

SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 73 (KAMLOOPS/ THOMPSON)

# **Pandemic Response Plan**

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September 21, 2009

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### **Introduction**

An influenza pandemic is an outbreak occurring over a larger geographical area, often worldwide, affecting a large proportion of the population with elevated mortality rates. Three pandemics have occurred in the last century, the Spanish (1918), the Asian (1957) and the Hong Kong (1968). The Spanish Flu pandemic of 1918 resulted in approximately 40-50 million deaths world wide.

The World Health Organization (WHO) has determined the H1N1 virus is a pandemic, based on the WHO's pandemic definition. At this time, WHO considers the overall severity of the influenza pandemic to be moderate. Based on experience from the Southern Hemisphere, Interior Health expects the spread of H1N1 to increase rapidly during the fall, 2009.

Contingency planning is essential for an effective response.

### **Pandemic Planning Committee/Emergency Response Team (ERT)**

A committee was developed under the direction and leadership of Dr. Terry Sullivan, Superintendent of Schools, 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 Committee:

Dr. Terry Sullivan, Superintendent of Schools  
Kelvin Stretch, Secretary-Treasurer  
Ross Spina, Assistant Superintendent-Secondary Education  
Karl deBruijn, Assistant Superintendent-Elementary Education  
Marilyn Hogg, Assistant Superintendent-Student Support Services  
Dan Cairnie, Assistant Superintendent, Human Resources  
Art McDonald, Director of Facilities and Transportation  
John Cuzzola, Director of Information Technology  
Trina Cassidy, Director of Finance  
Michelle Marginet, Manager Health and Safety

School District No. 73 is very grateful to Cathy Shether, Child Youth Program Consultant, Interior Health, who has provided planning tools, expertise, advice and ongoing support to the committee during this process.

### **What is an Influenza Pandemic?**

- A pandemic is a worldwide outbreak due to the spread of a new virus.
- Pandemics can happen when an animal virus mixes or changes to result in a new virus.
- This new virus is capable of person-to-person spread because most people have little or no immunity to it.
- 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.

## 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 School District No 73 doing?

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

- Education on hand washing and cough/sneeze etiquette
- Installation of soap dispensers in classrooms that have a wash sink
- Increased contact surface disinfection
- Education of students if 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 School District No. 73 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 mortality, morbidity, illness, 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

<i>Pre-Pandemic Activities</i>	<i>Responsibilities</i>
<b>1. Planning and Coordination</b>	
a. Responsibility for SD No. 73 plan activation	Superintendent of Schools
b. Update <i>Emergency Procedures Manual</i> to include a section on pandemic influenza	OH&S
c. Incorporate responsibilities and authorities of Ministry of Health / Interior Health and Ministry of Education in development and implementation of Pandemic Response Plan	Superintendent, OH&S
d. Advise staff of pandemic plan sent in conjunction with updated <i>Emergency Procedures Manual</i> <sup>1</sup>	Principal, Managers, Directors
e. Plan for an isolation room for staff and students that become ill with flu-like symptoms while at work/school (See <i>Separating Ill Students and Staff</i> )	Principals, Managers, Directors
f. Educate and equip person(s) to care for ill students until parent arrives. (See <i>Separating Ill Students and Staff</i> ). Manager of OH&S will assist with this function.	Principals, Managers, Directors
<b>2. Continuity of Student Learning and Core Operations</b>	
a. Consider impact of varying levels of student and staff absences and school closures	Assistant Superintendents, Principals, Managers, Directors
b. Consider and develop alternative procedures to ensure continuity of education	Assistant Superintendents, Principals
c. Develop cross training plans for essential services	Facilities Manager's, HR, Directors of Finance / IT
d. Develop a continuity of operations for essential services:	
i) Education	Assistant Superintendents
ii) Payroll	Director of Finance
iii) Custodial	Manager of Operations
iv) Communications (IT, Synervoice)	Director of IT, Superintendent, Assistant Superintendents
v) Transportation	Manager of Transportation
<b>3. Infection Control Policies and Procedures</b>	
a. Implement infection control practices and procedures that help limit the spread of infection	OH&S, Manager of Operations
b. Ensure that schools and facilities have an adequate supply of hand soap and paper towels	Manager of Operations
c. Order additional cleaning supplies and ensure custodial staff are trained in pandemic cleaning procedures	Manager of Operations
d. Advise staff and students that are sick with flu like symptoms to remain at home	Principals, Managers, Directors
e. Educate children and staff on proper hand washing and cough/sneeze etiquette <sup>1</sup>	Principals, Teachers, Managers, Directors

<b><i>Pre-Pandemic Activities</i></b>	<b><i>Responsibilities</i></b>
f. Maintain a healthy work environment by posting tips on how to stop the spread of germs <sup>1</sup> _____ → g. Advise the school public health nurse when ≥10% of school population is away ill. _____ →	Principals, Teachers, Managers, Principals
<b>4. Communication Planning</b> a. Develop and maintain contacts with MHO, Child Youth Program Consultants, Ministry of Education, and City Officials _____ → b. Post relevant information SD NO.73 Website on Pandemic Planning _____ → c. Establish 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. _____ → d. Advise Board of Education, Managers and School Administration on influenza surveillance and preventative measures _____ → e. Monthly topic at District Health and Safety Committee meeting. _____ → f. Advise staff, students and families of SD NO.73 Website and <i>Synervoice</i> . _____ → g. Ensure that parents/guardians have provided up to date contact information to the school. _____ → h. Discuss Pandemic Influenza with staff including prevention, signs symptoms and family preparedness <sup>1</sup> _____ → ❖ at your health and safety committee meetings ❖ and at staff meetings i. Media communications _____ →	Superintendent, OH&S Director of IT, OH&S <i>Synervoice</i> ; Principals may be required to close schools under advisement of Superintendent or designate. OH&S OH&S Principals, Managers, Directors Principals Principals, Managers, Directors Superintendent (or designate)
<b>5. Educate Staff / Student / Families</b> Personal Planning articles, home hygiene, etc. in school newsletter <sup>1</sup> . _____ →	Principals, Managers, Directors

## **Pandemic Period**

<b><i>Pandemic Activities</i></b>	<b><i>Responsibilities</i></b>
<b>1. Planning and Coordination</b> a. If school trips are planned, determine how children will be isolated and sent home should they become ill with flu like symptoms. _____ → b. Closing of schools may be required. _____ → c. School trips and school evening user groups may be cancelled. _____ →	OH&S, Principals (See <i>Separating Ill staff and Students</i> ) Superintendent, Assistant Superintendents, Principals Superintendent, Principals

<b><i>Pandemic Activities</i></b>	<b><i>Responsibilities</i></b>
d. Schools may be used by officials for clinics, hospitals, daycare centres etc. _____ → e. Depending on staffing or student shortages, classes may need to be combined _____ → f. Bus routes may need to be combined due to driver and/or student shortages. _____ →	Ministry of Health, City of Kamloops, Superintendent  Principals  Manager of Transportation
<b>2. Continuity of Student Learning and Core Operations</b> a. Evaluate capability of student learning continuity: adjust as needed _____ → b. Reinforce cross training to ensure continuity of core operations i. Education _____ → ii. Payroll _____ → iii. Custodial _____ → iv. Communications (IT, Synervoice) _____ → c. Schools may be closed _____ → d. School trips may cancelled _____ →	Assistant Superintendents, Principals  Assistant Superintendents Director of Finance Manager of Operations Director of IT, Superintendent, Assistant Superintendents Principals (under advisement of Superintendent or his designate). Use of <i>Synervoice</i> Ministry of Health, Superintendent, OH&S, Principals
<b>3. Infection Control Policies and Procedures</b> a. Continued use of infection control practices and procedures that help limit the spread of infection _____ → b. Ensure that schools and facilities have an adequate supply of hand soap and paper towels _____ → c. Advise staff and students that are sick with flu like symptoms to remain at home _____ → d. Restriction of community, volunteer and visitors to schools and facilities _____ → e. Rigorous cleaning of schools and contact surfaces _____ → f. Audit infection control practices. _____ → g. Plan for children away on school trips to be isolated and/ or sent home if they become ill _____ → h. Ongoing Education for children and staff on proper hand washing and cough/sneeze etiquette <sup>1</sup> _____ → i. Advise the school public health nurse when ≥10% of school population is away ill. _____ → j. Separation of ill students and staff until they can be sent home. _____ →	OH&S, Manager of Operations Manager of Operations Principals, Managers, Directors Principals, Managers, Directors Manager of Operations OH&S, Manager of Operations Principals, OH&S (See <i>Separating Ill Students and Staff</i> ) Principals, Teachers, Managers, Directors Principals Principals, Managers, Directors
<b>4. Communication Planning</b> a. Media communications _____ →	Superintendent or designate

<i><b>Pandemic Activities</b></i>	<i><b>Responsibilities</b></i>
b. Continue to work closely with MHO, Child Youth Program Consultants, Ministry of Education, and City Officials. → c. Maintain and evaluate SD NO.73 Website for information on Pandemic Planning → 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. → e. Continue to provide the Board of Education, Managers and School Administrators with information on influenza surveillance and preventative measures. → f. Remind staff, students, volunteers and families of SD NO.73 Website <sup>i</sup> → g. If school is open, provide information in school newsletters <sup>i</sup> →	ERT Superintendent, OH&S, <i>Synervoice</i> ; Principals (under advisement of Superintendent or designate) Superintendent, OH&S Principals, Managers, Directors Principals
<b>5. Educate Staff/Student/Families</b> a. If school is open, increase awareness by informing through bulletins etc., advise of School District Website, communicate with DPAC →	Principals

## Post-Pandemic Period

<i><b>Post-Pandemic Activities</b></i>	<i><b>Responsibilities</b></i>
<b>1. Planning and Coordination</b> a. Re-opening of schools → b. Resumption of business activities → c. Depending on staffing shortages, classes may need to be combined → d. Plan for Bus driver shortages and combining routes →	ERT, Principals ERT, Principals, Managers, Directors Principals Manager of Transportation
<b>2. Continuity of Student Learning and Core Operations</b> a. Evaluate capability of student learning continuity: adjust as needed. May take some time for schools to be re-opened → b. Communications (IT, Synervoice) → c. Resumption of school classes and activities →	Assistant Superintendents, Principals Superintendent, Director of IT, OH&S Superintendent, Assistant Superintendents, Principals
<b>3. Infection Control Policies and Procedures</b> a. Continue with infection control practices and procedures that help limit the spread of infection → b. Ensure that schools and facilities have an adequate supply of hand soap and paper towels → c. Advise staff and students that are sick with flu like symptoms to remain at home → d. Continue to audit infection control →	OH&S, Manager of Operations Manager of Operations Principals, Managers, Directors OH&S, Manager of Operations

<b><i>Post-Pandemic Activities</i></b>	<b><i>Responsibilities</i></b>
e. Ongoing education for children and staff on proper hand washing and cough/sneeze etiquette f. Advise the school public health nurse when $\geq 10\%$ of school population is away ill. g. Separate ill students and staff.	Principals, Teachers, Managers, Directors Principals Principals, Managers, Directors
<b>4. Communication Planning</b> a. Media communications b. Continue to work closely with MHO, Child Youth Program Consultants, Ministry of Education and City Officials c. Maintain and evaluate SD No. 73 website for information on Post- Pandemic Recovery Phase. 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 e. Prepare for Critical Incident Response if there have been deaths among students and staff.	Superintendent (or designate) OH&S Superintendent, Director of IT, OH&S <i>Synervoice</i> ; Principals Assistant Superintendent – Student Support Services, Critical Incident Response team, Principals
<b>5. Educate Staff / Student / Families</b> a. Direct staff, students and families to information on SD No. 73 website b. Use school newsletter to provide information to students and families <sup>i</sup> c. Keep staff informed	Principals, Managers, Directors Principals Principals, Managers, Directors (through safety committee meetings and staff meetings)

## **Roles and Responsibilities**

### **Superintendent of Schools**

1. SD NO.73 Pandemic Plan Team Lead
2. Activate School District No. 73 Pandemic Plan.
3. Direct school closures.
4. Key spokesperson for school related pandemic issues.

### **Assistant Superintendents, Elementary, Secondary, Student Support**

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

### **Communication**

1. The Superintendent of Schools (or designate) is the spokesperson for all *school district* related pandemic issues.

2. The Regional Medical Health Officer is the spokesperson for all pandemic health issues.
3. Continuation of the SD No. 73 H1N1 Website.
4. Implementation of *Synervoice* communication system.

### **Principals and Supervisors**

1. Educate all staff and students about proper hand washing practices. Resources are available on the SD No. 73 H1N1 area of the website.
2. Educate all staff and students about cough/sneeze etiquette. Resources are available on the SD No. 73 H1N1 area of the website.
3. Ensure that staff and students do not attend work or school when exhibiting flu like symptoms.
4. Separate students that become ill at school until they can be sent home.
5. Discuss pandemic planning at monthly safety committee meetings.
6. Advise DPAC and parents about School District No. 73 plans for pandemic influenza, including website communications and personal preparedness.
7. If greater than 10% of the school population is away, report to the School Public Health Nurse and to the assistant superintendent.
8. Ensure that rigorous cleaning and infection control practices are happening in the schools and facilities.
9. Provide a monthly communication in school newsletter on pandemic planning and preparedness, including information on SD No.73 website. Information will be provided by the Manager OH&S for this purpose.
10. Ensure that parents/guardians have provided up to date contact information to the school.

### **Director of Facilities and Transportation**

1. Continuation of core building functions.
2. Transportation plan for rural students.

### **Manager of Health and Safety**

1. Develop and maintain pandemic plan with input from pandemic planning committee and key stakeholders.
2. Provide key information to the Board of Education on pandemic response plan.
3. Provide district wide educational support, advice and expertise to schools and facilities.
4. Maintain liaisons with other school districts, Health Authorities and city officials.
5. Develop, implement and audit infection control plan.
6. Advise and report to the District Health and Safety committee on plans and preparedness.

7. Provide schools with educational materials and monthly information for school newsletters, staff and student education and safety committee meetings.

### **Operations Manager**

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

### **Information Technology Director**

Develop and maintain electronic communication.

### **Director of Finance**

Develop and implement key financial functions.

### **Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources/ Manager of Human Resources**

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

### **School District No. 73 Reporting Requirements**

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

### **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 2 metres 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.

## **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?**

1. Wash hands often. When soap and water are not available, use alcohol based disposable hand wipes or gel sanitizers.
2. 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.
3. Avoid touching eyes, nose or mouth. A person can become ill by touching a contaminated surface and then touching their eyes, nose or mouth.
4. 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.
5. 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 ( $\geq 60\%$  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

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<sup>i</sup> Information provided by Manager of Health & Safety and posted on SD No. 73 website