

STUDENT COMMUNICABLE DISEASE

The Morehouse Parish School Board recognizes the importance of protecting the health and welfare of the educational system from the spread of communicable diseases, including AIDS. The Morehouse Parish School Board shall work cooperatively with the Louisiana Department of Education, the Louisiana Department of Health and Hospitals, and the centers for Disease Control for the prevention, control, and containment of communicable diseases in schools. For purposes of this policy and its accompanying regulations, the term "Superintendent" shall mean the Morehouse Parish School Superintendent of Schools or his/her designee.

A *communicable disease* shall be defined as a persistent or recurring infection which may be potentially transmitted to a susceptible person by contact with an infected individual.

When reliable evidence or information from a public health officer or physician confirms a student of the School Board has a communicable disease or infection that is known to be spread by any form of casual contact and is considered a health threat to the school population, the Superintendent may exclude such person from school for not more than five (5) days, or the amount of time required by state or local public health officials. Such student shall be excluded unless the public health officer approves school attendance or the condition is no longer contagious.

When reliable evidence or information from a public health officer or physician confirms a student has a communicable disease or infection that is known not to be spread by casual contact, the decision as to whether or not the student will remain in school shall be addressed on a case-by-case basis by a *Review Panel* to ensure due process.

If the student's physician and/or a physician of the School Board's choice indicates that the health of the student does not allow his/her continued attendance in the regular education program, education services shall be provided in the setting appropriate to the health status of the child.

Students whose parent/guardian knowingly conceal their child's having a communicable disease shall, upon identification, be suspended from school on an excused absence status, with the opportunity to make-up assignments and graded activities, for a maximum of ten (10) school days, during which time the Superintendent shall determine the student's school attendance status.

Irrespective of the disease presence, routine procedures shall be used and adequate sanitation facilities shall be available for handling blood or body fluids within the school setting or on school buses. School personnel shall be trained in the proper procedures for handling blood and body fluids and these procedures shall be strictly adhered to by all school personnel (see policy *GAMFB, Guidelines for Handling Body Fluids in School*).

REVIEW PANEL

Communicable diseases that are known not to be spread by casual contact shall be addressed on a case-by-case basis by a *Review Panel*. Membership of the *Review Panel*, procedures for convening the *Review Panel*, and the process used to review the case shall be as outlined in *Health and Safety*, Bulletin 135, Louisiana Department of Education.

The Superintendent shall provide a written decision to the affected party within three (3) operational days (i.e. a day when the School Board Central Office is open for business) after the *Review Panel* convenes. The written decision shall convey information brought out during the review process and include the rationale for the decision concerning school attendance by the student.

APPEALS

Appeals may be made by the parent or guardian in writing to the Superintendent and subsequently to the School Board as outlined in *Health and Safety*, Bulletin 135, Louisiana Department of Education. If the written decision of the Superintendent is contrary to the majority opinion of the *Review Panel*, a majority of the *Review Panel* has the right to appeal the decision in the same manner as outlined in Bulletin 135.

CONFIDENTIALITY

All persons involved in procedures to assess school attendance of a student with a communicable disease that is not spread by casual contact shall be required to treat all medical information about the student, proceedings, deliberations, and documents as *confidential information*. Records of the proceedings and the decisions shall be kept by the Superintendent in a sealed envelope with access limited to only those persons receiving the consent of the parent/guardian or infected person, in accordance with state or federal law.

Before any medical information is shared with anyone in the school setting, a “Need to Know” review shall be made which includes the parent/legal guardian, student if age 18 or over, unless the information is required to meet the mandates of federal or state law or regulation, or Louisiana Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE) policy.

Approved: June 3, 2025

Ref: La. Rev. Stat. Ann. §§17:81, 17:170; *Health and Safety*, Bulletin 135, Louisiana Department of Education; Board minutes, 6-3-25.