

## **Woodthorpe J.I. School**

### **Needlestick Injuries Policy**

#### **What are Needlestick injuries?**

Needlestick injuries are wounds caused by needles and possibly other sharp equipment/items that accidentally puncture the skin. This is a hazard for anyone who uses or assists in the use of syringes or other needle equipment. These injuries can occur when people use, assemble, disassemble or dispose needles etc.

There are occasions when needles are discarded maliciously or incorrectly, these then become a serious hazard for employees who clean and service establishments and there have been injuries caused in this manner.

#### **What Are The Hazards Of Needlestick Injuries?**

Accidental punctures of the skin by used needles can inject hazardous fluids into the body through the skin. There is the potential for the injection of hazardous drugs, but the introduction of infectious fluids; especially blood is of the greatest concern as these may be carrying blood borne viruses that might lead to AIDS (HIV virus), hepatitis B and hepatitis C.

On the rare occasion that a member of staff receives a 'needlestick' injury i.e. a needle of unknown source accidentally punctures the skin, or there is the possibility of transference of body fluid, it is important that the following action is taken promptly in order to prevent the risk of infection:

- Immediately wash the wound liberally with soap and warm water but without scrubbing.
- Gently encourage free bleeding of puncture wounds but do not suck the wound.
- Dry the area and apply a waterproof dressing.
- Do not use antiseptics and skin washes - there is no evidence of their effectiveness and their effect on local body defences is unknown.

In the event of contamination of skin, eyes or mucous membranes:

- Immediately irrigate the area copiously with water.
- In the case of eye contamination, irrigate with water. Contact lenses wearers should irrigate both before and after removing any lenses.
- The employee should attend one of the NHS Accident and Emergency departments and state what has happened.
- This course of action is still necessary even though the person may have previously been immunised against Hepatitis B. This is because the immunisation's effectiveness diminishes with time and at a different rate from person to person.
- It is important that an accident report is completed should be forwarded to Safety Services, as soon as possible.

**Maliciously/Accidentally Discarded Needles/Sharps**

Staff who may be at risk from discarded needles or sharps must follow the recommended good practice and be aware of “high risk” situations. Make sure that you know the sort of places where needles may be discarded these include:-

- a) Playgrounds and planted areas, grounds of premises, especially secluded areas, toilets and cisterns outside drains etc.
- b) Needles may be deliberately concealed to cause injury
- c) Do not pick up or touch a discarded needle unless you are wearing disposable or protective gloves
- d) A sharps disposal pack should be available where there is the possibility of maliciously discarded needles. This should contain protective gloves, forceps/pick up device and portable sharps container.

**On finding a discarded needle: -**

- a) When a discarded needle is found prevent any further persons from coming into contact with the needle by placing substantial object over the needle
- b) Where possible put portable sharps container as close as possible to needle/syringe etc
- c) Use forceps/pick up device to move item into container securely close lid.
- d) Remove sharps container to a safe place to await collection.
- e) Dispose of gloves into waste bag (disposable type only)
- f) Wash and dry hands thoroughly

**Reporting**

Needlestick and sharps injuries are potentially very serious and must always be reported, recorded and investigated.

All such accidents and incidents must be reported in line with our accident policy.

Signed: .....

Approved: 18 March 2019

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