS is not fully understood and because ongoing research may provide new and significant information about transmission this policy can be changed at any time at the discretion of the Board of Education.

THE AIDS VIRUS

AIDS is a serious disease that damages the body's immune system, leaving a person susceptible to certain diseases and infections that would not ordinarily be a threat. AIDS is caused by a virus called the Human T lymphotropic virus, Type III (HTLV-III), also known as Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV). There are different categories of the disease under the heading of AIDS. One is the severe form of the infection which usually causes death within two years. A second category is the Aids - Related Complex (ARC) or Opportunistic Diseases, symptoms will be related to the specific disease process involved. The third form of the infection causes the affected person to be an Asymptomatic Carrier, having no symptoms, but still believed capable of evidence presently available, it appears that each of the three stages, or categories, is contagious under certain conditions.

TRANSMISSION OF AIDS

Unlike many other communicable diseases, AIDS is not believed by most medical authorities to be transmissible through casual contact in the normal school environment. Present medical knowledge indicates that the AIDS virus is transmitted by the introduction of the virus into the blood stream through sexual contact, sharing of hypodermic needles among intravenous drug users, receiving blood transfusions from infected individuals, or at birth. Pending further research, however, any spill of body fluid--blood, tears, semen, saliva, vomitus, urine or excrement--by an AIDS infected individual should be considered as a possible source of infection.

CLEANUP OF BODY FLUIDS

Since it is not always known whether a student is infected with the HTLV III virus, rubber gloves and a 1 to 10 solution of household bleach in water are to be used in cleaning up a spill of body fluid by any student. Insofar as possible, paper towels or other disposable products are to be used. Following cleanup the rubber gloves and paper towels are to be sealed in a plastic bag and discarded. Used sanitary napkins are also to be sealed in plastic bags and disposed of in the same manner. Clothing or materials used in cleanup, such as mop heads or rags are to be rinsed in a bleach and water solution or washed separately in hot water. The top portion of all drinking fountains are to be cleaned with a 1:10 solution of bleach and water. Any athletic mouthpiece not assigned to a specific player will be soaked in a 1:10 solution of bleach and water between uses.

Rubber or plastic gloves are to be worn by personnel administering first aid to cuts, scrapes, sores on the body or in the mouth. The rubber gloves and any used bandages are to be sealed in plastic bags and discarded. Thorough handwashing with soap and water is also advised. These precautions will help to guard against the spread of not only AIDS but other more communicable, though less deadly, diseases.

REFERRAL OF AIDS STUDENTS

If the school is notified by a child's parents or their representative that a diagnosis of AIDS has been made, the Ottawa County Health Department will be notified. If the Health Department verifies that the student is infected with the HTLV III virus, the Superintendent is authorized to institute the necessary procedures. Each case will be evaluated individually.

Following a thorough analysis of the case, a placement team made up of representatives from the Oklahoma Department of Health, the Oklahoma Department of Education, the Commerce Public School System, the child's physician and the parents will make a recommendation to the Commerce Board of Education as to whether and under what conditions the student should be permitted to continue in school. The Commerce Board of Education, after reviewing the placement team's recommendation and the available medical evidence, will make the final placement decision. The parents or guardians, together with the student's physician, shall have the right to attend all review meetings regarding their child's case, to ask questions and to present any matters in response to the recommendation.

If an alternative educational program is required, the Director of Special Education and his/her staff will establish that program in the least restrictive environment possible. At least once each semester, the principal will call a meeting of the student's parents, the student's physician, and the Health Department to review the case and, if needed, make any adjustments in the student's program.


PROTECTION OF OTHER STUDENTS AND EMPLOYERS

The first consideration must be the protection of other students from infection by the AIDS student. Since the possibility of spreading the HTLV-III virus through casual contact such as that which occurs in a school situation is "remote according to medical researchers. Most AIDS students can continue in the regular classroom, except that such students are not to be allowed to participate in contact sports or swimming. If a student is prone to biting or other aggressive behavior, is incontinent, has open skin lesions, or is subject to drooling, a more restrictive environment which minimizes the exposure of other students to his/her body fluids may be prescribed. Any employee assigned to work with this type of student must be informed of the potential contagiousness of the student.


PROTECTION OF AIDS STUDENTS

A second consideration is the physical well-being of the AIDS afflicted student. Since AIDS severely depresses the immune system, any of the minor infections or childhood diseases which are common among children could be life threatening to a student afflicted with AIDS. It may thus be advisable to recommend a restricted educational environment for the protection of the AIDS student.

This policy approved in a regular meeting of the Board of Education held on November 2, 1987 by a vote of



President, Board of Education



Clerk, Board of Education

Nov. 2, 1987