



# **California School Nurses Organization**

## **Position Statement**

### **COMMUNICABLE DISEASE PREVENTION AND CONTROL IN THE SCHOOL SETTING**

#### **STATEMENT**

The California School Nurses Organization recognizes that Credentialed School Nurses have the expertise and professional skills to assist school districts with communicable disease prevention programs and the development of policies in coordination with state and local public health agencies and the U. S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). This ensures the appropriate implementation of exclusion criteria and supports affected students and school personnel. Key components of school-based infectious disease programming includes the promotion of vaccines; individual and school wide infection control measures; and instruction on how to contain, manage and prevent further spread of infectious diseases. The Credentialed School Nurse also plays a role in disease surveillance and reporting, providing a vital link between the school and public health community. Credentialed School Nurses have the clinical expertise and training to assist in the development and implementation of school and district comprehensive communicable disease prevention and control programs, including:

- Education of the school community about the infectious disease process and care with emphasis on practicing Universal Precautions
- Reducing behaviors and practices that contribute to illness and loss of health.
- Preventing infection and transmission of disease in schools by developing policies to support educational services
- Cooperatively working with the local Medical Community and Public Health Department to conduct surveillance and reporting as recommended
- Proactively educating and addressing concerns and inquiries of school staff, parents and community
- Providing appropriate, timely, nursing care, health counseling and referral
- Protecting the confidentiality of individuals with infectious diseases at school
- Advocating for a safe and healthy school environment conducive to teaching and learning.

#### **RATIONALE**

There has been a resurgence of communicable diseases in the school population resulting from drug resistant strains of common infectious diseases, the emergence of new diseases for which there are currently no vaccines and no cure, and an increase in vaccine-preventable diseases due to lack of understanding or belief in the safety of childhood vaccines. These diseases may spread through airborne, blood borne, fecal oral, skin-to-skin contact, sexual contact or from mother to unborn child. Recent communicable disease concerns include Methicillin Resistant Staph Aureus (MRSA), Measles, Pertussis, Varicella, and various Influenza that have the potential to mutate and lead to a Pandemic Influenza situation.

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The Credentialed School Nurse has the unique educational background and knowledge necessary to assist in the development of communicable disease prevention and control policies and programs and to counsel and educate district staff, school-aged children and their families.

#### References:

Adolescent and School Health, (2011). Retrieved May 7, 2012, from Center for Disease Control, <http://www.cdc.gov/HealthyYouth/infectious/index.htm>

Infectious disease, (2011), Retrieved May 7, 2012, from National Assn. of School Nurses - <http://www.nasn.org/PolicyAdvocacy/PositionPapersandReports/NASNPositionStatementsFullView/tabid/462/smId/824/ArticleID/34/Default.aspx>

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