


Pandemic Preparedness

	<p>External References:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education Act: Sections 85, 87, 109, 141, 175, 178, 190, 231 • Public Health Act 	<p>Adopted: June 28, 2011</p> <p>Amended: July 8, 2013</p>
	<p>Internal References:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AP 160 Health and Safety of Students and Staff • Communicable Disease Control Handbook • Critical Incident and Crisis Response Handbook 	

Background

Pandemic Influenza spreads rapidly and widely, and causes more severe disease and more deaths than a seasonal influenza.

Goals of the Pandemic Plan

- To ensure a safe environment for students and staff (before, during and following a pandemic).
- To make a clear and complete assessment of situation that may arise within the Division and recommend courses of action, considering guidance from the health region.
- To make decisions and direct the overall operation of the Division.
- To communicate accurately and in a timely manner with management, staff, students and families.
- To liaise and cooperate with other organizations in response to the pandemic.
- To remain operational and maintain instruction and services as long as it is safe to do so.
- To determine the closure of any school(s) and/or changes in school operations.
- To report to the Board.

Procedures

1. The Division Critical Response Team will be comprised of:
 - 1.1 Director.
 - 1.2 Superintendents of Education.
 - 1.3 Human Resource Supervisor.
 - 1.4 Identified resource people.
 - 1.5 Communications Officer will participate on the committee as a resource.
 - 1.6 Executive Assistant.

2. Division Critical Response Team Role
 - 2.1 General
 - 2.1.1 Coordination of Division and school influenza prevention efforts.
 - 2.1.2 Educating employees and student on preventative measures.
 - 2.1.3 Monitoring and tracking the health status of students and employees.

- 2.1.4 Identifying and reporting an influenza/epidemic/infectious disease outbreak in the Division or schools.
 - 2.1.5 Coordinating liaison and communications with Heartland Health Region.
 - 2.1.6 Coordinating Division and school cleaning and sanitizing prevention efforts.
 - 2.1.7 Monitor and report the status of pandemic affected essential activities and capabilities.
- 2.2 Pandemic Alert Period
- 2.2.1 Implement procedures to communicate with staff to promote confidence in the workplace.
 - 2.2.2 Implement procedures to minimize illness among staff and visitors, including restricting workplace entry of people with influenza symptoms, increase social distancing (e.g. enable tele-working, avoid face-to-face contact and management of staff who become ill at work).
 - 2.2.3 Implement additional workplace cleaning measures to minimize the transmission of the virus through environmental sources, particularly hard surfaces such as sinks, handles, railing, objects and counters.
 - 2.2.4 Implement procedures for ensuring that adequate supplies of hand hygiene products are available.
 - 2.2.5 Implement procedure for recovered staff members to return to work.
 - 2.2.6 Activate liaison and communications links with Heartland Health Region.
 - 2.2.7 Assess the impact and develop recommendations for:
 - 2.2.7.1 Closing of buildings,
 - 2.2.7.2 Implementing and communicating program cancellations,
 - 2.2.7.3 Implementation of amendments to human resource benefit programs such as the definition of absenteeism, sick leave criteria, time off and vacation,
 - 2.2.7.4 Changes to travel procedures,
 - 2.2.7.5 Changes to flexible work hour and alternate workplace procedures.
 - 2.2.8 Identify core people and skills required to keep the essential activities running and ensure there are sufficient back-ups for people and skills if there is a high level of absence.
 - 2.2.9 Implement procedures to communicate with staff, students and the community.
 - 2.2.10 Implement procedures to minimize illness among staff and visitors, including;
 - 2.2.10.1 Restricting workplace entry of people with influenza symptoms;
 - 2.2.10.2 Social distancing; and
 - 2.2.10.3 Care of staff and students who become ill at work.
- 2.3 Division Response When Pandemic Situation Increases
- 2.3.1 Confirm the core people and skills required to keep the essential activities running and adjust staffing if there is a high level of absence.
 - 2.3.2 Re-assign personnel as needed to ensure the continuation of essential activities.
 - 2.3.3 Assess the impact and submit recommendations for:

- 2.3.3.1 Closing of buildings,
- 2.3.3.2 Implementing and communication program cancellations,
- 2.3.3.3 Implementing amendments to human resource benefit programs such as the definition of absenteeism, sick leave criteria, time off and vacation,
- 2.3.3.4 Change to travel procedures,
- 2.3.3.5 Changes to flexible work hour and alternate workplace procedures.
- 2.3.4 Initiate alternative education delivery solutions such as:
 - 2.3.4.1 Combine similar grades, as student absenteeism will likely reduce class sizes,
 - 2.3.4.2 Provide alternate activities that can be accommodated by fewer teaching staff,
 - 2.3.4.3 Temporarily combine schools if feasible,
 - 2.3.4.4 Continue instruction for students who are home and well enough to do school work including homework and/or virtual instruction on the Internet with phone contact,
 - 2.3.4.5 Saturday classes or vacation school when conditions improve to make up for lost instruction time.
- 2.3.5 Implement the practice of students and staff staying at home, even with minor symptoms.
- 2.3.6 Implement measures to minimize or slow the transmission of influenza. Examples of measures that may be introduced are:
 - 2.3.6.1 Reducing visitors to the school,
 - 2.3.6.2 Reducing the number and duration of face-to-face meetings or number of persons in attendance,
 - 2.3.6.3 Postponing events that are open to the public and/or parents, including travel for interschool activities, and
 - 2.3.6.4 Increasing distance education.
- 2.3.7 Report influenza-like illness and absenteeism rates to Heartland Health Region's Public Health Services as requested.
- 2.3.8 Communicate the notification of service reduction/cancellation to education stakeholders, employees, students, the community, the media.
- 2.3.9 Consult, if necessary, with Heartland Health Region the responsibility, authority and process for infected site inspections, cleanup and repairs.
- 2.3.10 Coordinate, with Heartland Health Region the authority and process for re-occupying infected sites.

3. School Level Critical Incident Team

- 3.1 The school level critical incident team will provide support at the school level during a pandemic situation. This will include:
 - 3.1.1 Implementing school influenza prevention efforts;
 - 3.1.2 Educating employees and students on preventative measure;

- 3.1.3 Monitoring and tracking the health status of students and employees;
 - 3.1.4 Identifying and reporting an influenza/epidemic/infectious disease outbreak in the school;
 - 3.1.5 Monitoring school cleaning and sanitizing prevention efforts; and
 - 3.1.6 Communicating and emphasizing the need for good personal hygiene practices, such as covering the nose and mouth when sneezing and coughing, good hand washing/hand hygiene practices, and workplace cleaning habits to minimize influenza transmission.
- 3.2 The team will coordinate communication with students and parents regarding information about the pandemic. This will include:
- 3.2.1 Reporting of staff and student absenteeism.
 - 3.2.2 Reporting of staff and students becoming ill at work.
 - 3.2.3 Implementing procedures to communicate with staff to promote confidence in the workplace.
 - 3.2.4 Implementing procedures to minimize illness among staff and visitors, including restricting workplace entry of people with influenza symptoms, increase social distancing (e.g. enable teleworking, avoid face-to-face contact) and management of staff who become ill at work.
 - 3.2.5 Implementing additional workplace cleaning measures to minimize the transmission of the virus through environmental sources, particularly hard surfaces such as sinks, handles, railings, objects and counters.
- 3.3 All media statements will be approved by the Director.

4. Operations of the Division

- 4.1 By 9:30 a.m. principals will send updated reports, including staff and student absences to the Division Office.
- 4.2 At or before 10:00 a.m. the Division Critical Incident Team will meet to review information and determine necessary courses of action.
- 4.3 At or before 11:30 a.m. the Team will have determined necessary courses of action and report to principals. Actions may include, but are not limited to, school closure and/or cancellation of extra-curricular activity or other events or services. Other potential courses of action will be listed under information items.
- 4.4 At or before 2:00 p.m. the Division Office will send out an information update to principals and the media.
- 4.5 Requests by the media will be referred to and received by the Communications Officer. The Team shall decide how to handle specific media requests brought by the Communications Officer. Requests by the media for school access will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis.
- 4.6 In the event of an emergency situation requiring an immediate response, the Director or designate shall make the necessary decision.
- 4.7 Decisions of the Team will be recorded by the Executive Assistant and communicated to Division personnel and Board.

5. Potential Impact on Division Operations

The Division's primary concern will be the health and safety of students and staff. Once a pandemic is declared and in consultation with authorities from Heartland Health the following may apply:

- 5.1 Instruction/Evaluation/Reporting – where possible, the regular in-school instructional program and those activities related to instruction, evaluation and reporting will continue.
- 5.2 After-hours Activities/Access to Schools will be cancelled.
- 5.3 Board Meetings will be held as scheduled and more frequently if necessary.
- 5.4 Extra-curricular Activities will be cancelled.
- 5.5 School Facility Rentals will be cancelled.
- 5.6 There will be a moratorium on field trips/excursions.
- 5.7 Meetings that take school-based administrators or staff out of school will be either cancelled or held via teleconference.
- 5.8 Parent/Teacher Interviews/Conferences will be cancelled.
- 5.9 Professional Development Activities will be cancelled.
- 5.10 Principals will have ongoing communication with the Chair of the SCC. School Community Council meetings will be cancelled.
- 5.11 Where possible and subject to daily review, student buses will maintain regular schedules while schools remain open.
- 5.12 Normal procedures for substitute teachers/support staff will continue where possible.
- 5.13 Continued use of volunteers will be considered on a case-by-case basis.