

Procedures for Dealing with Students Having HIV, AIDS or HBV

Although AIDS is a serious illness, the risk of contracting the disease in a school setting is extremely low. It is not spread from one person to another by casual social contact. Spread occurs when a body fluid such as blood or semen is introduced through broken skin or onto the mucous membranes of the eye, mouth, vagina or rectum. Specific methods for the spread of AIDS, HIV, or ARC¹ are sexual contact, sharing of intravenous needles, and transfusion of contaminated blood or blood products.

If any risk of contagion in the school setting exists, it would be limited to situations where open skin lesions or mucous membranes would be exposed to blood from an infected person. One example is a teacher providing first aid for a bleeding injury and getting blood into an open sore on his/her hand. Another example is an aggressive, neurologically handicapped or preschool child exposing other children by biting or other oral contact.

Children with HIV infections may be at increased risk of serious illness if exposed to certain infections such as chickenpox, measles, tuberculosis, herpes simplex and cytomegalovirus.

Basic Assumptions

Any procedure must be based on a set of assumptions that give credibility to the process. The following are among the assumptions that underlie this procedure:

1. All children in Oregon have a constitutional right to a free public education;
2. Because of the ways that the disease is transmitted, most children with an HIV infection pose no health risk if appropriate procedures are followed;
3. As a general rule, an infected child is entitled to remain in a regular classroom setting, be eligible for all rights, privileges, and services provided by law and by Board policy;
4. Decisions regarding educational programs and school attendance will be made on a case-by-case basis, taking into consideration all available information on the immediate case;
5. The need for confidentiality is paramount because of the potential for social isolation should a child's condition become known to others.

¹AIDS - Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome; ARC - AIDS Related Complex; HIV - Human Immunodeficiency Virus