

# Bear River Head Start



## Infection Control Policy

Revised June 2025

At Bear River Head Start, every employee, parent, and child deserves a safe environment in which to work, learn, and grow. Infection control is a critical and ongoing priority in Head Start programs, as it plays a key role in promoting children's health and preventing the spread of illness among children and staff.

The infection control procedures necessary for protecting immunocompromised children are the same practices that should always be in place for the safety of all participants. While the presence of immunocompromised children may increase awareness and vigilance, the core principles and protocols of infection control apply universally and consistently across all settings and individuals.

In accordance with Standard Precautions—which require treating all bodily fluids as potentially infectious—the following policies must be followed by all staff, volunteers, parents, and children:

## **PREVENTATIVE MEASURES**

### **STANDARD PRECAUTIONS:**

- Standard Precautions must be observed at all times by all staff and volunteers. This method of infection control requires all staff to treat **ALL** bodily fluids as potentially infectious for HIV, HBV, and other blood borne pathogens.

### **HEPATITIS B VACCINATION:**

- OSHA regulation CFR 1910.1030 (f)(2) states that the HBV vaccination series is made available at no cost within 10 days of employment or reassignment to any employee identified as being at risk of exposure.
- Exemptions can be made if: the employee has previously received the vaccination series, antibody testing shows immunity to HBV, or the vaccine is excused by a physician due to medical reasons. Documentation of the exemption status must be provided and given to the Fiscal Office.
- Those who get the Hepatitis B series must obtain, and provide the Fiscal Office with a copy of the vaccination record which must also be signed by a licensed healthcare provider.

### **IMMUNIZATIONS:**

- Immunizations are a vital tool in preventing the spread of serious and potentially life-threatening childhood diseases. In accordance with Utah and Idaho School Immunization Laws, every parent or guardian is responsible for providing written proof

of their child's current immunization status prior to enrollment in the program. This documentation must include the child's full name, date of birth, the type of vaccine administered, and the dates the immunizations were given.

- If a parent chooses not to immunize their child, they must submit a valid exemption form. This form must be obtained from the local health department, a licensed physician, or a recognized religious leader. The completed and signed exemption form must be returned to the Health Specialist at Bear River Head Start (Preschool/Early Head Start).
- In cases where a child cannot receive a specific vaccine due to medical reasons, a signed medical exemption form from the child's physician is required.
- In the event that a non-immunized child becomes infected with a communicable disease such as measles, rubella, polio, mumps, or other vaccine-preventable illnesses, the Health Specialist has the authority, in compliance with state law, to exclude the child from class. This measure is to ensure the health and safety of all children and staff, and to remain in compliance with Utah and Idaho State Immunization Laws.

The following immunizations are required for a three year old or four year old child to be enrolled at Bear River Head Start:

#### **Utah**

- **4 Diphtheria/Tetanus/Pertussis (DTP)**
- **3 Polio (OPV or IPV)**
- **3 Hepatitis B**
- **2 Hepatitis A**
- **1 Hemophilus Infuenza B (Hib)**
- **1 Measles/Mumps/Rubella (MMR)**
- **1 Varicella**
- **5 Prevnar** (at least one). *The last shot must be PCV-13.*

#### **Idaho**

- **4 Diphtheria/Tetanus/Pertussis (DTP)**
- **3 Polio (OPV or IPV)**
- **3 Hepatitis B**
- **2 Hepatitis A**
- **1 Hemophilus Infuenza B (Hib)**
- **1 Measles/Mumps/Rubella (MMR)**
- **1 Varicella**
- **5 Prevnar** (at least one). *The last shot must be PCV-13.*

If a child has not received immunizations or is not on schedule for their age, they can be conditionally enrolled. Conditional enrollment means that a child can enroll if he or she has had at least one dose of each vaccine required for his or her age. To stay in Head Start, the child must finish any needed shot(s) on schedule.

### **STAFF PHYSICAL & TB TESTS:**

- At the time of employment and every three years thereafter, all staff must receive a physical examination from their healthcare provider.
  - A physical form must be filled out by the physician and can be obtained from the Fiscal Office.
  - Bear River Head Start will pay for the physical exam, up to fifty dollars, by turning in your billing statement to the Fiscal Office.
- An initial TB test is required at the time of employment and then only if there is known exposure. A risk assessment questionnaire is required to be filled out yearly by all staff during pre-service.
  - All regular volunteers must also receive a TB test.
  - In order for Bear River Head Start to pay for a TB test a pre-authorization form must be signed by the Health and Wellness Administrator and taken to the Health Department at the time the test is performed.

**All completed physical exams and TB results must be handed in to staff supervisors. The supervisors will turn in the documentation to the Fiscal Office.**

### **EMERGENCY TRAININGS:**

- All staff working directly with children and families are required to have current certifications in Adult and Pediatric First Aid and CPR. The Health Team will provide training, reviews, and challenge courses for employees to receive and renew their certifications. If employees are unable to attend the scheduled CPR training, they are responsible to get their certification and/or renewal on their own and at their own expense.

## **METHODS OF CONTROL**

### **HANDWASHING:**

Handwashing is the cornerstone of effective infection control and one of the most important steps in preventing the spread of illness in a classroom setting.

All staff, volunteers, parents, and children are expected and encouraged to use proper handwashing techniques consistently throughout the day. Hand hygiene is not only a best practice—it is a daily responsibility.

- Training on proper handwashing will be provided to all Head Start staff during pre-service training before the school year begins.
- At the start of each school year, Teachers or Teacher Assistants will conduct an in-class handwashing demonstration to teach and reinforce proper technique for children.
- Visual guides outlining the “Methods of Proper Handwashing” will be posted in every restroom and above all classroom sinks.
- Staff and volunteers are expected to model appropriate handwashing by washing their hands alongside the children.

#### **Important Hand Washing Guidelines:**

- Handwashing must be performed in designated restroom sinks, not in sinks used for food preparation.
- Teachers, Teacher Assistants, and volunteers are responsible for observing and supervising children’s handwashing:
  - Immediately before meals and snacks
  - After using the restroom
- Additionally, children should be asked to wash their hands (with supervision) after sneezing, coughing or engaging in any activity that may spread germs or communicable diseases, at the discretion of the staff.

By establishing and maintaining these practices, Bear River Head Start ensures a healthier environment for all.

### **DAILY OBSERVATION:**

- Classroom teachers/assistants should perform a quick daily health check of each child as they enter the classroom to look for signs of illness or infection.
- Children should be observed throughout the day in outdoor activities, routines, and transitions.
- The Exclusion Policy will be followed at all times regarding communicable disease control.

- Any noted concerns or recurring problems should be brought to the attention of the Health Specialist through an incident/illness report and verbal communication. Parents will be notified and included in every step to correct the problem.
- The Health Specialist and Family Advocate will encourage and or help parents make the appropriate appointment for needed care.

## **TEMPORARY EXCLUSION FROM PARTICIPATION:**

- Temporary exclusion of sick children from Head Start for selected infectious diseases are based on State Child Care Regulations and Head Start standards and they apply to all children, regardless of any other health problems or disabilities they may have. Children with HIV infection should have the same routine screening tests as other children and should be excluded from participation only if they have one of the communicable diseases described in the exclusion procedure.
- Outbreaks of childhood illnesses can pose a risk to immunocompromised children and those who are exempt from immunizations. When an outbreak occurs, all parents will be notified of the outbreak and given information on what to do for their child if they should become infected.

**Any potential infectious disease must be reported to the Health Specialist as soon as possible so that the necessary steps can be followed to protect the health of the child and the children in the classroom. The Health Specialist will notify the Health and Wellness Administrator of all infectious diseases in the classrooms as quickly as possible.**

**In the event of a sudden or extraordinary occurrence of a serious communicable disease in accordance with State law R386-702-2, the Health Specialist shall contact the Local Health Department or the Utah or Idaho Bureau of Epidemiology to report the disease occurrence and receive specific instructions to control the outbreak.**

## **FOOD HANDLING AND PREPARATION:**

- The Food Policy is to be followed when providing and serving food at ANY Head Start function. Functions include:
  - Literacy Workshops
  - FSC Gatherings
  - Closing Socials
  - Policy Council Meetings
  - Parent Workshops
  - Group Socializations

- Staff Get-togethers
- Community Workshops etc.
- Because food is a large part of the classroom time, a Food Handler's Permit is required of anyone who will be handling food in the classrooms and must be renewed every three years.
- All food preparation and serving areas will be cleaned and sanitized before and after meals.
- Food will be served hot. Leftover meat items and or cooked vegetables will be thrown away after mealtime. Canned fruit will be dated and frozen if not used in 24 hours.

## **FOOD AS ART:**

- Extreme care must be taken when food is used for art purposes. Each child will be given his/her own edible art materials when possible, and other children will not reuse these materials.
- Children will wash their hands before and after using food for art purposes and will be supervised while using food for art.
- Dairy products, raw eggs, and other foods that can spoil easily or carry food poisoning if not handled correctly, are not to be used for art or in art materials.
- All leftover edible art materials will be thrown away immediately.

## **BLOOD AND BODILY FLUID PRECAUTIONS:**

To protect the health and safety of all staff and children, strict precautions must be followed when handling blood or bodily fluids.

- Disposable gloves must be worn by all staff whenever handling or cleaning up any bodily fluids (e.g., blood, vomit, urine, feces).
  - Gloves are single-use only: they must be used for one incident, by one person, and then immediately discarded.
  - Regardless of glove use, hands must be thoroughly washed after any contact with bodily fluids.
- Training on the proper procedures for cleaning up blood and bodily fluids will be provided to all staff as part of their health and safety instruction.
- Each classroom and Head Start bus will be equipped with a Blood and Bodily Fluid Clean-Up Kit that complies with OSHA's Bloodborne Pathogens Standard (29 CFR 1910.1030).
- Non-latex gloves must be carried by Teachers, Assistants, and Volunteers during:
  - Outdoor playground supervision
  - Field trips

- These gloves must be readily available for use in the event that first aid must be administered
- Soiled items (e.g., disposable gloves, paper towels, gauze) must be:
  - Disposed of immediately in a sealed double plastic bag
  - Placed in a lined trash container or a designated biohazard bag if applicable
- Contaminated clothing should be:
  - Wrapped in a securely tied plastic bag
  - Kept out of reach of children
  - Sent home with the child at the end of the day
    - Clothing should not be rinsed or laundered at the facility under any circumstances
- Any staff member who has had a potential or actual exposure to blood will be provided with appropriate information and guidance regarding communicable disease transmission and post-exposure procedures

By following these precautions, Bear River Head Start maintains a safe, hygienic, and legally compliant environment for all.

## **ENVIRONMENT CONTROL**

### **VENTILATION OF CLASSROOMS AND OFFICES:**

Coughing and sneezing are common ways respiratory illnesses are spread, particularly during the winter months when children and staff spend more time indoors. Proper ventilation plays a crucial role in minimizing the transmission of airborne germs.

In accordance with guidance from the Utah Department of Health, Bureau of Epidemiology, all classrooms and indoor areas must be well ventilated to reduce the buildup of airborne pathogens.

- Classrooms will be aired out daily for a minimum of 15-20 minutes
- If a window to the outside is not available, a door will be opened to allow for the circulation of fresh air
- These efforts help to remove airborne contaminants and maintain a healthier environment for children, staff, and volunteers

Promoting good respiratory hygiene and adequate ventilation are key components of Bear River Head Start's overall infection control strategy.

## **CLEANING, SANITIZING, and DISINFECTING TOYS AND PLAY SURFACES:**

- Toys need to be cleaned and disinfected at least weekly and daily when necessary. Centers with ZONO machines (see training manual for instruction) should use them on a regular basis in place of/in addition to cleaning/sanitizing solutions.
- Play surfaces including tables must be sanitized before and after meals, snacks, food experiences, or as often as necessary.
- **Cleaning, sanitizing, and disinfection products should not be used in close proximity to children, and adequate ventilation should be maintained during use.**

**SANITIZE:** 1 Tablespoon Bleach per 1 Gallon of cool tap water

$\frac{3}{4}$  Teaspoon Bleach per 1 Quart of cool tap water

*\*\*Chlorine strip tests should read 50-100 ppm*

*\*\*\*Make solutions fresh daily*

*For food contact surface sanitizing (e.g. dishes, utensils, cutting boards, high chair trays, tables), toys that children may place in their mouths, and pacifiers.*

**DISINFECT:** 4 Tablespoons Bleach per 1 Gallon of cool tap water

1 Tablespoon Bleach per 1 Quart of cool tap water

*Disinfect equipment and surfaces used for toileting or diapering and in cleaning body fluids, like blood. Disinfect high touch areas such as doorknobs, light switches, faucets and cabinet handles.*

### **To Sanitize and Disinfect:**

1. Clean the surface with soap and water, rinse thoroughly.
2. Spray the surface with a sanitizer or disinfectant, depending on the type of surface area.
3. Allow surfaces to completely air dry or wipe dry after two minutes of contact with the surface.

## **PROPER CLEANING OF PLAY CLOTHES:**

- Play clothes and all hats must be washed or disinfected on at least a weekly basis in order to prevent the spread of communicable diseases.
- Hats that cannot be washed or disinfected will be allowed in the classroom if a plastic liner is attached to the inside and then removed with each use.

- Parents and volunteers will also be encouraged to wash the play clothes for In-Kind hours.
- This will need to be done more frequently if a classroom has a contagious outbreak (i.e. chick pox, lice, ect.)

## **ANIMALS IN CLASSROOM/BUILDING:**

- Animals will be allowed in the building only under the following circumstances:
  - Small animals will be allowed in the classroom if they are in a cage
  - Large animals visiting Head Start that cannot be placed in a cage must be on a leash and under adult supervision at all times
  - Children can visit large animals either outside or during large motor time
  - Please inform the Health Specialist of arrangements for animal visits
  - The Health Specialist will contact the Health and Wellness Administrator
  - Children's direct contact with animals will only occur under the supervision of a teacher/assistant/parent
  - All hands must be washed after touching any animals
  - Animals must be in good health, friendly, and vaccinated. Vaccine records are to be available upon request

## **MSDS:**

- Material Safety Data Sheets are located in every classroom and in the main office in the MSDS on-line system and should be referred to in an emergency when a child ingests a certain chemical or for any other reason deemed necessary

## **PANDEMIC RESPONSE INFECTION CONTROL MEASURES:**

- In the event of a pandemic outbreak, Bear River Head Start will implement increased infection control measures. Bear River Head Start will follow guidelines from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), Utah and Idaho Department of Health, the Office of Head Start, Child Care Licensing Agencies in both states and other reputable sources.