

SAN DIEGO UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

Date: March 28, 2008

To: Principals, Division and Department Heads

Subject: CHECK LIST AND ACTIONS TO TAKE FOR ACTIVE TUBERCULOSIS AT A SAN DIEGO SCHOOL OR ADMINISTRATIVE SITE

Department and/or Persons Concerned: Administrators, District Medical Consultant, School Nurses, Communications Department

Due Date: Immediately

Reference: Administrative Procedures 6360 and 7065

Action Requested: (1) Review information with site administrative staff and school nurse.
(2) Maintain confidentiality of health information of student or employee.

Brief Explanation:

The San Diego County TB Control Program determines the legal policies and procedures to be followed when an active case of tuberculosis has been identified. As required by Education Code 49403, the San Diego Unified School District will cooperate with local health authorities to prevent and control communicable disease in school-age children. All school district employees and volunteers must maintain current tuberculosis clearance.

The district medical consultant and Nursing and Wellness Department have collaborated with the TB Control Program to establish this guideline to follow when a case of active tuberculosis is identified at school. All medical information is confidential and only shared with designated individuals.

This tool provides a detailed guide to be followed by designated school district employees during each step of the process from Suspected Tuberculosis; Active Pulmonary Tuberculosis; School Actions for Testing Susceptible Populations; Follow-Up; and Notification of School Community and General Media.

Questions may be directed to Eileen Griffiths, Project Nurse, Nursing & Wellness Program, at (858) 636-4380 or e-mail at egriffiths@sandi.net.

Jennifer Gorman
Program Manager
Nursing & Wellness

APPROVED:

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Dorothy Harper".

Dorothy Harper
Associate Superintendent
Parent, Community and Student Engagement

JG:eg

Attachment

Distribution: Lists B, D, E, F and Charter Schools

Active Tuberculosis on a San Diego School or Administrative Site Check List and Actions to Take

A. Suspected Tuberculosis

- Schools are typically notified of a “suspected” diagnosis of tuberculosis in one of two ways: San Diego County Health and Human Services Agency (HHSA)/TB Control Program, Public Health Services; or by a private doctor, a staff person, volunteer or student/parent.
- If a student, staff member or volunteer is suspected of having active tuberculosis, no action should be taken unless the site nurse, in consultation with the Nursing and Wellness Department, has been contacted and is in agreement that there is reasonable suspicion for this communicable disease. If there is no site nurse, contact the Nursing and Wellness Department at (858) 627-7580.
- In all circumstances and within one business day, a school nurse should contact the County’s TB Control Program to discuss the case and confirm that there is reason to suspect active TB: TB Control Nurse intake (HHSA) at (619) 692-8610.
- Persons suspected of having active pulmonary tuberculosis should be contacted and instructed to not return to school until the district’s health personnel have received clearance from the County’s TB Control Program. (This is in addition to any input from the person’s doctor.)

B. Active Pulmonary Tuberculosis

Once a diagnosis of active, pulmonary tuberculosis is established and after consultation with the County’s TB Control Program, the school **must do all of the following**:

- Inform the site school nurse when available.
- Involve the site principal in all circumstances.
- Notify the Nursing and Wellness Department at (858) 627-7580.
- Ensure that a school or district health professional (site nurse, other school nurse or school physician) has contacted the County’s TB Control Program to arrange a meeting to determine the school-based exposure investigation procedure.
- A district or site nurse should begin to discretely collect information that will be helpful for the TB Control Program assessment. This information includes:
 - 1) The time period that the TB-affected individual was working or attending school (e.g., every school day for the past nine months; every Monday and Wednesday afternoon for three months, etc.).
 - 2) Locations at school where the student, staff member or volunteer spend the majority of time (e.g., a health aid might be identified as working mainly in the health office and one classroom; or an 11th grade student has six different classrooms identified and wrestling team). Reason: TB Control takes size of classroom and length and frequency of time spent with others in order to determine whether there was a risk of TB exposure.
 - 3) Knowledge of any other persons at San Diego Unified School District who live in that person’s household. Important: This information is to be relayed to County personnel and the Nursing and Wellness Department only; **do not** call and warn other schools. Other notification that needs to be made will be done by the TB control.

- 4) For any known contacts with this individual, review health charts to determine if previous TB testing information is available. Reason: A person thought to be at risk of recent exposure to TB who also has a previously positive TB skin test, would be checked with a chest x-ray, not skin testing, to determine current status.
- Work with the TB Control Program Disease Investigation Unit (619-692-8292) to review the situation as soon as possible and share the results with site nurse, site principal and the Nursing and Wellness Department.
 - To ensure the confidentiality of a person diagnosed with TB, refer to the County TB Control Program to determine if that name needs to be disclosed in order to gather information.

C. School Actions for Testing Susceptible Populations

- It is the role of the TB Control Program to advise on which segment(s) of the school population is at risk for potential TB exposure and needs to be tested. TB Control Program personnel will provide this information to the site nurse, site principal and Nursing and Wellness Department.
- Logistics of testing potentially-exposed students, staff members, and volunteers will differ in each circumstance, depending on the number of people requiring testing, whether the population to be tested is largely staff, students or mixed, whether the school is about to embark on an extended vacation (summer or year-round school breaks), and other considerations. Both the TB Control Program and school nursing staff may share the workload of TB skin testing, TB skin test reading, as well as documentation and follow-up. The nature of that distribution of work will be tailored to the circumstances and decided on a situation-by-situation basis.
- A meeting must be scheduled as soon as possible and include the site principal, site nurse, a health professional representative of the Nursing and Wellness Department, a public health official and a representative from the Communications Department.
- In certain circumstances other invitees may include a representative of the district's Risk Management Office, Legal Office, Area/Associate Superintendent, and the Executive Director of Secondary School Innovation.
- The meeting should include all of the following outcomes:
 - A written plan that covers the logistics for testing and inquiring about symptoms for populations at schools who are deemed to be susceptible. This includes a plan for obtaining parent consent (for students) and plans for those whose screen becomes positive.
 - A plan on how the County and District will divide responsibilities.
 - A plan for notification of those who need to know, and those who need to be tested, in these circumstances.
 - A plan to identify the person(s) responsible for notifying other district administrators who were not at the meeting, such as the representative of the district's Risk Management Office, Legal Office, Area/Associate Superintendent, Executive Director of Secondary School Innovation.
 - A plan and contact information for fielding parent and student questions/concerns, staff concerns, and inquiries from a private doctor (e.g., this could be one telephone number contact with a live person answering), and how that contact information will be disseminated.
 - If a County press release is to occur, then an outcome of meeting should include a coordination plan between County, school and district health personnel and the Communications Department.

- A plan for identification of one contact person or office to field inquiries by media, and/or to independently inform media.
- A plan to maintain confidentiality of infected persons, as well as those in the school community who test positive after exposure.
- If the identity of the infected person(s) is widely known, a site response team plan that addresses student anxiety should be put into effect once the person(s) who has TB returns.

D. Follow-Up

School officials will work with the TB Control Program during the investigation to ensure those needing testing have been contacted and that the evaluation has been completed as recommended. This may include:

- Limiting return to school for any contact(s) who also has symptoms.
- Providing access for TB Control Program staff to meet with students/staff to complete skin testing.
- Calling parents to ensure chest x-rays and provider visits have been completed.
- Meeting with TB Control Program staff to review final investigation findings.

E. Notification of School Community and General Media

- Each of the following parties must discuss and approve all written and broadcast messages emanating from the school or district (including notification of the problem and the TB testing recommendations): Communications Department, Nursing and Wellness Department with input from County Public Health, and site principal whenever the information pertains to a particular site.
- Recognize that some schools have unconventional features. For example, some schools have Head Start and PrimeTime programs to consider; some schools share administrative offices (Lindbergh-Schweitzer; Emerson-Bandini); some high schools have school-within-a-school complexes, etc. Circumstances will determine in each case those who need to have information immediately and how they will receive this information.
- Press releases and school letters should include information such as whether all those at risk have already been notified, in order to minimize unnecessary concern of the school community and parents.
- All media questions should be referred and responded to by **only** that person(s) or office(s) who was agreed upon with key players.

HT:imt
3/08