

## **Infectious Diseases and Health Related Conditions**

### Statement

The school Board recognizes that employees with life-threatening illnesses may wish to continue to work. As long as employees are able to meet acceptable performance standards, and medical evidence indicates that their condition is not a threat to others, employees shall be assured of continued employment. Federal and State laws also mandate, pursuant to the laws protecting disabled individuals that those individuals not be discriminated against on the basis of their handicap, and that, if it becomes necessary, some reasonable accommodations be made to enable qualified individuals to continue to work.

### Employee Guidelines and Procedures

#### A. Purpose and Scope

This policy of the Torrington Board of Education is applicable to employees who have HIV, ARC, or AIDS, CMV (cytomegalovirus), hepatitis B, herpes simplex or other infectious diseases or illnesses which may affect the employee's ability to perform. Its purpose is the protection of the right of such school district's employees to continued employment. The school Board recognizes its obligation as an employer to provide not only a safe environment for all employees and the public at large, but also an environment in which employees and students need not fear for their health and safety.

The policy and procedures are applicable to all employees of the Torrington Board of Education.

#### B. Training and Education

Medical studies show that HIV infection, Hepatitis B and other infectious diseases may be transmitted via contact with body fluids of an infected person. Regarding HIV, to date there is no record of transmission of the AIDS associated virus to co-workers, clients or consumers in offices, schools, factories, construction sites or other work places. There is no evidence of casual transmission by sitting near, working in the same office, sharing the same water fountain, telephones, toilets, eating facilities, or office equipment with a person infected with HIV.

Many of the problems which arise in the work place when employees are confronted with a fellow employee who has become HIV-infected are caused by lack of knowledge about the disease and misunderstanding of the ways in which it is transmitted. The only means of combating this fear is education. Supervisors should make a concerted effort to educate themselves as to the facts regarding HIV infection and other infectious diseases and how they are not transmitted and, further, should make the same effort to educate their employees. Any information needed will be furnished by nursing and medical personnel. Supervisors

should be sensitive and responsible to co-workers's concerns, and emphasize employee education.

#### C. Confidentiality

The Torrington School Board realizes that an employee's health condition is personal and confidential. Personnel and medical files or information about employees are exempt from public disclosure. In addition, information relating to a specifically named individual, the disclosure of which would constitute an unwarranted invasion of personal privacy, is prohibited. Thus, special precautions should be taken to protect such information regarding an employee's health condition in order to prevent instances of disclosure that may invade the personal privacy of employees. Only those supervisors with a clear need to know should be informed of an employees health condition.

#### D. Reasonable Accommodations

The Board of Education recognizes that there is a relationship between employee health and employee effectiveness. It also recognizes that there is an obligation to support employees whose health may be impaired by adjusting work responsibilities without compromising the mission which it has toward the education of pupils. Accordingly, the Board encourages the school administration to adjust work assignments of employees whose health may be affecting their performance. When appropriate, and with employee's prior consent, the school administration will consult with the employee's physician, the school physician, and others who may contribute so that assignments and the work related environment may be adjusted for continued effectiveness. All adjustments will be made with the good of the employee in mind and the safety and well-being of pupils and others with whom the employee will come in contact.