



REPORT TO

## STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT AND WELL BEING, CATHOLIC EDUCATION AND HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE

### SICKLE CELL DISEASE

I have made you and I will carry you. I will sustain you and I will rescue you. - Isaiah  
46:4

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### RECOMMENDATION REPORT

#### Vision

*At Toronto Catholic we transform the world through witness, faith, innovation and action.*

#### Mission:

*The Toronto Catholic District School Board is an inclusive learning community rooted in the love of Christ. We educate students to grow in grace and knowledge and to lead lives of faith, hope and charity.*

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Associate Director of Academic Affairs

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Associate Director of Planning and Facilities

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Associate Director of Business Services,  
Chief Financial Officer and Treasurer

Angela Gauthier

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## **A. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

Lanre Tunji-Ajayi, representing the Sickle Cell Disease Association of Canada (SCDAC), regarding support for students living with Sickle Cell Disease in Ontario Schools

## **B. PURPOSE**

To increase awareness of the impact of Sickle Cell Disease on schooling and educational needs, and the possible recognition of June 19 as World Sickle Cell Disease Day.

## **C. BACKGROUND**

1. Received and referred to staff for a report to come back on how to increase awareness of Sickle Cell Disease in our schools and the possible recognition of June 19 as World Sickle Cell Disease Day.

## **D. EVIDENCE/RESEARCH/ANALYSIS**

### Analysis of the subject matter

Sickle Cell Disease (SCD) is the collective name for a series of serious, inherited chronic blood disorders that can affect all systems of the body.

It is one of the most common genetic conditions in the World, with >25 million affected individuals and 250,000 children born annually. Although prevalent in malaria-endemic regions, due to immigration patterns and the rich ethnic diversity in Ontario, SCD is a significant disorder in our province too.

The lifespan of persons with these disorders can be reduced by as much as 30 years and it has a devastating impact on the quality of life, most pertinent to education being the risk of stroke and subtle neurological deficits.

People with Sickle Cell Disease have a type of Hemoglobin (called Hemoglobin S (HbS) or sickle hemoglobin) which differs from normal hemoglobin. This can cause red blood cells, which provide oxygen to the body, to change shape and breakdown rapidly or cause blockage of blood flow in the circulation

The two main consequences of SCD are:

Severe anemia resulting in tiredness, reduced exercise tolerance, and delayed growth. The student may appear pale and have yellow-tinged eyes from time to time.

Recurrent episodes of oxygenation starvation to the body's organs resulting in severe bone pains ("pain crisis"), organ dysfunction, and even stroke

## E. VISION

VISION	PRINCIPLES	GOALS
As compassionate human beings we need to be aware of the suffering of others and to recognize that we can accommodate to reduce suffering.	Provide professional learning on the Student Well-Being Research Framework to ensure a holistic approach to the well-being of all students	To raise awareness among school leaders and educators of the impact that SCD has on student performance and engagement and facilitate the necessary accommodations in all curricular areas for these students.

## F. ACTION PLAN

### F. #1 Explanation of Options/Scenarios

#1	#2	#3
Provide schools with a communication plan for raising awareness of Sickle Cell Disease		

### F. #2 Resource & Compliance Requirements

Resources	#1	#2	#3
Curriculum / Professional Learning	Sickle Cell Disease Association of Canada (SCDAC) and or the Sickle Cell Awareness Group of Ontario (SCAGO) can provide medical liaison and disease related educational material at the school level		
Capital Infrastructure			
Human Resources			
Costs/Funding			

Source			
Legal / Policy Compliance			

## G. METRICS AND ACCOUNTABILITY

1. How will the recommendations in this report be monitored or assessed?

There will be a greater understanding of the triggers for a pain crisis as administrators and teachers become more aware of the impact that this disease has on the students afflicted. With a greater awareness of the triggers teachers can help mitigate pain crisis from occurring, through minimising school-related triggers, such as exam stress. Teachers will post triggers in the class of the student with SCD. The picture of the students will be placed in the same area as students who have an anaphylaxis and the same protocol will be used. A “medical conditions” form will be completed by the school and placed in a binder in the school so that all can access in the event that a pain crisis or other complication initiates. (Refer to Appendices below)

This document will be sent via email to all school administrators who will forward it to teachers who have a student with the disease. Once it is determined that a student has the condition, all individuals who have direct contact with the student will be given the practical guide for review. Schools with an affected student can also contact for more support The Sickle Cell Awareness Group of Ontario (SCAGO) at [www.sicklecellanemia.ca/education.php](http://www.sicklecellanemia.ca/education.php) and by email: [info@sicklecellanemia.ca](mailto:info@sicklecellanemia.ca). This group can provide to the school’s staff education around the disease and what to be aware of. *It is important that:* students with SCD do not feel singled out or set apart by their disease. They should still be encouraged to participate actively within their reasonable restrictions. This message will be communicated to the schools.

Schools will also be notified in advance and be provided with relevant materials to assist them in programing to recognize June 19<sup>th</sup> as World Sickle Cell Day.

## H. IMPLEMENTATION, STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS AND STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT PLAN

1. Provide a brief overview of the salient features of the implementation plan.

Sickle Cell Disease: A Practical Guide for Teachers and a One Page Chart will be sent via email to all elementary and secondary principals. Principals will forward the guide to all of their teachers. If there is a student or students in the school with the disorder, the student will be treated like any other student in the school with a medical condition. In the case of anaphylaxis students, a picture is taken and a summary of the triggers and

action plan are listed on a Medical Condition Form. The form is kept in a binder in the school where all have access. An IEP will be created for the student particularly in the area of Physical Education so that the necessary accommodations and modifications to the students program will be adhered to. Record of this will carry into the IEP Companion where future teachers can access. A copy will also go into the students OSR file.

2. Provide a brief overview of the communications plan.

**Communication Plan:**

- 1) The parent will have already notified the school of the medical condition of the student.
- 2) The principal will have reviewed and sent the Sickle Cell Anemia: A Practical Guide for Teachers and the Support Plan for Schools in Ontario to all teachers. If need be Principal can call Sickle Cell Awareness Group for further support. The school can also contact Sick Kids Hospital for further support.
- 3) The school's action plan can then be discussed with the parent so that parent input can be included in the action plan that would be placed in the central medical binder in the front office.
- 4 SCDAC will communicate information to schools ahead of world Sickle Cell Awareness Day on June 19<sup>th</sup>.

## **I. STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

Staff indicates preference and rationale for a specific option or prioritizes options.

### **APPENDICES**

1. Sickle Cell Anemia: A Practical Guide
2. Support Plan for Ontario Schools
3. One page Sickle Cell Chart