



How the *Health Protection Act* Relates to School Principals*

What is the *Health Protection Act*?

- The Health Protection Act is legislation designed to protect the health of the public. It comes into force on Nov. 1, 2005.
- The Act
 - provides the legal framework enabling public health officials to protect the public and to prevent, detect, manage, and contain health threats without unduly interfering with civil rights and liberties
 - deals with notifiable diseases or conditions, communicable diseases, health hazards, public health emergencies and good safety
 - lays out the duties and responsibilities of public health officials and of the ministers responsible
 - accords sufficient weight to ethical values especially individual liberty, protection of the public from harm, reciprocity, and privacy and confidentiality of health information

What are the responsibilities of school principals under this Act?

A school principal

- *must report notifiable diseases or conditions*

A school principal must report to the medical officer of health if they have reasonable and probable grounds to believe that a child who attends the school has or may have a notifiable disease or condition or has recently had a notifiable disease or condition. [S31(2)]

The list of notifiable diseases and conditions appears in Schedule A of the Reporting of Notifiable Diseases and Conditions Regulations and this document

How are reports made to the Medical Officer of Health?

The report

- is made to the Medical Officer of Health who has jurisdiction in the area in which the school principal works [S6 of Reporting of Notifiable Diseases and Conditions Regulations]

- Should include the following information (if available) on the person with the notifiable disease or condition:
 - name, age, address, ethnicity, and gender
 - the name of the notifiable disease or condition that is being reported
 - clinical and epidemiological details that are pertinent to the diagnosis and follow-up
 - name, profession, and contact information for the reporting person, and other information required by the Medical Officer of Health for case management and prevention of transmission of the notifiable disease or condition or the illness [*S8 of Reporting of Notifiable Diseases and Conditions Regulations*]

What other information should a school principal know?

- A school principal must provide the Medical Officer of Health with copies of school records, such as absentee reports and class lists, as requested by a Medical Officer of Health or as required by the Nova Scotia Surveillance Guidelines for Notifiable Diseases and Conditions. [*S10(1) of Reporting of Notifiable Diseases and Conditions Regulations*]
- A Medical Officer of Health may prohibit a school principal from admitting any person who has a communicable disease or has been in contact with a communicable disease until the medical officer authorizes their admission. [*S7 communicable Disease Regulations*]

*includes the principal of a public school or operator of a private school under the Education Act