



ST STITHIANS COLLEGE

POLICY: HIV / AIDS

Preamble

1. It is St Stithians' goal to create an environment of tolerance, understanding and compassion and of being non-judgmental of people living with HIV/AIDS.
2. St Stithians College recognizes that HIV/AIDS is a serious epidemic affecting South Africa. It is committed to:
 - 2.1. taking active steps in the prevention of the spread of HIV.
 - 2.2. to effectively managing and supporting staff and learners living with HIV/AIDS.
 - 2.3. St Stithians College acknowledges the following scientific facts:
 - 2.4. HIV is a blood borne virus and is spread only through intimate contact with blood, semen, vaginal fluid and breast milk.
 - 2.5. The Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) is not transmitted through casual contact. Therefore, there is no reason to treat individuals with HIV differently from other members of the school community.

General principles

3. HIV testing will not be a prerequisite for employment or school admission.
4. HIV status will not constitute a reason to preclude a person from employment or school admission.
5. It will not be mandatory for staff, learners or applicants to disclose their HIV status.
6. Staff members living with HIV/AIDS will:
 - 6.1. Have the same rights as all staff including sick leave, compassionate leave and benefit entitlement.
 - 6.2. Have the same responsibilities and obligations as all staff.
 - 6.3. Continue to be employed until they are no longer able to meet the acceptable standards of work performance and attendance. Management will make reasonable accommodations to enable these staff members to continue working at St Stithians College for as long as possible.
 - 6.4. Not be denied promotion/ training because of their positive HIV status.
 - 6.5. Be protected from discrimination, harassment and victimization.
7. Learners living with HIV/AIDS will attend regular classes as their health permits. If the learner is unable to attend school (as with any other illness or injury which prevents school attendance) alternative arrangements will be made to provide continuous education through home study.
8. Learners of compulsory school going age, who are unable to benefit from attendance or home study, may be granted exemption from attendance in terms of section 4(1) of the South African Schools Act, 1996, by the Head of Department, after consultation with the principal, the parents and the medical practitioner where possible.
9. All staff and learners will maintain absolute confidentiality of a staff member's or learner's HIV status. A staff member's HIV status will only be disclosed with written permission from them, or in the case of a learner, from his parent.

10. No staff member may refuse to work with a colleague or teach a learner based on his or her actual or perceived HIV positive status.
11. No learner may refuse to be taught by a staff member or study with a learner based on his or her actual or perceived HIV positive status.
12. Staff, learners and parents will be counseled and their concerns and fears will be addressed. However, refusal to work with, be taught by or study with someone who is HIV positive, will be considered a breach of St Stithians' Code of Conduct.

HIV/AIDS Education Programmes at the College

13. St Stithians College will appoint an HIV/AIDS Programme Coordinator, who will ensure that each school within the campus is providing:
 - 13.1. Age appropriate and ongoing education on HIV/AIDS as part of the curriculum for all learners, and integrated into the life-skills education programme for pre-primary, primary and high school learners.
 - 13.2. An ongoing HIV/AIDS programme for all staff, which will focus on updated education; the prevention of the spread of HIV and the management of staff living with HIV/AIDS.
 - 13.3. Ongoing parent education talks on HIV/AIDS.
14. The coordinator will oversee a wellness programme, which will include talks on healthy living, referring people living with HIV/AIDS to counseling and support groups and providing links to health services outside the workplace.

Preventative action

15. A Prevention Programme will be driven by peer educators and will include:
 - 15.1. Risk identification and Prevention Strategies.
 - 15.2. Awareness, including a HIV/AIDS awareness day.
 - 15.3. Education.
16. The College's position in preventing the disease is based on the ABC formula:
 - 16.1 A = abstinence, where the College believes students should abstain from all sexual activity until they are in an adult, committed relationship.
 - 16.2 B = be faithful to your partner. Promiscuity is a serious danger to contracting the disease.
 - 16.3 C = condoms. The College recognizes that many will be sexually active outside of marriage and so we will make condoms available within the Saints community. This is aimed at helping save lives in the context of the disease, rather than in any way condoning intercourse outside of marriage.
 - 16.4 The College wishes to reiterate that having sexual intercourse with anyone under the age of 16 years is illegal in South Africa

Safety procedures

17. A safe and healthy school environment will be maintained. Personal protective equipment such as disposable gloves will be made available. All staff and learners will be trained in the appropriate Universal Precautions (as described below) which will be distributed annually and updated as and when necessary.
18. This HIV/AIDS policy and programme will be evaluated by the St Stithians HIV/AIDS committee annually or as new information is made available. The updated policy and programme will be made known to all staff and parents.

Universal precautions for prevention of transmission of blood borne infections

19. The purpose of these precautions is to prevent staff and learners from exposing themselves to any infection, which may be caused by pathogens carried in the blood.
20. All blood is to be considered as potentially infected with blood-borne pathogens.
21. Universal precautions apply when:

- 22.1 Touching blood or body fluids as well as mucus membranes or non-intact skin.
- 22.2 Handling items soiled with blood or body fluids.
- 22.3 When cleaning surfaces contaminated with blood.
- 22. Universal precautions apply to all blood and any body fluid obviously contaminated with blood. This does not normally include tears, sweat or saliva.
- 23. All staff and learners will be educated with respect to universal precautions.
- 24. Latex gloves will be available to all staff and in all classroom and assembly areas.
- 25. Latex gloves and first aid kits will be packed into “moon bags” which should be strapped around staff or sports coaches waists during sports events, physical education lessons and playground duty.
- 26. These “moon bag” first aid kits will contain the following:
 - 26.1. 2 pairs latex gloves
 - 26.2. 6 waterproof plasters
 - 26.3. 1 CPR mouthpiece
 - 26.4. 6 sterile gauzes
 - 26.5. 2 small plastic bags
 - 26.6. 1 roll tape

Procedures

- 27. All cuts, sores, open wounds, breaks in skin, grazes or lesions will be covered with a waterproof dressing.
- 28. Latex gloves will be worn when handling blood or blood contaminated items and when cleaning up blood spills. When finished the gloves will be discarded into a sealed plastic bag. Hands are to be washed immediately after removing the gloves.
- 29. Blood spills will be treated with caution. The activity should be stopped until the spill has been cleaned. Gloves are to be worn. The area will be cordoned off. Paper towels are to be placed over the blood spill and deposited into a plastic bag. The area is then to be cleaned with household bleach (dilution 1:10) using paper towels. These are also to be discarded into a plastic bag, sealed with tape and incinerated. Hands are to be washed immediately after removing gloves.
- 30. Any staff member or learner, who comes into contact via their non-intact skin with another person’s blood, will inform the relevant head of school immediately.

APPROVED & ADOPTED BY COLLEGE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE: 05 JUNE 2006