

Infection Control - Practical guide for the use of Personal Protective Equipment

There are some quick and simple measures all staff can adopt in their daily practices and within their interactions with all students to reduce the spread of infection and illness and to maintain a healthy classroom environment.

Further information is available on the DoE [Infection Control Procedures](#) page.

Some simple measures all staff can adopt every day to maintain a healthy working and learning environment include:

For everyone

- **Stay at home when unwell.** Staff (and students) are expected to stay away from school when unwell or if they become unwell during the day.
 - Notify your school leadership if you become unwell during the day and need to go home.
 - Only return to work when you have fully recovered.
- **Wash your hands regularly and thoroughly.**
 - Maintaining good personal hand hygiene is the single most effective way to reduce the risk of transmission.
 - Wash your hands or use hand sanitiser between providing support to students.
 - Encourage students and colleagues to implement hand hygiene practices at regular intervals throughout the day.
 - A department hand washing and gloving [video](#) as well as a NSW Health resource on how to [wash and dry hands with soap and water](#) are available on the department's Infection Control procedures [page](#).
- **Maintain respiratory hygiene.**
 - Cover your cough or sneeze through coughing or sneezing into your elbow or tissue, and then disposing of tissues immediately. Always wash your hands after you have coughed, sneezed or blown your nose.
- **Avoid shaking hands or hugging when greeting people**

Standard Precautions for Infection Control

Infection control is a term to describe the actions required to prevent the spread of infection between people. Not all infections are known or diagnosed at the time of contact, therefore it is important to assume that every person is infectious and take appropriate precautions to prevent the spread of infection.

Standard precautions and good hygiene practices include the frequent washing of hands as well as use of appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) such as gloves, protective eyewear, masks and aprons. Precautions should also be taken when handling sharps, management of blood/bodily fluids or spills, handling and disposal of contaminated waste, and during the handling of laundry/soiled clothing and cleaning equipment.

All body substances are potential sources of infection so proper hygiene practices must be followed at all times. Where there is a likelihood of splash from bodily fluids or potential risk of exposure to droplets, for example during administration of health care procedures or any interaction with a student which could result in staff being exposed to bodily fluids, relevant PPE must be used. Staff should also refer to and follow requirements outlined within each student's [individual health care plan](#).

The department has comprehensive [Infection Control Procedures](#), including a range of practical fact sheets as well as health and hygiene support materials on the infection control [webpage](#).

Additionally, there are a range of [supporting resources](#) for the administration of medication including videos and tools for staff that complement training available through the Administration of Medication in School e-Safety course, training available through the department's Health Care Procedures (see MyPL), the students health care team and/or external providers depending on the students individual needs.

Personal Protective Equipment

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) is essential to prevent the spread of germs and infection between staff and students. PPE includes, but is not limited to gloves, protective eyewear, aprons and masks.

Select fit for purpose PPE based on an assessment of the risk of infection or contamination. Identify any potential pathways of infection, such as direct contact with bodily fluids or contaminated items or via airborne droplet transmission, and select the type of PPE most appropriate for the task to be performed.

It is important for schools to consider the activities being performed and for staff to use suitable PPE based on an assessment of the risk of infection or contamination.

When conducting activities that involve suctioning, catheterisation or tube feeding, staff should use gloves, protective eyewear, apron and mask.

Toileting assistance and catheter care may require the use of gloves and apron.

Schools may perform other activities which may require PPE. A risk management approach should be adopted and suitable PPE utilised as appropriate.

The administration of medications, such as finger pricks to check blood glucose for students with diabetes or the provision of oral medication, will always require gloves as they are administered into parts of the body where there may be exposure to bodily fluids. A range of support resources, including how to videos, on the administration of medications is available on the administration of medication [website](#).

Activities that may be considered less invasive such as assisting a student with feeding, may require an apron in addition to gloves in situations where a student may touch secretions such as saliva which may get on themselves and others, or cough, spraying staff with the contents of their mouth.

Additionally, PPE may be required when implementing behaviour plans for students with disability or behaviour disorders. For example, protective eye wear and in some cases a mask to prevent droplet contact from behaviours such as spitting.

Types of Personal Protective Equipment

Staff can refer to the department's support [video](#) demonstrating how to put on PPE and how to safely remove PPE to avoid contamination.

Gloves

Gloves are worn as a barrier to prevent the spread of germs and to protect staff, as well as students, from illness or infection. The use of gloves does not eliminate the need for hand hygiene, which must be performed before and after glove use. For instructions on how to put gloves on and off, refer to the department's support [video](#) for demonstration.

Gloves must be used when medications are administered to students and during the performance of health care procedures because staff are conducting activities in and around body parts where there may be exposure to fluids. Gloves must also be used where there is potential exposure to body substances and/or blood and while handling items or surfaces that have come into contact with bodily substances or blood.

Gloves must never be re-used and depending on the tasks being undertaken by staff, gloves should be changed between assisting students to prevent cross contamination.

Protective Eye Wear:

Protective eye wear or facial protection must be worn while performing any procedure where there is a risk of exposure of bodily fluids to the face. Protective eye wear must be worn and fitted securely. General prescription eye wear does not comply as eye wear and protective eye wear must be worn in addition to prescription eye wear.

Aprons

A **single use** fluid resistant apron or apron made of impervious material must be worn during any procedures where there is a risk of splashes or contamination of staff clothing

with bodily fluid. Washable gowns provide no protection and are not considered suitable for infection control.

Masks

Masks are single use items used to prevent transmission of infection through the air. Masks should be used during health care tasks where there is potential for droplet transmission.