

1) There is a difference between HIV and AIDS.

- The letters H-I-V stand for human immunodeficiency virus. That means it is a virus that attacks and destroys the immune system in human beings.
- Because of the slow progression of the disease, a person who is living with HIV may appear perfectly healthy and normal.
- As HIV progressively weakens the immune system, the person infected becomes vulnerable to a range of illnesses, including pneumonia and tuberculosis. These are called 'opportunistic infections'.
- The letters A-I-D-S stand for acquired immunodeficiency syndrome and a person is diagnosed with AIDS when their immune system is too weak to fight off infections.

2) The virus is not easily transmitted in the school setting.

- The virus cannot survive long outside of the human body.
- The virus can only be transmitted in a limited number of ways.
- You cannot get HIV/AIDS just by being near or touching someone who has it.
- HIV needs human body fluids to live, reproduce, and infect other people.
- The virus is transmitted through the blood, semen, vaginal secretions, or breast milk of an infected person.
- HIV is not transmitted by saliva, shaking hands, hugging, grading papers, mosquitoes, etc.
- The presence of a person living with HIV infection or diagnosed with AIDS is not a significant health threat to others in school, day care, or school athletic settings.

3) School policies should identify regulations for attendance, privacy, and confidentiality.

- Learners and students with HIV/AIDS have the legal right to attend any school or institution and expect equitable treatment.
- Disclosure of a person's HIV status is a violation of federal and state law.
- A school teacher does not have a right to know the HIV/AIDS status of a student and cannot ask the HIV/AIDS status of a student.
- A parent/guardian may only choose to reveal the HIV/AIDS status of students to specific staff such as the principal, nurse, or medical professional.
- Administrators and nurses should help teachers to understand the district's policy regarding students with HIV/AIDS.

4) First aid and infection control reduce the risk for HIV/AIDS transmission.

- Know that with HIV there are two important considerations for young people at risk: HIV transmission and transmission of potential opportunistic infections to people with HIV and AIDS.
- Follow procedures to handle or interact with the HIV/AIDS student the same as you would if any other student is hurt.
- Incorporate universal precautions for open wounds, vomit, phlegm, bites, nosebleeds, and scratches.
- Handle blood or other fluids with caution using barrier devices, use clean running water to wipe surfaces, etc.
- Practice hand washing techniques and encourage students to wash their hands as well.
- Learn first aid and have access to first-aid kits or appropriate barrier devices in the event of bleeding during participation in sports and play activities.
- Acquaint students with basic first-aid procedures using universal precautions to take care of their own minor injuries.

5) An environment of support and prevention is important for all students.

- Learn about the local school district's School Health Advisory Council (SHAC) and its role with student education regarding HIV/AIDS.
- Participate in staff development to learn appropriate and medically accurate messages to support health promotion activities in schools.
- Develop skills to listen to students and handle any sensitive issues in a nonjudgmental manner.
- Realize that teachers have a particular duty to ensure that the rights and dignity of all learners/students are respected and protected in the classroom.