



## Procedure for Reporting Tuberculosis

### **What Is TB?**

Tuberculosis (TB) is a disease caused by germs that are spread from person to person through the air. TB usually affects the lungs, but it can also affect other parts of the body, such as the brain, the kidneys, or the spine.

TB is spread when a person who has active, untreated TB germs in his or her lungs or throat, coughs, sneezes, laughs or speaks, spreading the germs into the air. A person who breathes in TB germs usually has had very close, day-to-day contact with someone who has active TB disease. A person who is infected with the germ may get TB disease unless he or she takes treatment. Although TB is a serious disease, it can be prevented and cured.

People with latent TB infection have TB germs in their bodies, but they are not sick because the germs are not active. These people do not have symptoms of TB disease and they cannot spread the germs to others. However, they may develop TB disease in the future. They are often prescribed treatment to prevent them from developing TB disease.

Even if all the students at your secondary school have provided the appropriate documentation that they have received the tuberculin skin test, a student may still become infected with active TB at some point in the future and attend school. There have also been schools where one of the employees has had active TB.

### **What to do if there is a reported case of active TB in School?**

- NYC Dept of Health must be notified by the physician **within 24 hours**. This is a reportable disease.
- There is a standardized protocol that the DOH must follow as part of the investigation for the source case and other potential contacts.
- DOH will notify the UFT that there is a confirmed case.
- When there is a confirmed case, DOH provides a letter to staff and parents with information regarding how the DOH will proceed.
- The DOH will visit the school, meet with the principal and discuss the process of their investigation. They are always willing to present the

- information in an educational session during the day for staff and in the evening for parents.
- The DOH may also conduct tuberculin skin testing (TST) at the school. This test shows if a person has been infected with TB germs. This test is generally after 8 weeks after exposure to someone with active TB because it can take several weeks after infection for your immune system to react to the TB skin test. If you were exposed to TB recently, you may have a false-negative result to the skin test if the skin test was done in less than 8 weeks after you were last exposed. The DOH will administer the test at the school and return to the school 2-3 days later to "read" the skin test.
  - If you have a positive reaction to the skin test, the DOH may do other tests to see if you have active TB disease. These tests may include a chest X-ray, medical examination and a test of the phlegm you cough up.

**What happens if there is a suspect case of TB in School?**

- The UFT Health and Safety Department will contact the TB unit of the DOH directly and discuss all the information we have about the student or staff member. (Name, DOB, hospital they've been treated in)
- At no time will the confidentiality of the student or staff member be violated.

Please refer to the attached fact sheet on tuberculosis from the Centers for Disease Control. The link is:

<http://www.cdc.gov/tb/faqs/default.htm>

Please let us know if you have any questions about this protocol.