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DISCARDED NEEDLES AND SYRINGES POLICY

St. Agnes' Primary School



RATIONALE:

- It is critically important to ensure that the school and its surrounding area is as safe as possible for students, staff and community members.
- The disposal of used needles and syringes is an Occupational Health and Safety issue. They must be removed immediately and in a safe manner.

AIMS:

- To provide a safe and effective means of removing syringes from the school surrounds.
- To outline a procedure in case of needlestick injury.
- Provision of education and resources regarding HIV/AIDS and other blood borne diseases.

IMPLEMENTATION:

- **Discovery of Syringe:** Students are instructed to report the discovery of a syringe immediately to the supervising teacher.
- **Ensure Safety:** Ensuring the safety of the students and others is the teacher's first priority. Take quick commonsense action to ensure safety. Isolate area around syringe, no one shall work or play in the immediate area around the syringe until the syringe has been safely disposed of by the appropriate personnel.
- **Seek Assistance:** Teachers must always seek the help of the Principal / Executive when dealing with such incidences.
- **Safe Removal and Disposal of Syringe:** The Principal / Executive will remove the syringe and dispose of it in the following manner.
 - Wear gloves, (they will protect you from infectious material, but will not protect you from being pricked by a needle).
 - Have an appropriate sharps container ready. This container should be a rigid, screw top container such as a fruit juice or bleach bottle.
 - Place the container on a flat, stable surface, don't hold the container with your hands.
 - Pick up the syringe by using tongs. If you must pick it up by hand, make sure you are wearing gloves and hold it by the plastic barrel with the needle end pointing away from you.
 - Never put the cap back on the needle or break it off.
 - Place the sealed container in the trash pack.

- In the event of a continuing problem with syringes being discovered on the site arrange with the Department of Health to be supplied with an approved syringes disposal pack or bin.

- **In Case of Needlestick Injury**

- Do not panic.
- Allow the wound to bleed a little.
- As soon as possible, wash the wound with soap and cold running water.
- Treat with antiseptic/bleach and cover with a Band-Aid.
- Seek medical attention.

- **Education and Resources regarding HIV/AIDS and other Blood Borne Diseases:**

HIV, the virus that causes AIDS dies quickly when exposed to air and light. The amount of blood inside, or on the surface of a used needle or syringe is very small. There would probably not be enough to cause HIV infection if you were pricked. So the chances of being infected with HIV from a used syringe, is extremely low.

There are however greater risks of being infected with Hepatitis C, which like HIV, cannot be vaccinated against. Other diseases that can be caught from dirty needles are Hepatitis A and B, and Tetanus. You can be vaccinated against these by your local doctor.

Student Education

- It is important that all students are aware of the procedure for the notification and safe removal and disposal of syringes at St Agnes'. This is particularly important during any school clean up events.
- Students at St Agnes' also study units of work in the PDHPE curriculum which foster understandings about the safety issues surrounding the safe disposal and removal of syringes and HIV/AIDS.

Reviewed: February 2011

Ratified: February 2011

Reviewed: February 2014

Ratified: February 2014

Next Review: February 2017