

Health(Infectious Diseases)(Amendment) Regulations 2004

Fact Sheet 3: Amendments to school exclusion table

These Regulations aim to protect the public health by preventing the spread of infectious diseases. They also aim to encourage proprietors of businesses or the persons in charge of premises to provide and maintain an environment that is safe from the spread of infectious diseases.

The amended Regulations contain the following changes to the school exclusion table:

- Verotoxin producing *Escherichia coli* (VTEC) has been added to the school exclusion table, with the exclusion criteria "as deemed necessary by the Secretary"
- SARS has been added to the school exclusion table.

VTEC, a current notifiable condition, was not captured as a condition in the School Exclusion Table (Schedule 6). Whilst diarrhoea is an excludable condition, VTEC can still be transmitted from cases not necessarily suffering diarrhoea.

This potentially is a problem in settings where younger children are in attendance, such as childcare centres, and when toilet training has not occurred. Adding VTEC to the School Exclusion table, and basing the exclusion criteria "as deemed necessary by the Secretary" will enable the Department to manage cases of VTEC on a case-by-case basis and therefore reduce the likelihood of further transmission in these settings.

SARS has been added to the school exclusion table due to its discovery in late 2002. As of September 26 2003, there has been 8098 probable cases and 774 deaths from SARS reported from 33 countries to the World Health Organization. Adding SARS to the school exclusion table will reduce transmission within the childcare and school setting should Victoria have any cases.

(These Fact Sheets are a summary of changes to the Regulations and need to be read in conjunction with the Regulations, which can be found at www.dhs.vic.gov.au/phd/infectious_disease/regulations/index.htm)