

HIV (Human Immunodeficiency Virus) Infection
AIDS (Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome)

The Westford Public Schools shall strive to protect the safety and health of the students in the system, as well as their families, staff, and the general public.

School Attendance

A student with HIV infection has the same right to attend school and receive services as any other student, and will be subject to the same policies and regulations. HIV infection shall not factor into decisions concerning class assignments, privileges, or participation in any school-sponsored activity.

Accommodations will be made for students exhibiting chronic health problems or students with disabilities as a secondary result to their HIV status on a case-by-case basis following the established policies and regulations. Administration or designees must consult with the student's physician and parent/legal guardian; respect the student's and family's privacy rights; and reassess the placement if there is a change in the student's need for accommodations or services.

Staff members will strive to maintain a respectful school climate and not allow physical or verbal harassment of any individual or group by another individual or group. This includes, but is not limited to, taunts directed against a person living with HIV infection, a person perceived as having HIV infection, or a person associated with someone with HIV infection.

Employment

The Westford Public Schools do not discriminate on the basis of HIV infection or association with another person with HIV infection, in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. An employee with HIV infection is welcome to continue working as long as he/she is able to perform the essential functions of the position, with reasonable accommodation if necessary.

Privacy

Students and staff are not required to disclose HIV infection status to anyone in the school system. HIV antibody testing is not required for any purpose.

No information regarding a person's HIV status will be divulged to any individual or organization without a court order or the informed, written, signed, and dated consent of the person with HIV infection (or the parent/legal guardian of a legal minor.) The written consent must specify the name of the recipient of the information and the purpose for disclosure.

All health records, notes, and other documents that reference a person's HIV status will be kept under lock and key. Access to those confidential records is limited to those named in the written permission from the person (or parent/legal guardian) and to emergency medical personnel. Information regarding HIV status will not be added to a student's permanent educational or health record without written consent.

Every staff person has a duty to treat as highly confidential any knowledge or speculation concerning the HIV status of a student or other staff member. Any violations of this policy and/or medical privacy will be grounds for disciplinary action up to and including immediate suspension or dismissal.

Infection Control

All staff members are required to consistently follow infection control guidelines in all settings and at all times, including playgrounds and school buses. Schools will operate according to the standards promulgated by the U.S. Occupational Health and Safety Administration for the prevention of blood-borne infections. Equipment and supplies needed to apply the infection control guidelines will be maintained and kept reasonably accessible in each school.

All staff members are expected to alert the school nurse if a student's health condition or behavior presents a reasonable risk of transmitting any infection.

If a situation occurs at school in which a person might have been exposed to an infectious agent, such as an instance of blood-to-blood contact, school authorities shall counsel that person (or if a minor, alert a parent/legal guardian) to seek appropriate medical evaluation.

HIV and Athletics

The privilege of participating in physical education classes, athletic programs, competitive sport, and recess is not conditional on a person's HIV status. School authorities will make reasonable accommodations to allow students living with HIV infection to participate in school-sponsored physical activities.

All physical education and athletic program staff must consistently adhere to infection control guidelines, which will be included in the Coaches' Manual, in locker rooms, playgrounds, and athletic settings. First aid kits must be on hand at every athletic event.

All physical education teachers and athletic program staff will complete an approved first aid and injury prevention course that includes implementation of infection control guidelines. Student orientation about safety on the playing field will include guidelines for avoiding HIV infection.

Student Training and Education

The Westford Public Schools will provide HIV/AIDS prevention education as part of its health curriculum.

Staff Development

All staff members will participate in a planned HIV education program that conveys factual and current information; provides guidance on infection control procedures; informs about current law and state, local, and school policies concerning HIV; and assists staff in maintaining productive parent and community relations.

Federal Law References:

Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990

Westford Public Schools Policy References:

P4110 – Confidentiality

P4203 – Harassment

P5303 – Harassment

P5304 – Bullying

Other References:

Westford Public Schools Athletic Department – Coaches' Manual