

SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 53
(OKANAGAN SIMILKAMEEN)

Pandemic Response Plan

September 2009

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What is an Influenza Pandemic?

- A pandemic is a worldwide outbreak due to the spread of a new virus.
- Pandemics can happen when an influenza virus changes substantially, this may occur due to crossing animal species viruses with human viruses. .
- Most people have little or no immunity to it.
- If the virus is capable of person to person spread, then it may cause a pandemic
- Influenza causes outbreaks each winter. The very young and the very old usually have the most severe illness.
- Influenza pandemics cause more illness and more serious outcomes like hospitalization and death affecting all age groups, including young adults. This is different from usual influenza.

Three pandemics have occurred in the last century, the Spanish (1918), the Asian (1957) and the Hong Kong (1968). The World Health Organization is certain that another pandemic will occur, although exactly when is unpredictable. Contingency planning is essential for an effective response.

Pandemic Emergency Response Team (PERT)

The Pandemic Emergency Response Team (PERT), under the direction and leadership of the Superintendent of Schools, is being established to plan for effective educational and business continuity in the event of a pandemic. This plan also addresses the very important topics of infection control and mitigation.

During a pandemic, the roles of the members will shift from planning to emergency response; as identified in the *Pandemic Period* of this response plan. Members of the PERT are:

Juleen McElgunn – Superintendent of Schools
James Insley – Assistant Superintendent
Richard Goodwein – Secretary Treasurer
Terry Collis – District Principal - Student Support Services
Mitch VanAller – Director of Operations
James Pocher – Manager of Finance
Susan Trower – Manager of Human Resources

If needed the District Emergency Response Phone Tree may be implemented. See **Appendix A**.

What are the Signs and Symptoms of Influenza?

→ Fever → Cough → Sore Throat → Runny nose → Headache → Muscle aches and pains → Extreme fatigue → May include diarrhea and vomiting (especially in children)

What type of prevention and continuity planning is in place?

An important component of the plan is prevention. As there may be one third to one half of a school population away during a pandemic with the potential for a school or schools to be closed, the school district is working on the following plans.

- Education on hand washing and cough/sneeze etiquette
- Ensuring soap dispensers in washrooms and classrooms are filled regularly
- Increased contact surface disinfection
- Continuation of learning for students if a school or schools are closed
- Continuation of employee wages/benefits
- Facility's operations (heating, electrical, plumbing etc.)
- Cleaning of schools following a closure or during a pandemic
- Information Technology: Educational Program Delivery and Communication

Plan Overview

Organization and Structure of the Plan

The main body of this plan is organized in three sections, which outline the key roles and responsibilities of the District in each of the three pandemic phases. In order to ensure clarity in public communication, these sections mirror the phases of the *Interior Health Pandemic Influenza Preparedness Plan*.

1. **Pre-pandemic Period:** This is the critical stage for pandemic preparedness. The pre-pandemic phase is NOW, and planning efforts need to focus on education, business continuity and infection control.
2. **Pandemic Period:** The Provincial Health Officer (PHO) will declare when it is time to activate plans for the pandemic phase. We cannot anticipate exactly what will happen. Plans will need to be adapted to reflect circumstances and situations as they arise.
During this phase, the key goals will be to:
 - Minimize rates of illness, mortality, morbidity, and suffering; and,
 - Minimize educational and business disruptions.
3. **Post-pandemic Period:** The post-pandemic period begins when the Provincial Health Officer declares that the influenza pandemic is over. The primary focus of work at this time is to restore normal services, deactivate pandemic response activities, review their impact, and use the lessons learned to guide future planning activities.

Each period in the Pandemic Response Plan addresses the following five key components:

1. Planning and Coordination
2. Continuity of Student Learning and Core Operations
3. Infection Control Policies and Procedures
4. Communication Planning
5. Education of Staff/Student/Families

Pre-Pandemic Period

Pre-Pandemic Activities

Responsibilities

1. Planning and Coordination

- | | | |
|--|---|--|
| a) Responsibility for SD No. 53 plan activation | → | Superintendent |
| b) Alternative use of schools if required during a pandemic | → | Superintendent |
| c) Update <i>Emergency Procedures Manual</i> to include a section on pandemic influenza | → | OH&S Committee |
| d) Incorporate responsibilities and authorities of Ministry of Health / Interior Health and Ministry of Education in development/implementation of plan | → | Superintendent, OH&S |
| e) Advise staff , including early learning staff, of pandemic plan | → | Superintendent, Principals |
| f) Plan for school-based vaccination program if required | → | Superintendent, Principals |
| g) Maintain confidentiality of student health information While response to potential risk is adequate | → | All staff |
| h) Ensure other activities/community users are aware and informed of school situation during a pandemic | → | Superintendent, Principals |
| i) Plan for an isolation room for staff and students that become ill with flu-like symptoms while at work/school/field trips (See <i>Separating Ill Students and Staff</i>) | → | Superintendent, Principals |
| j) Ensure access to mental health or psychological services are available. | → | District Principal, Manager Human Resources |
| k) Educate and equip person(s) to care for ill students until parent arrives. (See <i>Separating Ill Students and Staff</i>). | → | Superintendent. Principals |
| l) Review with Special Education staff any special plans needed for students with special/medical/health needs | → | District Principal. Principals, Special Ed Staff |
| m) Review School Meals, Farm to Salad Bar or other food related programs to determine if any changes are required. | → | Principals, Staff |

2. Continuity of Student Learning and Core Operations

- a) Consider impact of varying levels of student and staff absences and school closures → Superintendent, Assistant Superintendent, Principals
- b) Consider and develop alternative procedures to ensure continuity of education → Superintendent, Assistant Superintendents, Principals
- c) Develop cross training plans for essential services → Superintendent, Secretary Treasurer, Director of Operations Manager of Human Resources
- d) Develop a continuity of operations for essential services:
 - i. Education → Superintendent, Assistant Superintendent
 - i. Payroll → Secretary Treasurer, Manager of Human Resources
 - ii. Custodial → Director of Operations
 - iii. Communications/Information Technology → Superintendent, Assistant Superintendent
 - iv. Transportation → Director of Operations

3. Infection Control Policies and Procedures

- a) Implement infection control practices and procedures that help limit the spread of infection → Director of Operations
- b) Ensure that schools and facilities have an adequate supply of hand soap and paper towels → Director of Operations
- c) Order additional cleaning supplies and ensure custodial staff are trained in pandemic cleaning procedures → Director of Operations
- d) Advise staff and students that are sick with flu like symptoms to remain at home → Superintendent, Principals
- e) Educate children and staff on proper hand washing and cough/sneeze etiquette → Superintendent, Principals, Teachers,
- f) Maintain a healthy work environment by posting tips on how to stop the spread of germs → Superintendent, Principals, Teachers
- g) Advise the school public health nurse when $\geq 10\%$ of school population is away ill. → Principals

4. Communication Planning

- a) Develop and maintain contacts with MHO, Child Youth Program Consultants, Ministry of Education, and Municipal Officials → Superintendent
- b) Post relevant information SD NO.53 Website on Pandemic Planning → Superintendent
- c) Establish method of communication with students and families to receive immediate information if child needs to be sent home or if school is closing → Superintendent may be advised by Public Health to close schools
- d) Advise Board of Education, and School Administration on influenza surveillance and preventative measures → Superintendent
- e) Ongoing topic at District Health and Safety Committee meeting. → OH&S
- f) Advise staff, students, families and Early Learning Service providers → Superintendents, Principals
Phone tree process
- g) Ensure that parents/guardians have provided current contact information to the school → Principals, Secretaries
- h) Discuss Pandemic Influenza with staff including prevention, signs symptoms & family preparedness → Superintendent, Principals
 - ❖ at your health and safety committee meetings
 - ❖ and at staff meetings
- i) Media communications → Superintendent (or designate)

5. Educate Staff / Student / Families

- Personal health articles on hygiene, etc. in newsletters. → Superintendent, Principals

Pandemic Period

Pandemic Activities

Responsibilities

1. Planning and Coordination

- | | | |
|--|---|---|
| a) If school trips are planned, determine how children will be isolated and sent home should they become ill with flu like symptoms. | → | Principals
(See Separating Ill Staff and Students) |
| b) Closing of schools may be required. | → | Superintendent, Assistant Superintendent, Principals |
| c) School trips and school evening user groups may be cancelled. | → | Superintendent, Principals |
| d) Schools may be used by officials for clinics, hospitals, daycare centres etc. | → | Superintendent, Ministry of Health, Towns, RDOS |

2. Continuity of Student Learning and Core Operations

- | | | |
|---|---|---|
| a) Evaluate capability of student learning continuity: adjust as needed | → | Superintendent, Assistant Superintendents, Principals |
| b) Reinforce cross training to ensure continuity of core operations | → | Superintendent (all areas) |
| i. Education | → | Assistant Superintendent |
| ii. Payroll | → | Secretary Treasurer |
| iii. Custodial | → | Director of Operations |
| iv. Communications | → | Assistant Superintendent |
| c) Schools may be closed | → | Superintendent (or designate) |
| d) School trips may cancelled | → | Superintendent, Medical Health Officer, Principals |

3. Infection Control Policies and Procedures

- | | | |
|--|---|----------------------------|
| a) Continued use of infection control practices and procedures that help limit the spread of infection | → | Director of Operations |
| b) Ensure that schools and facilities have an adequate supply of hand soap and paper towels | → | Director of Operations |
| c) Advise staff and students that are sick with flu like symptoms to remain at home | → | Superintendent, Principals |

- d) Restriction of community, volunteer and visitors to schools and facilities → Superintendent, Principals
- e) Rigorous cleaning of schools and contact surfaces → Director of Operations
- f) Audit infection control practices. → Director of Operations
- g) Plan for children away on school trips to be isolated and/ or sent home if they become ill → Principals, (See Separating Ill Students and Staff)
- h) Ongoing education for children and staff on proper hand washing and cough/sneeze etiquette → Superintendent, Principals, Teachers
- i) Advise the school public health nurse when $\geq 10\%$ of school population is away ill. → Principals
- j) Separation of ill students and staff until they can be sent home. → Principals, Vice Principals

4. Communication Planning

- a) Media communications → Superintendent (or designate)
- b) Continue to work closely with Interior Health, Ministry of Education, and Municipal Officials → Superintendent (or designate)
- c) Maintain SD No.53 Website for information on Pandemic Planning → Superintendent
- d) Maintain method of communication with students and families to receive immediate information if child needs to be sent home or if school or facility is closing. → Principals (under advisement of Superintendent (or designate))
- e) Continue to provide the Board of Education and School Administrators with information on influenza surveillance and preventative measures. → Superintendent
- f) Remind staff, students, volunteers and families of SD No.53 website and relevant Health websites → Superintendent, Principals
- g) If school is open, provide information in school newsletters → Principals

5. Educate Staff/Student/Families

- a) If school is open, increase awareness by informing → Principals
through bulletins etc., advise of SD No. 53 Website
and other relevant Health information sites

Post-Pandemic Period

<i>Post-Pandemic Activities</i>		<i>Responsibilities</i>
1. Planning and Coordination		
a) Re-opening of schools	→	Superintendent, Principals
b) Resumption of business activities	→	Superintendent, Principals
c) Depending on staffing shortages, classes may need to be combined	→	Principals
d) Plan for Bus driver shortages and combining routes	→	Director of Operations
2. Continuity of Student Learning and Core Operations		
a) Evaluate capability of schools to be re-opened	→	Superintendents, Assistant
b) Communications	→	Superintendent
c) Resumption of school classes and activities	→	Superintendent, Assistant Superintendent, Principals
3. Infection Control Policies and Procedures		
a) Continue with infection control practices and procedures that help limit the spread of infection	→	Director of Operations
b) Ensure that schools and facilities have an adequate supply of hand soap and paper towels	→	Director of Operations
c) Advise staff and students that are sick with flu like symptoms to remain at home	→	Superintendent, Principals
d) Continue to audit infection control	→	Superintendent, Principals Director of Operations
e) Ongoing education for children and staff on proper hand washing and cough/sneeze etiquette	→	Superintendent, Principals, Teachers,
f) Advise the school public health nurse when $\geq 10\%$ of school population is away ill.	→	Principals
g) Separate ill students and staff.	→	Superintendent, Principals

4. Communication Planning

- a) Media communications → Superintendent (or designate)
- b) Continue to work closely with Interior Health, Ministry of Education, Town and RDOS → Superintendent
- c) Maintain SD No. 53 website for information on Post- Pandemic Recovery Phase → Superintendent, OH&S
- d) Maintain method of communication with students and families to receive immediate information if a child needs to be sent home or if school or facility is closing → Principals
- e) Prepare for Critical Incident Response if there have been deaths among students and staff. → Superintendent, Assistant Superintendent, District Principal, Student Support Services, Critical Incident Response team, Principals

5. Educate Staff / Student / Families

- a) Direct staff, students and families to information on SD No. 53 website → Superintendent, Principals
- b) Use school newsletter to provide information to students and families → Principals
- c) Keep staff informed through safety committee meetings and staff meetings → Superintendent, Principals

Roles and Responsibilities

Superintendent of Schools

- Activates and leads SD No.53 Pandemic Emergency Response Team
- Directs school closures if needed
- Key spokesperson for school related pandemic issues

Assistant Superintendents

Develop and maintain education plans for implementation if schools are closed and/or teaching or critical support staff are away due to pandemic influenza.

Communication

- The Superintendent of Schools (or designate) is the spokesperson for all *school district* related pandemic issues.
- The Regional Medical Health Officer is the spokesperson for all pandemic health issues.
- Updating H1N1 information on SD No. 53 Website.

Principals and Vice Principals

- Educate all staff and students about proper hand washing practices and cough/sneeze etiquette. Resources are available on the SD No. 53 and Health websites.
- Ensure that staff and students do not attend work or school when exhibiting flu like symptoms.
- Separate students that become ill at school until they can be sent home.
- Discuss pandemic planning at school safety committee meetings.
- Advise parents about School District No. 53 plans for pandemic influenza, including website communications and personal preparedness.
- If greater than 10% of the school population is away, report to the School Public Health Nurse and to the assistant superintendent.
- Ensure that rigorous cleaning and infection control practices are happening in the schools and facilities.
- Provide a monthly communication in school newsletter on pandemic planning and preparedness, including information on SD No.53 website. Information will be provided by the Superintendent or designate for this purpose.
- Ensure that parents/guardians have provided up to date contact information to the school.

Director of Operations

Transportation

- Continuation of core building functions.
- Transportation plan for students.

Operations

- Ensure custodial staff is trained in the safety requirements and the contact disinfection techniques for all three pandemic phases.
- Ensure custodial staff has personal protective equipment and cleaning supplies to prevent self infection and cross contamination during all three phases of pandemic planning.
- Ensure adequate supply of soap and paper towels for increased hand washing vigilance during all three pandemic phases.
- Audit infection control program.

Occupational Health & Safety Committee

- Support pandemic plan
- Provide school wide educational support and advice
- Maintain liaisons with principals
- Implement and audit infection control plan
- Advise and report to the Superintendent.

Computer Technicians

- Develop and maintain electronic communication.

Secretary Treasurer

- Develop and implement key financial functions.

Manager of Human Resources

- Assist departments with the development and implementation of cross training strategies.
- Develop and implement specific employee work policies for use during a pandemic.

School District No. 53 Reporting Requirements

If greater than 10 % of the school population is away, the principal is to notify the school public health nurse and the superintendent.

School Closure Decision Making Process

1. The Provincial Medical Health Officer will direct the province when it is time to activate pandemic plans. If, to minimize the spread of infection, activation of these plans is to include school closures, the Regional Medical Health Officer will advise the Superintendent of Schools.

Or

2. The Ministry of Education can direct that school closures occur to reduce the spread of infection in the school population or for other public health reasons

EXAMPLE: A student or staff member has tested positive for the pandemic virus.

1. Laboratory or CDC informs - Medical Health Officer (MHO)
2. MHO Informs: → Superintendent of Schools
3. Superintendent of Schools informs: → Ministry of Education
4. The Superintendent of Schools, in consultation with the Medical Health Officer, the Ministry of Education and the school principal, will determine whether the school should be closed, based on criteria established by the Ministry of Education.

Separating Ill Students and Staff

1. Sick students and staff should always be required to stay home. Students and staff who appear to have an influenza-like illness at arrival or become ill during the day must be promptly separated from other students and staff and sent home.
2. Schools should regularly update contact information for parents so that they can be contacted more easily if they need to pick up their ill child.
3. Recognizing that space is often in short supply, early planning on the location for a sick room is essential. This room should not be one commonly used for other purposes for example, the lunchroom during non-meal times. It should not be a space through which others regularly pass. It is not necessary for this room to have a separate air supply (HVAC) system. Ill persons should be placed in well ventilated areas and placed in areas where at least 6 feet of distance can be maintained between the ill person and others.
4. A limited number of staff should be designated to care for ill persons until they can be sent home. These care givers should not be at increased risk of influenza complications (for example, pregnant women or persons that have a chronic illness) and they should be familiar with infection control recommendations to prevent spread of influenza.

5. When possible and if the sick person can tolerate it, he or she should wear a surgical mask when near other persons.
6. Staff who act in this capacity are likely to come into close contact with students and staff with influenza-like illness. CDC recommends that staff who provide care for persons with known, probable or suspected influenza or influenza-like illness use appropriate personal protective equipment (disposable respirator, gloves).

Personal and Family Preparedness

What can you and your family do to minimize the chance of coming into contact with the agent that causes the pandemic influenza?

- Wash hands often. When soap and water are not available, use alcohol based disposable hand wipes or gel sanitizers.
- Cover nose and mouth with a tissue when sneezing or coughing or cough or sneeze into your sleeve. Wash hands after you cough or sneeze.
- Avoid touching eyes, nose or mouth. A person can become ill by touching a contaminated surface and then touching their eyes, nose or mouth.
- If you or a family member becomes sick with flu like symptoms, stay at home, get plenty of rest and contact a health care provider as needed.
- Practice other good health habits. Get plenty of sleep, be physically active, manage stress, drink plenty of fluids, eat nutritious foods and avoid smoking which may increase the risk of serious consequences if you do contract the flu.

What can you do to ensure your family is prepared?

1. Food - 2-week supply minimum
 - a) No refrigeration, preparation or cooking
 - b) Formula for infants or special nutritional needs
2. Pets
 - a) Food, medication, water
3. Water - 2-4 litres / person / day
 - a) Use clean plastic containers
 - b) No milk cartons or glass bottles
4. Medical
 - a) Have extra prescription and non-prescription drugs and supplies
 - b) Store health/cleaning supplies
5. Talk to your family about how they would be cared for if they get sick
6. Find out now about your child's school/day-care

Note: You can call **HealthLink BC** at **8-1-1**, 24 hours/day, seven days/week to speak to a nurse if you have more questions or if you are feeling ill.

Hand Washing Education

Washing your hands properly consists of the following steps:

1. Remove jewelry and watches from fingers and wrists.
2. Wet hands under warm running water.
3. Apply soap and rub hands together for 10 seconds to produce lather.
4. Wash all surfaces thoroughly, including wrists, palms, backs of hands, between fingers and thumbs, and under finger nails, for 20 seconds.
5. Rinse hands with fingers pointing downward.
6. Dry hands with a clean or disposable towel.
7. Turn off the water with the same towel used to dry your hands. Do not turn off the taps with solely your hands as this will only re-contaminate them.
8. If single use, dispose of the towel in the nearest waste basket.

Sanitizing your hands with an alcohol based sanitizer (>60% alcohol) consists of the following steps:

1. Remove jewelry and watches from your fingers and wrists.
2. Apply an alcohol-based hand sanitizer to your hands.
3. Rub all surfaces thoroughly, including wrists, palms, backs of hands, between fingers

ii <http://www.flu.gov/plan/school/k12techreport.html#sepill>

More information on pandemic influenza can be found at the following web links:

- The public can call HealthLink BC by dialing 8-1-1 or visiting www.healthlinkbc.ca/healthfiles/hfile108.stm
- British Columbia updates on the H1N1 flu (human swine flu) are available at www.gov.bc.ca/swineflu
- Learn how to protect yourself against flu at <http://www.fightflu.ca/index-eng.html>
- Business Continuity Planning for Health Emergencies <http://www.readyforcrisis.ca/resources/tools.php>
- Interior Health <http://www.interiorhealth.ca/health-and-safety.aspx?id=9024>
- BC Centre for Disease Control at www.bccdc.ca/dis-cond/a-z/_h/HumanSwineFlu/default.htm
- Public Health Agency of Canada http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/alert-alerte/swine_200904-eng.php;