



RUSTENBURG HIGH SCHOOL FOR GIRLS

HIV/AIDS POLICY

Revised May 2010

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1. PREAMBLE

Rustenburg Girls' High School does not unlawfully discriminate against staff members or learners living with HIV or AIDS. RGHS recognizes that HIV and AIDS, the most serious stage of disease, pose significant and delicate issues for the school.

RGHS is committed to maintaining a safe and healthy environment for all staff members and learners. This commitment stands on the recognition that HIV, and therefore AIDS, is not transmitted through any casual contact.

HIV is a blood-borne virus and is spread only through intimate contact with blood, semen, vaginal secretions and breast milk

There is no cure for the disease at present. It is transmitted in the following ways:

- a) Sexual transmission and vaginal intercourse
- b) Parenteral transmission. (When HIV infected blood is passed into the body through a blood transfusion, via blood contaminated needles, syringes, razor blades and other sharp instruments, or through intravenous drug use by sharing of needles and syringes)
- c) Prenatal transmission from mother to child during pregnancy and childbirth

RGHS strives toward an "open door" policy and has accordingly established the following guidelines and principles to serve as the basis for handling staff and learners and concerns related to HIV and AIDS.

2. PRINCIPLES OF THE POLICY

2.1. Non-Discrimination

- a. Staff and learners living with or affected by HIV infection and AIDS will be treated with compassion and understanding as would staff and learners with other disabling conditions.
- b. It is the policy of RGHS to respond to the changing health status of staff and learners.
- c. All staff and learners should respect the rights of other staff and learners.

2.2. Confidentiality

- a. Information about a staff member and learner's medical condition is private and must be treated in a confidential manner.
- b. No staff member or learner is compelled to disclose his or her HIV/AIDS status to RGHS's Principal or Governing Body.
- c. Staff and learners who may acquire confidential information, even if obtained personally from the individual, should respect the confidentiality of the medical information.

2.3. Educational Programmes

RGHS will aim to keep staff and learners accurately informed about HIV/AIDS through running a comprehensive prevention, awareness and wellness programme.

2.4. Legal Framework

RGHS's HIV/AIDS Policy reflects the rights of the individual as directed by the Constitution of South African Schools Act No. 84 of 1996 and the National Policy on HIV/AIDS for Educators and Learners in Public Schools contained in General Notice 1926 in Government Gazette 20372 dated 1999.

3. SCOPE OF POLICY

This HIV/AIDS Policy has been developed to include RGHS staff members and learners, taking into account considerations of employment, admissions, law and equity. The fundamental principle is that HIV and AIDS should be treated in all relevant respects like other life threatening conditions.

4. STAFF MEMBERS

4.1. Employment Criteria

- a) No staff member may be denied the right to be appointed to a post, to teach or be promoted on account of his or her HIV/AIDS status or perceived HIV/AIDS status.
- b) HIV/AIDS status may not be a reason for dismissal of a staff member nor for refusing to conclude, or continue, or renew a staff member's employment contract, nor to treat him/her in any unfair discriminatory manner.
- c) The testing of staff as a prerequisite for appointment at RGHS is prohibited.
- d) No staff member may be asked about their sexual orientation or activities.

4.2. Management, Care and Counselling of HIV/AIDS at RGHS

- a) In working areas where there is any possibility of accident, first aid and instructions should be closely adhered to.
- b) RGHS, if requested, should assist a staff member with HIV/AIDS to obtain professional counselling (without financial obligation to the school).
- c) HIV shall not be used as a justification for the non-performance of staff.

4.3. Grievance and Disciplinary Procedure

- a) A staff member with HIV/AIDS has the same rights and responsibilities as other staff.
- b) Where discrimination occurs as a result of HIV status, the staff member shall follow appropriate grievance procedures. (See Employment Educators Act, 1998 and Employment Equity Act, 1998)
- c) RGHS may enforce disciplinary procedure against a staff member with HIV where there is evidence of an infringement of his/her employment contract.
- d) Standard grievance procedures will be enforced against any staff member who refuses to work with, withhold services from, harass or otherwise discriminate against a person with HIV infection or AIDS. (See Employment of Educators Act, 1998 and Employment Equity Act, 1998)

5. LEARNERS

This policy covers learners only for the period that they are registered at RGHS.

5.1 Admission Criteria for Learners

- a) No learner may be denied admission to or continued attendance at school on account of her HIV/AIDS status.
- b) The testing of learners for HIV/AIDS as a prerequisite for admission at RGHS is prohibited.
- c) HIV/AIDS status may not be a reason for dismissal of a learner, nor a reason to treat her in any unfair manner.

5.2. Management, Care and Counselling of Learners at RGHS

- a) Learners who are HIV positive or who have AIDS will not be prevented from attending classes or being involved with school activities.
- b) HIV shall not be used as a justification for the academic non-performance of learners.
- c) HIV counselling services will be made available to all learners.
- d) RGHS, if requested, should assist a learner with HIV/AIDS to obtain professional counselling (without financial obligation to the school).

5.3. Grievance and Disciplinary Procedures

- a) A learner with HIV has the same rights and responsibilities as other learners. (See SA Schools' Act 84 of 1996 section 5)
- b) Where discrimination occurs as a result of HIV status, the learner shall follow appropriate grievance procedures.
- c) RGHS may enforce standard disciplinary procedures against a learner with HIV where there is evidence of an infringement of the Code of Conduct of RGHS.
- d) Standard disciplinary procedures will be enforced against any learner who refuses to work with or harasses or otherwise discriminates against a person with infection or AIDS.

6. **TRANSMISSION**

- a) RGHS is committed to implementing universal precautions to eliminate the risk of transmission of all blood-borne pathogens, including HIV.
- b) All blood, open wounds, sores, breaks in the skin, grazes and open skin lesions, as well as body fluids and excretions which could be stained or contaminated with blood, (for example tears, saliva, mucus, phlegm, urine, vomit and pus) must be treated as potentially infectious. (Universal precautions must also be taught and encouraged in school or private situations off campus).
- c) All persons attending to blood spill, open wounds, sores, breaks in the skin, grazes, open skin lesions, body fluids and excretions should wear protective latex gloves or plastic gloves over their hands to eliminate the risk of HIV transmission effectively.
- d) The ultimate responsibility for the behaviour of a learner rests with his/her parents. (See SA Schools Act 84 of 1996, section 6)

Parents of all learners:

- Are expected to require learners to observe all rules aimed at preventing behaviour which may create a risk of HIV transmission.
- Are encouraged to take an active interest in acquiring any information or knowledge on HIV/AIDS supplied by the school and to attend meetings convened for them by the Governing Body.

7. **REVIEW OF POLICY**

The RGHS's HIV/AIDS policy will be reviewed on an annual basis to:

- a) consider new submissions
- b) to implement changes in legislation, regulations and/or codes of good practice
- c) plan and discuss any activity to further the intention of this policy

8. BIBLIOGRAPHY

Government Gazette no 20372 National Education Policy Act 1996 (no 27 of 1996)
National Policy on AIDS
Government Gazette No 19370 Employment Equity Act (no 55 of 1998)
Peninsula Technikon, HIV/AIDS Policy 2000
Sea Point High School HIV/AIDS Policy

We would like to thank Tracey Wood and Marina Kaichis from Sea Point High School for their HIV/AIDS policy which provided the basis for this one.

Compiled by the Guidance Department in consultation with parents, staff and learners of Rustenburg Girls' High School

Formally ratified by the School's Governing Body on 23 August 2001

APPENDIX 1: UNIVERSAL PRECAUTIONS

- The basis for advocating the consistent application of universal precautions lies in the assumption that in situations of potential exposure to HIV, all persons should be treated as such. All blood wounds, sores, breaks in the skin, grazes and open skin lesions, as well as all body fluids and excretions which could be stained or contaminated with blood (for example tears, saliva, mucus, phlegm, urine, vomit, faeces and pus should be treated as potentially infectious).
- Blood, especially in large spills such as from nosebleeds should be handled with extreme caution.
- Skin exposed accidentally to blood should be washed immediately with soap and running water.
- All bleeding wounds, sores, breaks in the skin, grazes and open skin lesions should ideally be cleaned immediately with running water and/or antiseptics.
- If there is a biting or scratching incident where the skin is broken, the wound should be washed and cleansed under running water, dried, treated with antiseptic and covered with a waterproof dressing.
- Blood splashes to the face (mucous membranes of the eyes, nose or mouth) should be flushed with running water for at least three minutes.
- All open wounds, sores, breaks in the skin, grazes and open lesions should at all times be covered completely and securely with a non-porous or waterproof dressing or plaster so that there is no risk of exposure to blood.
- Cleansing and washing should always be done with running water and not in containers of water. Where running tap water is not available, containers should be used to pour water over the area to be cleansed.
- All persons attending to blood spills, open wounds, sores, breaks in the skin, grazes, open skin lesions, body fluids and excretions should wear protective latex gloves or plastic bags over their hand to eliminate the risk of HIV transmission effectively.
- Blood contaminated material should be sealed in a plastic bag and incinerated or sent to an appropriate disposal firm. Tissues and toilet paper can readily be flushed down a toilet.
- Should instruments (for instance scissors) become contaminated with blood or other body fluids, they should be washed and placed in a strong household bleach solution for at least one hour before drying and re-using.

APPENDIX 2: SAFER SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT

- Two large and two medium pairs of disposable latex gloves
- Two large and two medium pairs of household rubber gloves for handling blood-soaked material
- Absorbent material, waterproof plasters, disinfectant, scissors, cotton wool, gauze tape, tissues, containers for water and resuscitation mouth piece
- Protective eye wear
- Face mask to cover nose and mouth
- Unbroken plastic bags on hands where latex or rubber gloves are not available
- Each classroom should have a pair of latex or household rubber gloves

- Latex gloves should be available at all school outings and tours and should be kept in vehicles for the transport of learners on such events
- Educators and other staff members should be given appropriate information and training on HIV transmission, the handling and use of first-aid kits and the application of universal precautions
- Learners should be instructed never to touch blood, open wounds, sores, breaks in the skin, grazes and open skin lesions of others, nor handle emergencies such as nose bleeds, cuts and scrapes of friends on their own-an educator should be called to assist
- Learners should be taught that all open wounds, sores, breaks in the skin, grazes and open skin lesions on all persons should be kept covered completely with waterproof dressings or plasters at all times not only when they occur in the school or institution environment

APPENDIX 3: PREVENTION OF HIV TRANSMISSION DURING PLAY AND SPORT

- No learner may participate in play or contact sport with an open wound, sore, break in the skin, graze or open skin lesion.
- If bleeding occurs during play or contact sport, the injured player should be removed from the playground or sports field immediately and treated appropriately. Only then may the player resume playing and only for as long as any open wound, sore, break in the skin, graze or open skin remains completely and securely covered.
- Blood-stained clothes must be changed.

DIRECTORY OF HEALTH ASSISTANCE

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| 1. | ATTIC | 021 797 3327 |
| 2. | National HIV/AIDS Line
08:30 – 16:30 English and Xhosa
16:30 – 08:30 English and Afrikaans | 0800 0123 22 |
| 3. | Belhar Community Health Care | 021 952 2160 |
| 4. | Lifeline | 021 461 1111 / 3 |
| 5. | Triangle Project (office)
Helpline 13:00 - 17:00 | 021 448 3812
021 422 2500 |
| 6. | Wola Nana (Embrace) | 021 423 7385 |
| 7. | Tygerberg Hospital | 021 938 4911 / 021 933 2142 |
| 8. | NAPWA | 021 424 1106 |