

GUIDELINES FOR HANDWASHING IN THE SCHOOLS

“Careful handwashing immediately after contact with blood or other potentially infectious material is the single most important personal hygiene practice.” Wisconsin Division of Health Personal Hygiene Guidelines for viral Hepatitis, Type B

- A. Purpose
To reduce the number of microorganisms on the hands
- B. When is it especially important to wash hands?
 1. After caring for a bleeding or weeping wound
 2. After handling items which have been soiled with blood, urine, saliva, and other body fluids.
 3. Before eating or handling food.
- C. Equipment
 1. Liquid soap in dispenser (preferred to bar soap)
 2. Paper towels
 3. Hand lotion
 4. Covered waste receptacle with disposable plastic liner

Protocol for Handwashing*	
Essential Steps	Key Points and Precautions
1. Remove all jewelry	Jewelry should not be worn when working with students who require repeated physical contact and care. Microorganisms can become lodged in settings or stones of rings.
2. Wet hands with warm, running water.	Warm water, combined with soap, makes better suds than does cold water. Hot water removes protective oils and will dry skin. Running water is necessary to carry away dirt and debris.
3. Apply liquid soap and lather well.	Liquid soap is preferred to bar soap. Bacteria grow on bar soap and in soap dishes.
4. Wash hands, using a circular motion and friction, for 15 to 30 seconds. It is especially important to scrub for at least 15 seconds.	Include front and back surfaces of hands, between fingers and knuckles, around nails, and the entire wrist area. Avoid harsh scrubbing to prevent skin breaks.
5. Rinse hands well under warm, running water.	Hold hands under the water so that water drains from wrist area to fingertip.
6. Repeat steps 3 through 5.	All remaining bacteria and soil should now be removed.
7. Wipe surfaces surrounding sink with clean paper towel and discard the towel.	Damp surfaces promote the growth of bacteria.
8. Dry hands well with paper towels and discard towels immediately.	Because of frequent handwashing, it is important to dry gently and thoroughly to avoid chapping. Chapped skin breaks open, thus permitting bacteria to enter one's system.
9. Apply lotion as desired.	Lotion helps keep skin soft and reduces chapping.

*The Protocol for Handwashing and the diagram on page 2 are reprinted by permission from *Techniques for Preventing the Spread of Infectious Diseases*, Sacramento: California State Department of Education, 1983.

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D.C. Everest Area School District
6300 Alderson Street
Schofield, Wisconsin 54476