

Procedure Title	<b>Fifth Disease (Erythema Infectiosum) - Response Procedure</b>		
Date of Issue	May 19, 2004	Related Policy	BP 3801-D
Revision Dates	November 4, 2021	Related Forms	
Review Date		Originator	Administrative Council
References			

## 1.0 RATIONALE

- 1.1 Bluewater District School Board will ensure that all reasonable efforts are made to protect the health and well-being of employees and those they serve by creating employee awareness of Fifth Disease and preventing and/or minimizing the spread of Fifth Disease in the workplace.
- 1.2 It is the responsibility of all employees that take/utilize any available preventative measures, as required for their specific positions.
- 1.3 This procedure applies to all work sites, buildings, and schools, owned, or leased by Bluewater District School Board. It is applicable to all employees, students, volunteers, contractors, and visitors.

## 2.0 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 **Fifth Disease**, also called erythema infectiosum, or “slapped cheek disease”, is an infection caused by parvovirus B19. Outbreaks most often occur in winter and spring, but a person may become ill with fifth disease at any time of the year.
- 2.2 The disease has no significant health concerns for affected children. A child who has contracted fifth disease will display a rash on their face, which gives the appearance of a hand slap (a more widespread rash will appear a few days later).
- 2.3 Fifth Disease spreads from person to person through direct contact or by breathing in respiratory secretions from an affected person. The contagious period for this disease occurs before the rash appears. After exposure, symptoms may develop four (4) to twenty (20) days longer.
- 2.4 Fifth disease may present serious health problems for pregnant women and for people with chronic blood disorders such as sickle anemia, chronic anemic, and impaired immune system.

## 3.0 PROCEDURE

- 3.1 Outbreaks of **Fifth Disease** may occur in schools. In these cases, the following procedures will be followed to address the concern for staff “at risk” in our schools in order to ensure that the board is responding in a responsible manner to ensure the health and safety of employees.

- 3.2 The principal/designate is responsible for;
- i. educating staff, students, and parents about the symptoms of Fifth Disease and measures to be taken to reduce exposure to it;
  - ii. requesting that staff report such symptoms to the principal/designate;
  - iii. informing all school staff of the presence of Fifth Disease;
  - iv. informing the superintendent of education responsible for human resources services of the presence of Fifth Disease. They will ensure that all itinerant staff and all education centre staff are notified;
  - v. request that students obtain a medical diagnosis to confirm whether or not the disease is present if there is evidence of the presence of the disease but no known outbreak at the time; and
  - vi. contacting the board's health and safety officer, when there are two or more physician diagnosed cases of Fifth Disease at a school/location within three weeks. The health and safety officer will advise the principal/designate regarding what enhanced cleaning measures must be taken.
- 3.3 Employees who are at risk of health problems from Fifth Disease for one or more of the reasons identified below are advised to determine through testing whether they are susceptible to this disease. In particular;
- i. any employee who is pregnant is strongly advised to be tested at an early stage of pregnancy; and
  - ii. any employee who is considering starting a family is encouraged to be tested.
- 3.4 Should an outbreak of the disease be confirmed at an employee's school or location, it is the responsibility of the employee who may be at risk and does not know whether they have immunity, to be tested at their own cost at the earliest possible time. The employee may use sick leave entitlement or personal leave to visit the doctor and obtain the required tests and results.
- 3.5 In the case of a confirmed outbreak, an employee who has been tested and found susceptible to Fifth Disease, and who is at risk, as a result of this outbreak, of health problems for one or more of the reasons identified above, will, until the outbreak is over (20 days with no confirmed cases):
- i. be accommodated by way of reassignment to another work location; or
  - ii. be granted leave of absence with pay if the employer determines that reassignment is not possible; or
  - iii. use sick leave with pay, pursuant to the employee's collective agreement, if the employee does not wish to be reassigned.
- 3.6 If an employee, who is potentially susceptible to the disease, chooses not to be tested, the board will allow the employee to use sick leave entitlement to cover the time lost from work for the duration of the confirmed outbreak of Fifth Disease.
- 3.7 If an employee, that is found to be susceptible to Fifth Disease, does not wish to remain in a school/location for fear of potential exposure, although no presence of the disease has been confirmed, the board will grant an unpaid leave of absence for the period requested.
- 3.8 Any employee who is found, as a result of testing, to have immunity from Fifth Disease, is required to report to work.