Communicable Disease Plan

updated August 2022

This communicable disease plan is not intended to be a substitute for professional medical advice, diagnosis, or treatment. Always seek the advice of your physician or other qualified health provider with any questions you may have regarding a medical condition. Never disregard professional medical advice or delay in seeking it because of content contained herein.
# Communicable Disease Prevention

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Communicable Disease Prevention

SCOPE

The Communicable Disease Plan applies to all students, employees, and visitors of Portland Waldorf School. In accordance with Oregon Department of Education (ODE), Oregon Health Authority (OHA), Centers for Disease Control (CDC), Oregon Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) and local and state public health departments recommendations and guidance, this document provides definitions for Portland Waldorf School’s approach and methods to communicable disease prevention and management.


This is a living document and will be updated based on new recommendations and evidence from local and state health departments.

OVERVIEW AND BACKGROUND

Communicable disease prevention and control is essential to creating a safe and healthy environment for Portland Waldorf School employees and students.

A communicable or infectious disease is an illness that can spread through contact with an infected individual and/or their secretions, or through coming in contact with contaminated items in the environment. The best way to protect employees and students is through a prevention-oriented approach, which aims at breaking the chain of transmission in as many ways as possible.

PREVENTION PRINCIPLES

Communicable disease prevention is most effective when broad principles for breaking links in the chain of transmission are applied. Instead of focusing on the prevention of specific diseases, most infectious diseases fall into categories by type of transmission. These categories allow for simple behavior changes based on knowledge of how the disease spreads, to prevent transmission. The most common types of communicable diseases encountered at a school fall under the categories of droplet or airborne transmission (flu, coronavirus, measles, chicken pox), contact transmission (staph infections), and fecal-oral transmission (norovirus, salmonella, cholera). These diseases can then be prevented with the foundational approaches listed below. Disease-specific recommendations are found in Appendix A of this document. Local health departments have a list of restrictable diseases that result in exclusion from school.

Hand Hygiene

Hand hygiene is the foundation of communicable disease prevention. At Portland Waldorf School, an emphasis is placed on performing hand hygiene for all employees and students (either with soap and water or hand sanitizer) to prevent disease spread. Teachers and
employees will educate students and reiterate how to properly wash/sanitize hands in age-appropriate ways to students.

Across the campus, sinks with soap and water and hand sanitizer are available to students and employees both inside and outside of classrooms.

Students and employees will perform hand hygiene:
- Before, during and after preparing food
- Before eating food
- Before and after caring for someone at home who is sick with vomiting or diarrhea
- Before and after treating a cut or wound
- After using the toilet
- After cleaning up a child who has used the toilet
- After blowing your nose, coughing or sneezing
- After touching garbage
- Hands will be washed with soap and water when visibly soiled

Figure 1. How to wash your hands: (Image: WHO)
Respiratory Etiquette

Respiratory etiquette encompasses the methods used to control respiratory droplets and aerosols to prevent the spread of respiratory illnesses (influenza, cold viruses, coronaviruses). When a person coughs or sneezes, droplets containing the infectious agent can spread through the air and fall onto objects and surfaces or reach the nose or mouth of others and cause illness, or be spread through contact with the infected individual. Like hand hygiene, respiratory etiquette is a foundational method of disease prevention and comprises of:

- Covering your mouth and nose with a tissue when coughing or sneezing and using the nearest waste bin to dispose of the tissue immediately after use
- Covering your mouth and nose using your upper sleeve, not your hands, when you cough or sneeze
- Performing hand hygiene after having contact with respiratory secretions and/or contaminated objects
- Appropriately and effectively washing your hands or using hand sanitizer after coughing or sneezing

Environmental Cleaning

Routine cleaning and disinfection of the school environment contributes to reducing disease spread by decreasing the burden of potentially infectious surfaces and ensuring safe classroom spaces for employees and students. Cleaning encompasses the sanitizers, disinfectants and cleaning agents used in the school as well as routine garbage, recycling or compost removal.

See Cleaning, Sanitizing and Disinfecting at PWS for more information.

Vaccines

Vaccines are a pivotal part of communicable disease prevention, especially in schools. All public and private schools in Oregon, including PWS, follow the Oregon Health Authority Public Health Division vaccination requirements for all students PK-12. Portland Waldorf School maintains records of which students are and are not vaccinated as a primary control measure for outbreaks of vaccine preventable diseases.

When a positive case of a vaccine preventable illness is identified in the school population, the school will work with local public health officials to determine the need for exclusion or notification to members of the school community based on the level of exposure and vaccination status of the students.
Communicable Disease Exclusion

For disease specific exclusion criteria and re-admission criteria, please see Appendix A: School Exclusion Criteria by Disease or Symptom

SCHOOL EXCLUSION CRITERIA

Prevention of disease spread depends on quick identification of symptoms and isolation of symptomatic people from healthy individuals. Appendix A contains a pathogen-specific list of restrictable infections, however, waiting for a diagnosis will prolong exposure to affected individuals, and Portland Waldorf School follows Tri-county public health guidance to restrict school attendance based on symptoms known to promote disease spread.

All employees and students are expected to stay home from school if experiencing any of the following:
Individuals with the above symptoms should be excluded from school until they have been without symptoms for the specified time frame (see Appendix A), or until they receive clearance to return based on a note from their healthcare provider. However, a provider note does not supersede public health law or restrictions.

Many other conditions may not be excludable, however healthcare providers may restrict the individual from returning to school for a specific duration. A medical provider’s note is needed in these instances.
RESTRICTABLE DISEASES

Restrictable diseases are specific infectious diseases in Oregon Administrative Rule (OAR) 333-019-0010 that require students or employees to remain at home for a specified amount of time to limit transmission. Clackamas County Public Health Division (CCPHD) must be notified of the infection as soon as it is diagnosed in students or employees.

The following communicable diseases require documentation from the local health department or healthcare provider indicating the individual is no longer communicable prior to returning to school:

- Chickenpox
- COVID-19
- Diphtheria
- Hepatitis A
- Hepatitis E
- Measles
- Mumps
- Pertussis (whooping cough)
- Rubella
- Salmonella enterica serotype Typhi infection
- Scabies
- Shiga-toxigenic E.coli (STEC) infection
- Shigellosis
- Active tuberculosis

School employees receiving reports of individuals with restrictable diseases must inform the Main Office immediately and maintain student and employee confidentiality by not disclosing health information to other students, employees, or parents.

ISOLATION SPACES

When employees or students are identified with an excludable symptom or restrictable disease, they must be immediately separated from the well-population and placed in an isolation room until transferred off the premises. In an emergency, an isolation room is any room with a door. In the event employees or a student develops symptoms, adhere to the following guidelines:

- When illness symptoms occur, mask the individual and escort them to an unused room with a door, close the door, and wash your hands. Do not spend time in the room with the sick individual without personal protective equipment. Have the individual wait in the appointed location until an ambulance, parent, or transport off the premises arrives.

Isolation supplies will include:

- Personal protective equipment (PPE). Depending on the symptoms the person is experiencing, it may be necessary to put on gloves, a gown, face covering, and shoe protectors.
- Trash bins and hand sanitizer for the removal of PPE. PPE should not be worn outside of the isolation room. It is considered contaminated once donned, so it should be removed to minimize spread of the pathogen. Prior to leaving the room, remove your gown, gloves, etc. and wash your hands or perform hand hygiene outside of the room.

Outbreak Identification and Management by Type of Illness

DEFINITION OF AN OUTBREAK

An outbreak is the incidence of a disease above its expected endemic occurrence. In the
school setting this will translate to 2 or more cases outside of the same household of an infection in a group or cohort in the same communicability time period. This definition varies depending on the symptoms and type of suspected illness, and outbreak investigations in collaboration with administration and the Clackamas County Public Health Division will need to be conducted to determine specific courses of action.

RESPIRATORY INFECTIONS

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Outbreak</th>
<th>Control and Management Plan</th>
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<td>Respiratory infections are transmitted by direct contact during coughing and sneezing, and generally the closer the contact the greater the change of spread. Droplets are also sprayed onto surfaces and contact with these by hands and fingers may be just as important a method of transmission.</td>
<td>Consult with school administrators and the local public health when an outbreak of a respiratory infection is suspected.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Examples of respiratory infections include: the common cold, influenza (flu), or whooping cough (pertussis).</td>
<td>The following steps should be taken immediately to prevent further spread:</td>
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</table>
| The following indicators should be reported to the Main Office immediately and the local public health department and may be indicative of an outbreak of a respiratory infection:  
  ● Any respiratory illness resulting in hospitalization or death of a student or employee  
  ● Diagnosed pneumonia in 3 or more individuals in the same cohort/class  
  ● Unusually high (10 or more individuals or >20% of a cohort, whichever is greater) population of individuals affected with similar respiratory symptoms  
  ● Any uncommon incidence of illness in more that two students from separate households | • All symptomatic students and employees should be sent home and stay home until fever free for at least 24 hrs without the use of symptom reducing drugs, and with an improvement in respiratory symptoms  
  ● High touch surfaces should be wiped with a disinfectant  
  ● Additionally, reinforcement and emphasis on hand hygiene and cough etiquette for employees and students |

GASTROENTERITIS

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*In the event of respiratory infections related to a novel virus, the Pandemic Management Plan will be deferred to.*
Gastroenteritis can be caused by a variety of pathogens. Foodborne illnesses and diarrheal infections present similarly as well, often manifesting in vomiting, diarrhea, and/or nausea.

Most common in schools is norovirus because it is easily transmitted and highly infectious, however other pathogens may present similarly, so the following indicators should be watched for and reported to administration immediately:

- Multiple children with similar symptoms in 48 hours within the same cohort but separate households
- More than 2 cases of diarrhea from separate households with bloody stool in the school setting
- Sudden onset of vomiting in multiple persons in the same cohort/class
- Any unusual combination of gastrointestinal symptoms, severity, duration or incidence

Consult with school administrators and the local public health when an outbreak of gastroenteritis is suspected.

The following steps should be taken immediately to prevent further spread:

- Any student or employees experiencing diarrhea (3 or more loose stools in 24 hrs) and/or vomiting should be sent home
- Students or employees reporting symptoms of diarrhea or vomiting should stay home until symptoms have resolved for at least 24 hours
- Anyone reporting symptoms of vomiting or diarrhea can not handle, prepare, or share food until 72 hours after symptoms have resolved
- If symptoms began at school, clean affected toilets/utilite, high-touch surfaces, and toys or other objects with an approved disinfectant or chlorine bleach solution with a concentration of 1000 to 5000 ppm (5 to 25 tablespoons of household bleach [5% to 8%] per gallon of water)
- Wash hands with soap and water often
- Discard communal or shared food items
- Validate all food handling practices and follow guidelines for preparation and storage

VACCINE PREVENTABLE DISEASES

Vaccine preventable diseases (VPD) are infectious diseases where an effective vaccine exists. The following vaccine preventable diseases are routinely immunized for in the United States:

- Diphtheria*
- COVID-19*
- Tetanus*
- Measles*
- Mumps*
- Rubella*
- Haemophilus influenzae type b infections*
- Pneumococcal infections*
- Meningococcal disease*
- Pertussis*
- Polio*
- Hepatitis A*
- Hepatitis B*
- Varicella (chicken pox)
- Influenza

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Vaccine preventable diseases marked with an (*), indicate that they are reportable to the public health department and are constantly under surveillance.

Reports of VPDs should be communicated to the administration and local public health department when:
- A single case of a VPD is identified
- More than 2 cases of diagnosed chickenpox from separate households in the same classroom, or more than 5 cases in a school

The most effective form of control and prevention of VPDs is through vaccination and maintaining current vaccination status, aligned with local vaccination timetables.

All Portland Waldorf School students are required to be up-to-date with their school required vaccinations prior to enrolling in school and vaccine records are centrally monitored, unless they meet an acceptable exclusion.

Other Circumstances

Outbreaks of skin infections or other unusual infectious diseases may arise, and will be handled on a case by case basis and should be referred to the Main Office and local public health for further investigation. Vigilance for circumstances which may warrant notification include:
- More than 2 students from separate households with reported similar skin infections in the same school setting or athletic team
- Any student or employee animal bite, by a domesticated or undomesticated animal on school grounds
- Any employee who has come in contact with blood or other potentially infectious body fluids that is not their own without appropriate personal protective equipment
- Any combination of symptoms, severity, duration, or frequency of illness that seems unusual as compared to baseline seasonal illness

FOOD SAFETY

The following standards should be practiced for food preparation and food safety at the school:
- Hands must be washed prior to eating
- Sharing food from home should not be allowed
- Hands must always be washed prior to preparing or handling food
- Surfaces must be cleaned with appropriate sanitizers before and after food preparation
- Raw foods must be separated from ready-to-eat foods at all times
- Foods must be stored or maintained at temperatures of below 40°F or above 140°F
- Perishable food must never be left out for more than 2 hours (or 1 hour if is hotter than 90°F outside)
Pandemic Plan*

The following guidelines will be followed in the event of a novel virus pandemic. The pandemic response will be in phases, determined by the level of international and community spread, and guidance from state and local public health authorities. Pandemics occur when a new virus begins to circulate in populations, and because populations will lack immunity to the virus, if containment measures aren't implemented or fail, the virus will spread internationally and overwhelm healthcare systems and societal operations.

*Please refer to the Portland Waldorf School Pandemic Management Plan for pandemic specific plans and directions (found on the PWS website).

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<th>Pandemic Phase</th>
<th>General School Response</th>
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<td>Phase I: Novel virus is detected globally</td>
<td>● School continues to reinforce foundational infection prevention and control principles</td>
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<td>● School establishes an Pandemic Response Team to monitor viral spread and potential impact on the school community</td>
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<td>Phase II: Novel virus cases are identified regionally or nationally</td>
<td>● School implements higher standard of infectious disease control</td>
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<td>● Teachers provide age-appropriate education on the threat of virus and infectious disease control measures</td>
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<td>● Increase routine hand hygiene, make alcohol-based hand sanitizer available when hand washing is not an option</td>
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<td></td>
<td>● Emphasize cough etiquette and covering coughs/sneezes, throw away tissues at each use, wash your hands</td>
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<td></td>
<td>● Re-emphasize the importance of all standard illness policies. Some exclusion periods may be extended longer periods at home in the case of symptoms)</td>
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<td>● Follow local and state government health mandates</td>
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<td>Phase III: When cases are detected locally</td>
<td>● Communicable disease surveillance increased and active monitoring and reporting student and employee illness</td>
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<td>● Initiate centralized isolation room to separate students who become ill at school with febrile (temperature &gt;100.4°F) respiratory illness until parents/guardians can pick up</td>
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<td>● Increase sanitizing of horizontal surfaces and shared objects</td>
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<td>● Devise prevention and post-exposure sanitizing strategies based on current recommendations</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● Isolate students who become ill at school with febrile respiratory illness until parents/guardians can pick up</td>
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<td>● Modify, postpone, or cancel large school events as coordinated with or advised by public health officials</td>
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<td>● Begin to plan remote learning possibilities</td>
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| Phase IV: Cases of novel virus are detected at school or substantial community spread | • Plan for modified school operations and online classes to minimize the spread within the school and protect the community at large  
• The school will defer to the state and local health authorities in the event of state-mandated school closures |
Appendix A: School Exclusion Criteria by Infection or Symptom

*Communicable Disease Exclusion Guidelines for Schools and Child Care Settings

*This document is subject to updates

Reference:
The bulk of this document was copied from the Catlin Gabel Communicable Disease Manual (August 2020).

See also

- Cleaning, Sanitizing and Disinfecting at PWS
- PWS Pandemic Management Plan
- Communicable Disease Guidance for Schools