



## **WELWITCHIA HEALTH TRAINING CENTRE**

### **HIV/AIDS POLICY**

Policy Name	HIV/AIDS Policy
Version	2 of 2020
Responsibility	Student Support Officer
Sub-Committee	Student Support Committee
Approval Authority	Governing Board
Date Approved	20 January 2019
Date of Last Review	20 January 2020
Date Review Approved	17 December 2020
Review Frequency	Three Years
Next Review	17 December 2022
Implementation	All WHTC Staff at all levels and Students

## **Abbreviations**

HIV - Human Immunodeficiency Virus

AIDS – Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome

VCT - Voluntary Counselling and Testing

ILO - International Labour Organization

WHO - World Health Organization

Originator: **Board Approval**

- 1.1 Preamble and Objectives
- 1.2 The social partners recognize that HIV and AIDS pose a serious threat to the health and wellbeing of workers, their families, and communities and to the success of the operations of the company and its stakeholders. HIV/AIDS is a workplace issue, and it is in the interest of the parties to agree on how to deal with HIV infections and AIDS.
- 1.3 This policy defines the rights and responsibilities of the parties and sets down the principles which ensure that fair processes are being applied when dealing with HIV and AIDS at the workplace. It also guides the parties in case of disputes.
- 1.4 It is in the framework of this policy that the company in full cooperation with the union will develop and maintain programmes to stop the spread of the HIV infection and minimize the social and economic impact of HIV and AIDS.
- 1.5 The parties agree to work together to implement awareness and prevention programmes and they recognize that care and support is required for infected workers, their families and the wider community. This includes provision of accurate and understandable information on HIV/AIDS to all members of staff and students.
- 1.6 The HIV/AIDS Workplace Policy should be extended to contract and agency labour used by the company.

## 2. **Justification and Scope**

- 2.1 This policy is formulated within the framework of (name of the country) legislation. It is informed by the (name of national policy) and seeks to give effect to this national policy at the company level.
- 2.2 The policy applies to all workplaces of the company in Namibia.
- 2.3 The parties agree to set up an appropriate structure, e.g., an HIV/AIDS or Occupational Health and Safety Committee (hereinafter called "the committee"), to supervise the implementation of the policy. The committee includes in equal numbers of representatives of the union and of management. In nominating members of the committee, care should be taken to gender balance, the inclusion of young workers and of people living with HIV.

### **3. Principles**

#### **3.1 Non-discrimination**

The respect of human rights and dignity of persons infected or affected by HIV and AIDS requires equality between individuals living with HIV/AIDS and those without. No employee /students will be discriminated against on the basis of his or her real or perceived HIV positive status. This includes access to training and promotion in the organization. The organization cannot fail to hire qualified people simply because they fear the individual will become sick in the future. The hiring decision must be based on the individual's ability at the current time. In addition, organization cannot decide against hiring qualified people with HIV/AIDS because they are afraid of higher medical insurance costs, worker's compensation costs or absenteeism.

#### **3.2 Job security**

Employees with HIV infection or AIDS will not be dismissed on the grounds of their status. A person's HIV status should not dictate what she or he can or cannot do at work. This should be determined by qualifications, talents and commitment to the job. Persons with AIDS-related illnesses should be able to work for as long as medically fit in available, appropriate work (reasonable accommodation).

#### **3.3 Confidentiality**

All persons with HIV or AIDS have the legal right to privacy. No employee or applicant for a job shall be required to disclose HIV-related personal information. Nor should co-workers be obliged to reveal such information about fellow workers. Company management and medical staff as well as union leaders and officials are bound by strict confidentiality about a person's status.

#### **3.4 Voluntary Counselling and Testing (VCT)**

No HIV/AIDS testing will be required for job applicants or for persons already in employment. Individuals are encouraged to know their HIV status through testing. Testing must be voluntary, confidential and with the informed and written consent of the person concerned. Professional pre- and post-testing counselling services must be available. Testing should only be carried out at no cost to the employees or their dependents in unmarked medical facilities not located on the company premises.

#### **3.5 Treatment and Care**

Workers infected with HIV and suffering from AIDS and their dependents are entitled to the same health services as those with other diseases. Treatment with antiretroviral drugs must be available when VCT is advocated.

Dependents of workers who have died from AIDS or AIDS-related diseases must have access to the same care as those who have died from other diseases or industrial accidents.

### **3.6 Gender Equality**

The gender dimensions of the epidemic are recognised by the social partners. Gender discrimination at the workplace is ruled out. Sexual harassment and the exploitation of dependency of women/men is an offence. All employees in the organization must be treated equally regardless of their gender.

### **3.7 Occupational Health and Safety**

The work environment must be healthy and safe. Tools which bear the danger of injuries such as cuts should not be shared between workers. Also, workers must not utilize tools that may cause accidents at workplace without given appropriate training on how to use them.

In case of accidents which involve blood and body fluid emissions, first aid must be exercised with the use of protective barriers, such as gloves and masks, which prevent direct contact with blood or other body fluids.

### **3.8 Benefits**

Employees with HIV and AIDS shall not be unfairly discriminated against in the allocation of employee benefits. With regard to sick leave, HIV and AIDS related illness will be treated no different from other chronic or life-threatening conditions. Health and social security schemes run by the company shall give the same benefits to those with HIV and AIDS as to any other worker. The same applies to separation allowance, retirement schemes and pension benefits.

### **3.9 Prevention and Behaviour Change**

HIV infection is preventable. The parties will promote prevention efforts at the workplace, within families and in the wider community.

Because it is within the power of each individual to avoid HIV infection, it is expected that employees take responsibility of their own health. They are urged to avoid risky behaviour such as unprotected sexual intercourse and the injection of drugs through shared needles.

## **4 Implementation**

- 4.1 This HIV/AIDS Workplace Policy shall be made known and explained to all employees through the distribution of the text as a brochure in the appropriate languages and through meetings.
- 4.2 The implementation of this policy includes information and education activities aimed at communicating correct information about HIV and AIDS and eradicating myths in order to eliminate stigma and discrimination.
- 4.3 The company will organize, in cooperation with the union and if necessary and appropriate with the participation of health professionals, regular awareness and prevention programmes about HIV and AIDS during working time.
- 4.4 The social partners will undertake the training of peer educators. Qualified peer educators should be given the necessary time off on full pay to perform their duties.

- 4.5 The policy is further supported by the display of posters and the mass distribution of leaflets at the workplace and in the community. The company should also disseminate adequate information to students and parents at the beginning of each year in connection with scheduled in-service opportunities to provide both groups with relevant information regarding prevention and transmission of HIV/AIDS.
- 4.6 As condoms and femidoms are an effective barrier to sexually transmitted infections and HIV transmission, condoms and femidoms will be made available at no cost on the company premises.
- 4.7 Meetings, information and training activities should be included in an action programme with an implementation plan for a defined period of time. This should include material to be acquired or produced. The company should make provisions in its budgetary process to include the cost of activities and materials.
- 4.8 Disputes or grievances arising from the application of the principles of this policy and its implementation are dealt with by the HIV/AIDS Committee and/or in established dispute resolution or grievance procedures.


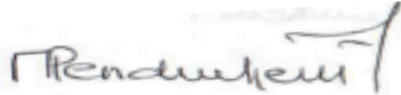
**5. Monitoring and Review**

- 5.1 The committee monitors the adherence to and the implementation of this policy. It meets regularly in intervals to be defined and reports to the appropriate structures of the parties.
- 5.2 To the extent possible, baseline data should be established, especially on the prevalence rate among workers, their families and in high-risk groups in the community, and be compared in regular intervals to actual data to monitor progress.
- 5.3 The committee reviews new developments related to prevention and treatment of HIV and AIDS. It will take note of new or revised policies at national level and will take into consideration new or revised policies, recommendations or guidelines at international level, issued by organizations such as the International Labour Organization (ILO) or the World Health Organization (WHO).

**6 APPROVAL AND EFFECTIVE**

The Policy effective after approval by the Governing Board at the Recombination of the Quality Assurance Committee.

Thus Done, Signed and Certified as an Approved Policy of Welwitchia Health Training Centre (WHTC) at Windhoek on this 17<sup>th</sup> Day of December 2020.

	
Prof. Scholastika Ndatinda Ipinge	Mrs. Monika Pendukeni
Rector & Chief Executive Officer	Deputy Rector & Executive Director

