

Administrative Procedures 162

Pandemic Preparedness



Adopted: June 28, 2011

Amended: July 30, 2020

External References

- Education Act: Sections 85, 87, 141, 175, 178, 190, 231
- Public Health Act
- Re-Open Saskatchewan Plan
- Primary and Secondary Educational Institution Guidelines
- The Saskatchewan Employment Act

Internal References

- AP 160 Health and Safety of Students and Staff
- AP 162 Pandemic Preparedness – Appendix A – COVID-19 Pandemic
- 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 Saskatchewan Health Authority.
- 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 Manager.
- 1.4 Identified resource people.
- 1.5 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 the Saskatchewan Health Authority.
 - 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 symptoms of illness, increase social distancing (i.e. 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 the Saskatchewan Health Authority.
 - 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 risk of spread of illness among staff and

visitors, including;

2.2.10.1 Restricting workplace entry of people with 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 communicating 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 Combining similar grades, as student absenteeism will likely reduce class sizes,

2.3.4.2 Providing alternate activities that can be accommodated by fewer teaching staff,

2.3.4.3 Temporarily combining schools, if feasible,

2.3.4.4 Continuing instruction for students who are at home including homework and/or online with phone contact,

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 online education.

2.3.7 Report influenza-like illness and absenteeism rates to the Saskatchewan Health Authority as requested.

2.3.8 Communicate the notification of service reduction/cancellation to education

stakeholders, employees, students, the community and the media.

- 2.3.9 Consult, if necessary, with the Saskatchewan Health Authority the responsibility, authority and process for infected site inspections.
- 2.3.10 Consult with the Saskatchewan Health Authority regarding the 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 symptoms, increase social distancing (i.e. 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 The Division Critical Incident Team will meet as necessary to review information and determine necessary courses of action.
- 4.2 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.
- 4.3 The Division will send out an information update to principals and the media.
- 4.4 Requests by the media will be referred to and received by the Director. The

Team shall decide how to handle specific media requests brought by the Communications and Marketing Coordinator. Requests by the media for school access will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis.

- 4.5 In the event of an emergency situation requiring an immediate response, the Director or designate shall make the necessary decision.
- 4.6 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 the Saskatchewan Health Authority the following may apply:

- 5.1 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 online.
- 5.8 Student/Parent/Teacher Conferences will be cancelled.
- 5.9 Professional development activities will be cancelled.
- 5.10 Principals will have ongoing communication with the School Community Council Chair. School Community Council meetings will be cancelled.
- 5.11 Where possible and subject to daily review, school 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.

Administrative Procedures 162 – Appendix A

COVID-19 Pandemic

	Adopted: June 28, 2011
	Amended: July 30, 2020
	External References <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Education Act: Sections 85, 87, 141, 175, 178, 190, 231• Public Health Act• Re-Open Saskatchewan Plan• Primary and Secondary Educational Institution Guidelines• The Saskatchewan Employment Act
	Internal References <ul style="list-style-type: none">• AP 160 Health and Safety of Students and Staff• AP 161 Dangerous and Communicable Diseases• AP 430 Occupational Health and Safety Committee• AP 431 Duty to Accommodate• Communicable Disease Control Handbook• Critical Incident and Crisis Response Handbook

Background

On June 9, 2020, the Government of Saskatchewan announced that in-classroom learning will resume for the 2020-21 school year. To help school divisions prepare for the return of students and staff, provincial guidelines were developed to inform local planning. This appendix has been created to ensure a safe return to the workplace for all staff. These guidelines will continue to be adjusted as necessary following the direction of the Chief Medical Health Officer of Saskatchewan.

Procedures

1. General Guidelines

- 1.1 When practical, physical distancing between individuals should be maintained. If this is not possible, other measures should be used.
- 1.2 Proper hand washing hygiene is expected from all employees and students. Practices include using soap and water, for a minimum of 20 seconds, and using hand sanitizer when handwashing is not possible. Cough and sneeze into your elbow and avoid touching your face, mouth, nose and eyes.
- 1.3 Employees and students are encouraged to bring their own hand sanitizer for personal use to supplement what the Division will be providing.
- 1.4 Except when in close contact with a student who is ill, masks and eye protection are not required. However, if an employee feels more comfortable wearing a mask while at work, they may bring their own.
- 1.5 Employees and students shall limit physical contact throughout the school day and avoid close greetings such as handshakes.
- 1.6 Employees are expected to keep desks/workspaces clean, sanitized and free from clutter.
- 1.7 Students are expected to keep desks/workspaces clean and free from clutter.
- 1.8 Sharing food, drinks or other personal items is to be avoided.

- 1.9 Employees shall not enter private residences or provide personal transportation to students with the exception of transportation of students on a school bus.
- 1.10 Employees shall avoid unnecessary travel.
2. Employee Illness Due to COVID-19
 - 2.1 All employees are expected to self-monitor for COVID-19 symptoms. It is recommended employees use the online Saskatchewan COVID-19 Self-Assessment Tool at <https://public.ehealthsask.ca/sites/COVID-19/>.

Common symptoms include:

 - Fever
 - Cough
 - Headache
 - Muscle and/or joint aches and pains
 - Sore throat
 - Chills
 - Runny nose
 - Nasal congestion
 - Conjunctivitis
 - Dizziness
 - Fatigue
 - Nausea/vomiting
 - Diarrhea
 - Loss of appetite
 - Loss of sense of taste or smell
 - Shortness of breath
 - Difficulty breathing
 - 2.2 If an employee has symptoms of COVID-19 they are to stay home. The employee must request their absence using the normal process established at the school level and enter the absence into Absence Management (Aesop). If the employee does not have sufficient sick leave they are to contact the Human Resources Manager for direction.
 - 2.3 If an employee has symptoms unrelated to COVID-19 they are to report to work.
 - 2.4 If an employee develops symptoms at work they should leave immediately. If unable to leave immediately:
 - 2.4.1 Employees should separate themselves in an area and maintain a two (2) metre distance from others.
 - 2.4.2 Employees should use a tissue or mask to cover their nose and mouth.
 - 2.4.3 Staff responsible for facility cleaning must clean and disinfect the space where the employee was separated as well as any areas used by them (classroom, washroom, etc.)
 - 2.4.4 Contact the local public health authority to notify them of a potential case and seek further input.
 - 2.5 If an employee feels well but is at a high risk of severe illness from COVID-19 the employee is to contact their principal/supervisor and the Human Resources Manager.
3. Student Illness Due to COVID-19
 - 3.1 Parents are to ensure their child(ren) are assessed/monitored for symptoms of COVID-19. It is recommended that students/parents use the online Saskatchewan COVID-19 Self-Assessment Tool at <https://public.ehealthsask.ca/sites/COVID-19/>.
 - 3.2 If a student has symptoms of COVID-19 they are to stay home until they have been assessed by a health care provider to exclude COVID-19 or other infectious

diseases, and their symptoms have resolved. The parents will report the absence to the school, using the normal process established at the school level.

- 3.3 Students arriving at school with symptoms of COVID-19 will be sent home. Parents will be contacted and expected to arrange to pick up children immediately.
 - 3.4 If a student develops symptoms at school they should be sent home as soon as possible. The student will be immediately separated from others in a supervised location and the parent/guardian will be contacted to pick them up as soon as possible.
 - 3.4.1 Where possible, maintaining a distance of two (2) metres. If not possible, staff and student may wear a mask.
 - 3.4.2 Once the student is picked up, hand washing should be performed.
 - 3.4.3 Staff responsible for facility cleaning must clean and disinfect the space where the student was separated as well as any areas used by them (classroom, bathroom, etc.)
 - 3.4.4 Contact the local public health authority to notify them of a potential case and seek further input.
 - 3.5 If a student feels well but is at a high risk of severe illness from COVID-19 the parent is to contact the principal and the Superintendent of Education with responsibilities for school operations to discuss possible accommodations.
4. Public Health Order
 - 4.1 All employees and students will follow the directives outlined in the most recent Public Health Order available at www.saskatchewan.ca/coronavirus.
 - 4.1.1 Employees or students that have been identified by a Medical Health Officer as **having COVID-19** shall immediately go into mandatory self-isolation until such time as the Medical Health Officer determines that they no longer pose a public health threat;
 - 4.1.2 Employees or students that have been identified by a Medical Health Officer as a **close contact of a person or persons with COVID-19** shall go into mandatory self-isolation for 14 days from the date of last having been exposed to COVID-19;
 - 4.1.3 Employees or students that have **traveled internationally** shall go into mandatory self-isolation for 14 days from date of arrival back into Canada;
 - 4.1.4 Employees or students **who are household members or contacts of a person with COVID-19** shall immediately go into self-isolation for 14 days and call HealthLine 811 if they become symptomatic.
 5. Additional Health Supports
 - 5.1 HealthLine 811 (all staff and students)
 - 5.2 Member and Family Assistance Program (STF members) 1-833-485-4245
 - 5.3 Employee Family Assistance Program (CUPE Members and Out of Scope Staff) 1-866-644-0326
 6. Guidelines for Work Refusal Due to COVID-19
 - 6.1 Section 3-31 of The Saskatchewan Employment Act states that an employee may

refuse to perform any particular act or series of acts at a place of employment if the employee has reasonable grounds to believe that the act or series of acts is unusually dangerous to the employee's health or safety or the health or safety of any other person at the placement of employment until:

- 6.1.1 Sufficient steps have been taken to satisfy the employee otherwise; or
 - 6.1.2 The Occupational Health and Safety Committee (OH&S) has investigated the matter and advised the employee otherwise.
- 6.2 An employee's right to refuse to perform work as a result of COVID-19 will be contingent upon factors including (but not limited to) the following:
- 6.2.1 the state of the COVID-19 situation in the employee's particular community and workplace at the time the refusal to work is being exercised;
 - 6.2.2 the age and health of the specific employee;
 - 6.2.3 the type of workplace where the employee usually performs their functions;
 - 6.2.4 the specific field of work and their normal duties or tasks;
 - 6.2.5 the measures adopted by the Division to prevent the transmission of COVID-19, including workplace hygiene and personal protective equipment (PPE), where applicable;
 - 6.2.6 whether or not an employee has been diagnosed with COVID-19;
 - 6.2.7 whether the employee or the circumstances fall in one of the legislative exceptions to the right to refuse unsafe work; and
 - 6.2.8 any other factually relevant considerations in assessing whether there is a hazard, a risk or a danger.
- 6.3 If an employee has reasonable grounds to believe they have been asked to perform an unusually dangerous act, the employee shall notify their principal/supervisor, the applicable Superintendent of Education with responsibilities for school operations and the Human Resources Manager.
- 6.4 Following notification, the school OHS committee will investigate the concern and communicate the decision to the above noted Division office staff.