

Communicable/ Infectious Diseases

When teachers become aware of signs of illness and/or communicable disease they will refer students who show such symptoms to the school nurse.

A communicable disease is a disease or condition that may cause serious illness, serious disability or death, the infectious agent of which may pass or be carried, directly or indirectly, from the body of one person to the body of another person.

A communicable disease may be reportable by law and the Department of Education to the Bureau of Health. The updated list of reportable diseases is maintained by the Maine Bureau of Health. The school nurse shall be responsible for notifying local health department of all students having a reportable communicable disease. The school nurse shall also notify the building Principal of all communicable disease cases and contacts in the school.

Students who have a communicable disease shall be excluded from school as prescribed by law, or shall observe other protective procedures according to recommendations issued by the school nurse.

A student may return to school after having had a communicable disease with the written or oral permission of a physician to the school nurse or building principal. The school nurse will then notify the DHS of the student's return to school, if the exclusion had been for a reportable condition.

When there is an outbreak of vaccine-preventable diseases, and a public health official "has reason to believe that the continued presence in school of a non-immunized child presents a clear danger to the health of others, the public official must notify the superintendent. The superintendent is then required to exclude the child from school during the period of danger or until the child receives the necessary immunizing agent.

During an outbreak of a disease for which immunization is available, even if the DHS does not direct exclusion of non-immunized children, the school superintendent will take action to exclude them for their own safety and the welfare of others. A non-immunized child must remain at home during outbreaks in the community, until the danger passes or until the child is immunized.

When a non-immunized child is directed to be excluded, the superintendent must make arrangements to meet the educational needs of the child if he/she is absent more than 10 days. Implementation is a local decision, and may include homework assignments provided and allowing ample opportunity at home or upon return to make up other requirements such as examinations and in class assignments.

Legal Reference: 5 MRSA 19201 et seq.
20 - A MRSA 1001 (11) (A), 6301
22 MRSA 801, 802, 806, 823, 824

Adopted April 7, 2004