



## **BISHOPS**

# **POLICY GUIDELINES ON HIV/AIDS**

### **CONTENTS**

HIV Policy Statement .....	2
HIV / AIDS Policy .....	3
Policy on Life Threatening Diseases .....	12

## POLICY STATEMENT

Bishops strives to deal with the impact and threat of HIV / AIDS by:

1. Providing full and adequate information about the disease to all pupils, staff and interested parents.
2. Empowering pupils, by the furtherance of the Christian ethos, and through education, to prevent the transmission of HIV
3. Providing reasonable safeguards to prevent exposure to the virus.
4. Making available confidential, voluntary counselling and testing to pupils and staff for early detection of HIV infection in order that progression to AIDS be prevented by early and appropriate treatment.
5. Ensuring that there is no discrimination against pupils or staff with HIV/AIDS by providing a policy, based on constitutional rights and guarantees, which will be reviewed regularly by the HIV/AIDS Action Committee in conjunction with appropriate experts.
6. Teaching pupils about appropriate lifestyles, with particular reference to abstinence, in the context of the school's faith and its Statement on Spirituality. In particular the school's position is that individuals should abstain from sexual intercourse until marriage, be faithful to one partner in marriage and use condoms within a marriage as an agreed option by the couple.

## HIV / AIDS POLICY

The Bishops Policy on HIV/AIDS is based on the draft National Policy on HIV/AIDS that was published as a General Notice in the Government Gazette dated 11 December 1998.

This policy has been written in keeping with international standards and in accordance with education law and the constitutional guarantees of the right to basic education, the right not to be unfairly discriminated against, the right to life and bodily integrity, the right to privacy, the right to freedom of access to information, the right to freedom of conscience, religion, thought, belief and opinion, the right to freedom of association, the right to a safe environment, and the best interests of a child.

### 1. Definitions.

In this policy guideline all terms and expressions used have the meaning that has been assigned to them in the South African Schools Act (No 98 of 1998) and the Employment of Educators Act (No 76 of 1998) or, unless the context otherwise indicates, the following shall have meanings assigned hereunder.

“Bishops” is taken to include the Pre-preparatory School, Preparatory School and the College of the Diocesan College,

“The School” is taken to mean Bishops.

“HIV” means the human immune deficiency virus.

“AIDS” means the acquired immune deficiency syndrome, that is the final phase of HIV infection.

“Universal precautions” refers to the concept used worldwide in the context of HIV/AIDS to indicate the standard infection control procedures of precautionary measures aimed at the prevention of HIV transmission from one person to another and includes instructions concerning basic hygiene and wearing of protective clothing such as rubber gloves.

“Staff members” refers to all individuals employed by Diocesan College and includes educators, administrative staff, support staff, sports coaches and stooges.

## **2. Introduction.**

AIDS is a disease caused by infection with the HIV. The HIV is spread only when an adequate amount of infected body fluid enters the bloodstream of a non-infected person.

The dominant modes of transmission of the HIV are:

1. unprotected penetrative sexual intercourse where the exchange of bodily fluids takes place;
2. through the accidental or deliberate shared use of HIV-contaminated needles or skin cutting instruments (in and out of health care settings);
3. from infected mothers to unborn infants;
4. through transfusion of infected blood or blood products.

Since the HIV cannot be contracted through the more usual work-place or study contacts, the School views a person infected with HIV as it does any healthy person and it views a person with AIDS as it does a person with any other chronic illness or disability. The School's policies that apply to life threatening diseases (see addendum) apply to all staff members with AIDS.

## **3. HIV / AIDs and the School's Statement on Spirituality.**

The School's Statement on Spirituality and the Christian values which the School community espouses, are to be regarded as integral to this policy document. In particular the School subscribes to the notion, which conforms with Christian principles, that the only safe form of prevention of infection by the HIV/AIDS virus during sexual intercourse, is to abstain from sex before marriage. This will continue to be the main theme in the school's HIV/Aids and sex education drive. Conversely the school also recognises that where a pupil or indeed a member of staff has become infected, it has a Christian obligation to deal with that person in a caring and compassionate way. This requirement is echoed by the legal requirements of our constitution

**4. Non-discrimination and equality with regard to pupils and staff members with HIV/AIDS.**

No pupil or staff member with or perceived to have HIV/AIDS may be unfairly discriminated against.

Pupils and staff members with HIV/AIDS should be treated in a just, Christian, humane and life-affirming way, taking into account the fears, objections and the rights of all parties affected - a fair and balanced stance is necessary in the interest of the school community.

Any special measures required in respect of a pupil or staff member with HIV should be fair and justifiable in the light of medical facts, school conditions, and must be financially feasible, considering a balancing of interests of the pupil or staff member with HIV/AIDS and those of other pupils or staff members, and their parents.

**5. HIV/AIDS testing: the admission of pupils to Bishops and the appointment of staff members.**

No pupil may be denied continued attendance at the school on account of his HIV/AIDS status or perceived HIV/AIDS status.

No staff member may be denied the right to be employed or to be promoted on account of his or her HIV/AIDS status or perceived HIV/AIDS status. HIV/AIDS status may not be the reason for dismissal of a staff member.

Pupils with HIV/AIDS are expected to attend classes in accordance with school requirements for as long as they are able to function effectively.

If and when pupils with HIV/AIDS become incapacitated through illness, or pose a risk to others at the school, the school should make academic work available to them for study at home and parents should, where practically possible, be allowed to educate their children at home, at the request of parents. All such arrangements are to be made by the parent in conjunction with the boys' House Director.

**6. Voluntary HIV Counselling and Testing.**

The school will provide of voluntary, confidential HIV counselling and testing to pupils and staff as needed or requested.

## **7. Disclosure of HIV/AIDS-related information and confidentiality.**

No pupil (or parent on behalf of a pupil), or staff member, may be compelled to disclose his or her HIV/AIDS status to the school.

Genuine voluntary disclosure of HIV/AIDS is welcomed and encouraged. In the event of voluntary disclosure, it may be in the best interests of a pupil with HIV/AIDS if a member of the School's Executive Committee is informed of his/her HIV/AIDS status, either by the pupil or by the pupil's parent(s).

A person to whom any information about the medical condition of a pupil or staff member with HIV/AIDS has been divulged is expected to keep this information confidential. Disclosures to third parties may nevertheless be authorized with the informed consent of the pupil (if the pupil is above the age of 14 years), or his/her parents, or by the written consent of the staff member, or as is justified by statutory or legal authorization, or necessity, as would be in the case of an emergency.

## **8. Safe environment at Bishops.**

Bishops will implement universal precautions to effectively eliminate the risk of transmission of all blood-borne pathogens, including HIV, in the school environment, as far as is practical.

The basis for advocating the consistent application for universal precautions lies in the assumption that in situations of potential exposure to HIV, all persons are potentially infected and all blood and body fluids and excretions which could be stained or contaminated with blood (for example tears, saliva, mucus, phlegm, urine, vomit, faeces and pus) are therefore to be treated as potentially infectious.

Blood, especially in large spills (such as from nosebleeds) should be handled with extreme caution.

Major blood spills on surfaces and floors will be dealt with by the cleaning staff under the supervision of the School's Health and Safety Officer.

All bleeding wounds, sores, breaks in the skin, grazes and open skin lesions should be covered, the flow of blood should be stopped and the patient should be sent to the school Sanatorium to be assessed by the Sister.

If there is a biting or scratching incident where the skin is broken, the wound should be washed thoroughly with running water and disinfectant.

All open wounds, sores, breaks in the skin, grazes and open skin lesions should be covered securely with a non-porous or waterproof dressing or plaster so that there is no risk of exposure to blood.

Cleansing and washing of wounds should always be done with running water and not in containers of water. Where running tap water is not available containers should be used to pour water over the area to be cleansed.

All persons attending to blood spills, open wounds, sores, breaks in the skin, grazes, open skin lesions, body fluids and excretions should wear protective latex gloves to exclude the risk of HIV transmission effectively. However, emergency treatment should not be delayed because gloves are not available. Bleeding can be managed by compression with material that will absorb the blood, for example a towel. However, people who have skin lesions should not attempt to give first aid when no latex gloves are available.

Blood splashes on the face (mucous membranes of eyes, nose or mouth) should be flushed with running water for at least three minutes.

Skin exposed accidentally to blood should be cleaned promptly with water and disinfectant, in every instance.

If blood has contaminated a surface, that surface should be cleaned with fresh, clean bleach solution and the person responsible for this should wear latex gloves. Other body fluids and excretions that could be stained or contaminated with blood (for instance tears, saliva, mucus, phlegm, urine, vomit, faeces and pus) should be cleaned up in similar fashion.

Blood-contaminated materials should be sealed in a plastic bag and incinerated or sent to an appropriate disposal firm. This is the responsibility of the school Sister.

If instruments (for instance scissors) become contaminated with blood or other body fluids, they should be washed and placed in a strong bleach solution for at least one hour before drying and re-use.

First-aid kits should be available on the school premises. Details of the content, location and use of these First Aid Kits is included in an addendum to this document.

First aid kits should be taken on all tours, excursions and outings. It is the responsibility of the staff member organising the excursion to ensure that a first aid kit is taken.

Universal precautions are in essence barriers to prevent contact with blood or body fluids. Adequate barriers can also be established by using less sophisticated devices than those described above, such as:

- Unbroken plastic packets for indoor and outdoor use on hands where latex or rubber gloves are not available, and
- Common household bleach for use as disinfectant, diluted one part to nine parts water (1:9 solution) made up as needed

All pupils and staff members should be given appropriate information and training on HIV transmission, the application of universal precautions and the importance of adherence thereto.

Pupils should be instructed never to touch the blood, open wounds, sores, breaks in the skin, grazes and open skin lesions of others, nor to handle emergencies such as nosebleeds, cuts and scrapes of friends on their own. They should be taught to call for the assistance of a staff member.

## **9. Prevention of HIV transmission during play and sport.**

Considering:

The risk of HIV transmission as a result of contact play and contact sport is generally insignificant.

The risk increases where open wounds, sores, breaks in the skin, grazes, open skin lesions or mucous membranes of pupils and staff members without HIV are exposed to infected blood.

Certain contact sports (such as rugby and hockey) may represent an increased risk of HIV transmission.

Adequate wound management, in the form of the application of universal precautions is essential to contain the risk of HIV transmission during contact play and contact sport.

Therefore:

No pupil may participate in contact play or contact sport with an open wound, sore, break in the skin, graze or open skin lesion.



If bleeding occurs during contact play or contact sport, the injured player should be taken off the playground or sports field immediately and appropriately treated. Only then may the player resume playing and only for as long as any open wound, sore, break in the skin, graze or open skin lesion remains securely covered.

Soiled clothes must be changed.

The same precaution should be applied to injured staff members and injured spectators.

Sports participants, including coaches, with HIV/AIDS should preferably seek medical counselling before participation in sport, in order to assess risks to their own health as well as the risk of HIV transmission to other participants.

Staff members acting as sports administrators, managers and coaches should ensure the availability of first-aid kits and the adherence to universal precautions in the event of bleeding during sports participation.

## **10. Education on HIV/AIDS at Bishops.**

The primary responsibility for sex education in general and more particularly HIV/AIDS education and prevention measures rests with a pupil's parents and family and the School could never, nor should it ever, attempt to act as a substitute or assume the responsibility of the parents in that regard. The School's role in sex and HIV/AIDS education is a complementary one only.

A continuing HIV/AIDS education programme must be implemented for all pupils and staff members.

Age-appropriate education on HIV/AIDS must form part of the curriculum for all pupils and should be integrated in the life-skills education programme for pre-primary, primary and secondary school pupils. This should include the following:

- Providing information on HIV/AIDS in South Africa and developing the life skills necessary for the prevention of HIV infection;
- Providing information on appropriate prevention and avoidance measures particularly abstinence from sexual intercourse, but also the use of condoms and the application of universal precautions;

- Inculcating, from an early age onwards, basic first-aid principles, including how to deal with bleeding;
- Emphasizing the role of alcohol, drugs, sexual abuse and violence in the transmission of HIV;
- Encouraging pupils to make use of health care, counselling and support service (including services related to reproductive health care and the prevention and treatment of sexually transmitted diseases) offered by community service organisations and other disciplines;
- Teaching pupils how to behave towards individuals with HIV/AIDS; and
- Cultivating an enabling environment and a culture of non-discrimination towards persons with HIV/AIDS.

Education and information regarding HIV/AIDS must be given in an accurate and scientific manner and in language and terms that are understandable.

#### **11. Duties and responsibilities of pupils, staff members and parents.**

Pupils and staff members should respect the right of other pupils and staff members.

The ultimate responsibility for a pupil's behaviour rests with his or her parents. Parents of all pupils:

- Are expected to require pupils to observe all rules aimed at preventing behaviour which may create the risk of HIV transmission;
- Are encouraged to take an active interest in acquiring any information or knowledge on HIV/AIDS supplied by the school, and to attend meetings convened for them.

It is recommended that a pupil or staff member with HIV/AIDS and his or her parent, in the case of pupils, should obtain medical opinion to assess whether the pupil or staff member, owing to his or her condition or conduct, poses a medically recognized significant health risk to others. If such a risk is established, the Principal of the school and the Chairman of Council must be informed. The Principal of the school, after

consulting with the Chairman of Council, must take the necessary steps to ensure the health and safety of all the other pupils and staff members.

Staff members have a particular duty to ensure that the rights and dignity of all pupils, and other staff members are respected, protected and promoted.

**12. Refusal to study with or teach a pupil with HIV/AIDS or to work with a staff member with HIV/AIDS.**

Refusal to study with a pupil or to work with a staff member with or perceived to have HIV/AIDS should be pre-empted by providing accurate and understandable information on HIV/AIDS to all staff members, as well as to pupils and their parents.

Nevertheless, pupils who refuse to study with a fellow pupil, or staff members who refuse to work with a fellow staff member or to teach a pupil with or perceived to have HIV/AIDS, should be counselled.

The situation should be resolved by the Principal and, if necessary, with the assistance of Council, in accordance with the principles contained in this policy.

## **BISHOPS POLICY ON LIFE THREATENING DISEASES**

This policy is applicable to all employees.

Bishops is committed to maintain a healthy work environment by protecting the physical and emotional health and well-being of all its employees in the work place. The school is committed to assisting employees who have contracted life threatening diseases which include, amongst others, cancer, heart disease, tuberculosis, chronic obstructive airways disease and HIV/AIDS. Recent developments have made it necessary to set out a formal policy on this issue.

### **1. OBJECTIVES**

This policy aims to:

- provide guidelines to manage employees and or situations where an employee has contracted or as in the case of AIDS is suspected of having contracted the HIV virus or a life threatening disease.
- protect the rights of employees who are diagnosed with a life threatening disease.
- establish procedures for training, education and recruitment
- clarify the position with regard to how medical aid, pension fund and disability benefits are affected.
- promote the safety and health of employees at work and create a working environment consistent with such objectives.

### **2. PRESENT EMPLOYEES**

Bishops acknowledges that continued employment (as far as may be practical and appropriate) of an employee with a life threatening disease may sometimes be therapeutically important in the remission or recovery process or may help prolong the employee's life. The school acknowledges that employees who have a life threatening disease may be able to continue working for a number of years.

In order to facilitate the objectives of this policy, employees who have a life threatening disease are requested to volunteer information on their condition to HR management as soon as possible. Such information will be treated in confidence. For as long as employees are able to meet acceptable standards of

work performance and work attendance and subject to medical opinion indicating that their condition is not a threat to others, treatment of those affected with a life threatening disease will be treated sensitively.

The school has the obligation to provide a safe working environment for all employees. The school will take all reasonable steps to ensure that an employee's condition does not present a health and or safety threat to other employees.

Consistent with the School's concern for employees with a life threatening disease a commitment is made to offering:

- advice on the rights of afflicted employees;
- referral to medical and other resources, such as counselling services; and
- consultation on conditions of employment to assist employees in managing their illness from the point of view of their employment.

The diagnosis of a life threatening disease will be treated as strictly confidential between the School and employee.

Once an employee contracts a life threatening disease, the impact of the illness on his her ability to perform his or her job will be assessed. If the employee is no longer able to work, the normal sick leave or ill health retirement regulations as applicable will be applied, subject to the item on Benefits.

The school reserves the right to require an examination by specialist or medical practitioner appointed by the school in order to assess the appropriateness of the employee remaining at work. A diagnosis need not be given; the important information is to the effect of an employee's illness has on his her ability to work as well as the threat, or lack thereof, to colleagues or pupils.

### **3. LEGAL ASPECTS**

The school undertakes to approach the question of an employee who is affected with a life threatening disease in terms of the law of contract, fair and reasonable practices and equity in balancing the interests of the affected employee, the school and other employees. The implementation of this policy is subject to the overriding requirements of legislation.

### **4. EMPLOYEES AT RISK**

Certain employees such as first aiders or employees in charge of the first aid box, may be at minimal risk of being infected by a life threatening disease when required to administer first aid. The risk can be avoided by taking the prescribed precaution and following infection control procedures.



## **5. BENEFITS**

Life threatening disease sufferers will, for as long as this is possible, be treated in terms of the provisions of the existing benefits. This position may be altered by the respective underwriters of the employee benefit schemes, should the impact of the claims of life threatening diseases be of such a scale as to render such action necessary. The School undertakes to do all that is reasonable within its power to look for schemes that offer suitable benefits and protection when this is required, taking cognisance of the interests of the School and all its employees.

## **6. HIV/AIDS**

Where employees request to be tested for HIV, the employee will be advised where confidential counselling will be made available. Where such an employee is not a member of the medical aid scheme, the costs of testing will be borne by the individual.

Testing for HIV will only be undertaken on a voluntary basis with the informed consent of the employee.

Should a job performance problem or attendance record indicate that testing for HIV is recommended, the employee will obtain counselling in this regard. Such tests will be paid for by the School.

(The committee responsible for drafting the original policy consisted of: Dr Martin Bailey, Dr Ann Cooper, Dr Roy Leaver, Mr Henry Stubbings, Ms Cheryl Douglas and Mr Jason Bantjes, in consultation with other HIV / AIDs specialists.)