DELAWARE CHILDREN'S DEPARTMENT POLICY

POLICY #103	SUBJECT: Communicable Diseases
EFFECTIVE DATE: August 8, 1988 REVISION DATE: September 24, 2008, October 17, 2014	PAGE 1 of 3
AUTHORIZED SIGNATURE	

COMMUNICABLE DISEASES

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to establish uniform standards and practices to avoid transmission of serious communicable diseases among children and their families, employees, contractors and volunteers. This policy applies to those communicable diseases that may require hospitalization or be considered life threatening. It is also the purpose of this policy to prevent discrimination against youth and their families and employees or prospective employees who have or are at risk of communicable disease.

Youth and their families who have or may be at risk of getting any communicable diseases have equal right to DSCYF services as well as confidentiality. DSCYF employees, contractors and volunteers who have or may be at risk of acquiring any communicable disease do not forfeit any rights of employment, confidentiality or job opportunities by DSCYF.

Employees are referred to the Delaware Division of Public Health (DPH) regulations for the Control of Communicable and other Disease Conditions which can be found on the DPH website.

II. DEFINITION

Communicable Disease: A disease capable of being transmitted from one person to another. Communicable diseases may be transmitted via environment and airborne exposure, contact with blood or body fluids or through sexual contact. A list of communicable disease can be accessed on the Delaware Division of Public Health website.

Epidemic or Outbreak: The occurrence in persons in a community, institution or other defined area of cases of an illness or similar nature clearly in excess of normal expectancy.

Infectious Disease: A disease caused by a living organism or other pathogen, including a fungus, bacillus, parasite, protozoan or virus. An infectious disease may or may not be transmissible from person to person or animal to person.

Standard Precautions: Strategies that minimize the transmission of communicable diseases including blood borne and airborne pathogens including hand washing, protective barriers and the care in use and disposal of needles and other sharp instruments.

Universal Precautions: Use of barrier precautions to prevent exposure to blood, body fluids, secretions and excretions. Universal precautions are one type of standard precaution.

II. PROCEDURES

A. Routine infection control procedures and standard precautions
   a. Routine infection control procedures and standard precautions will be implemented and practiced at all DSCYF offices and service delivery environments. Staffs are made aware periodically of these practices.

B. Required reporting of known or suspected communicable disease
   a. Employees who know or suspect that they have been exposed to or have contracted a communicable disease will seek medical attention. Employees who work directly with youth, families or the public at large will notify their supervisor if they suspect or know that they have a communicable disease.
   b. Employees who know or suspect that a child or family receiving DSCYF services has contracted a communicable disease will inform their supervisor.

C. Screening for Communicable Diseases
   a. DSCYF requires that employees in residential and child care facilities and teachers and school employees must have on file with their employing Division prior to the first day of employment written documentation regarding communicable disease screening results completed within the previous 12 months. For positive screening results, written documentation from a medical professional that the employee is medically cleared to work must be provided prior to the first day of employment. Periodic follow-up testing is required at a frequency contained in Delacare Regulations and the Administrative Code of the Department of Education.
   b. Unless otherwise required in this policy, employees, contractors, volunteers or clients who in the performance of normal assigned or expected duties and interactions are exposed to blood or other bodily fluids from a person who has or is likely to have a communicable disease will be provided access by DSCYF to screening for communicable diseases.

D. Training
   a. DSCYF provides information to employees regarding communicable disease transmission including the use of standard precautions.
   b. DSCYF requires that contracted providers offer communicable disease prevention training to their employees, volunteers and contractors.

E. Confidentiality
   a. All existing policies and safeguards regarding the confidentiality of client and employee records and information apply to disease-related information. Employees are expected to give the utmost care in preventing the unauthorized and/or unnecessary disclosure of information regarding client or employee disease status. All sharing of disease related information must comply with federal and state law and DSCYF policy.

F. Service Delivery
   a. Each Division shall ensure that contractors and subcontractors adhere to non-discrimination policies consistent with Department policy and contract boiler-plate language. Any contractor or subcontractor found to be in violation of non-discrimination policy shall be subject to disciplinary actions consistent with Department policy and state and federal law.
   b. An employee refusing to provide usual and expected services to a youth or family who has or is at risk for a communicable disease shall be subject to normal disciplinary processes of the Department as stated in the Merit Rules or in appropriate bargaining agreement.
   c. Decisions regarding selection of residential care settings for a youth infected with a communicable disease must be based on assessment of behavior, neurological development, physical conditions of the youth, skills and services available in the various residential options and the anticipated types of interactions with others in the residential setting(s). Except where the presence or risk of a communicable disease presents specialized care needs or places other youth and facility staff at imminent risk, the presence or risk of a communicable disease should not be a mitigating factor in decisions regarding residential admission.
   d. If a youth requires specialized care needs, the Division case manager will notify the Office of Case Management which will convene a planning team including but not limited to the youth and their parent/guardian, the youth's physician, the Division of Public Health, DSCYF case manager(s) and potential residential services provider.