

## **HANDLING CASES OF AIDS REGULATION**

### **Introduction**

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 known cure for AIDS and because it is a life-threatening disease, it is imperative that specialized procedures be followed in the management of an employee or a student who is diagnosed as a carrier of the AIDS virus.

### **Nature of the AIDS Virus**

AIDS is a disease which disables the body from fighting infection. The cause of the disease is infection by the human T-Lymphotropic virus, Type III (HTLV-III), also known as Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV). Three categories of outcomes result from infection by HTLV-III. (1) AIDS is the most severe form of the infection and most victims die within two or three years. (2) AIDS-Related Complex (ARC) is a milder form with less severe symptoms. (3) The most common form of infection by HTLV-III causes the affected person to be an Asymptomatic Carrier, having no symptoms but still believed capable of transmitting the virus to others. Based upon the medical evidence presently available, it appears that each of the three levels or stages of HTLV-III infection 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.

### **Referral of Employees and Students with AIDS**

The case of any employee or student who has been diagnosed as having AIDS will be referred to the superintendent. If medical authorities verify that the person is infected with the HTLV-III virus and if there is a possibility that other students or employees might become infected from the AIDS person, the superintendent is authorized to arrange a safe, temporary placement for that person until permanent arrangements can be made.

Following a thorough analysis of the case, the superintendent will make a recommendation as to whether and under what conditions the employee or student should be permitted to stay on school grounds. In the case of a student, copy of the superintendent's recommendation will be sent to the student's parent/guardian. If the employee or the student's parents/guardians are dissatisfied with the superintendent's recommendation, they may send a written request for a review of the case to the Amber-Pocasset Board of Education. The employee or the student, with his/her parents or guardians, together with the physician of the case have the right to attend all review meetings regarding the case, to ask questions and to present any matters in response to the recommendation. The decision of the board shall be final.

### **Alternative Education**

If an alternative educational program is required for the student, the superintendent 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 family physician, and the superintendent to review the case, and if needed, make adjustments in the student's program.

**HANDLING CASES OF AIDS  
REGULATION (Cont.)****Protection of AIDS Students**

The physical well-being of the AIDS afflicted student shall be considered. 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, either permanently or temporarily, for the protection of the AIDS student.

**Protection of Other Students and Employees**

Students and employees not afflicted with the AIDS virus shall be protected. Since the possibility of spreading the HTLV-III virus through casual contact such as occurs in a school situation is "remote," according to medical researchers, most AIDS students can continue without restriction 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 be biting or other similar aggressive behavior, is continent, 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.

**Confidentiality Requirements**

Protection of the confidentiality of information regarding HTLV-III infected students and employees is of utmost importance. Only those employees who have an absolute need to know are to be made aware of the identity of AIDS students and employees. The superintendent, in consultation with other staff members, will identify by name those employees who are to be given this information. This list will be given to the principal who will be responsible for insuring that only authorized employees are made aware of the infected person's condition, and that they are informed of the potential legal consequences of revealing that information. When an HTLV-III student or employee is identified, the superintendent is to establish a separate file on that person to which only he/she and those identified employees are to have access. No entry regarding the AIDS condition is to be made on the student's cumulative record, health card, the computerized student data base or other record.

**Cleanup of Body Fluids**

Since it is not always known whether a student or employee is infected with the HTLV- III virus, rubber gloves and a 1: 10 solution of household bleach in water are to be used in cleaning up a spill of body fluid by any student or employee. 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. Other materials used in the cleanup, such as mop heads, rags, or clothing are to be thoroughly rinsed in a bleach and water solution or washed separately in hot water. Band instruments which are shared among students are to be thoroughly decontaminated between uses. Thorough hand washing with soap and water is also advised. These precautions will help to guard against the spread of not only AIDS, but also other communicable, though less deadly, diseases.