



The Northwest Catholic District School Board

Pandemic Action Plan

Purpose

This plan has been developed to assist Administration and Principals in preparing for and managing the impact of a health related emergency. With the existing threat of an influenza pandemic, the Board recognizes the need for preparedness. The plan was designed to provide for the continuity of instruction, and the continued safety of staff and students in the event of a pandemic or other health related emergency. In the event of an emergency, such as a flu pandemic, our schools and Board offices will be subject to higher than normal staff and student absenteeism, interruptions to transportation, and the closure of schools/Board offices.

This plan includes guidelines and steps each school/Board office should take in the event of outbreak or threat of an outbreak. It will be subject to revisions pending wider research regarding ongoing events world-wide and nationally. This document therefore, is a working document that will be updated as needed.

The World Health Organization (WHO) has identified 6 phases of an influenza pandemic. Each phase reflects risk to human health. The Canadian and Ontario Government is using the WHO pandemic phases to assess the risk in Canada. Ontario's Chief Medical Officer of Health will declare each phase using the WHO model. The Board will take appropriate action pending which phase is designated. Table 1 below identifies and describes each pandemic period and phase.

The Ontario Government predicts that 20-60% of the working population will be unable or unwilling to work for 2 to 4 weeks at the height of a severe pandemic wave. It is estimated that there will be several waves, lasting about 8 weeks per wave.

Table 1 WHO Pandemic Periods and Phases

Period	Phase	Description
Interpandemic Period	Phase 1	No new influenza virus subtypes have been detected in humans. An influenza virus subtype may be present in animals, the risk of human infection is low.
	Phase 2	No new influenza virus subtypes have been detected in humans. However, a circulating animal influenza virus subtype poses a substantial risk of human disease.
Pandemic Alert Period	Phase 3	Human infection(s) with a new subtype, but no human-to- human spread, or at most rare instances of spread to a close contact.
	Phase 4	Small cluster(s) with limited human-to-human transmission but spread is highly localized, suggesting that the virus is not well adapted to humans
	Phase 5	Larger cluster(s) but human-to-human spread still localized, suggesting that the virus is becoming increasingly better adapted to humans, but may not yet be fully transmissible (substantial pandemic risk).
Pandemic Period	Phase 6	Increased and sustained transmission in general population.
Postpandemic period	Phase 7	Return to interpandemic period.

Source: World Health Organization 2005

INTERPANDEMIC PERIOD: Planning and coordinating occurs during this phase. Schools and Board offices become prepared. staff, students, and parents become well informed and understand their roles before, during and after a pandemic.

Inter-pandemic Period: Phase 1 & 2	
PHASE 1 Prevention	<p>Educate the Board's community on the importance of influenza and novel virus surveillance.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Regular monitoring of the school communities may mitigate the spread of influenza. <p>Educate Board's community on preventative measures to be taken.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Educate students and staff on the importance of frequent and appropriate hand washing. • Encourage staff and students to get the flu vaccine.
PHASE 2 Control	<p>Review infection control procedures, educate Custodial staff on increased vigilance.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Custodial staff review cleaning practices, and receive enhanced infection control procedures. ▪ Staff are informed of infection control and taking preventative measures. <p>Create communication strategies to students and parents in the community.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Prepare educational sheets to have ready for circulation to staff and students.

Pandemic Alert Period: Heighten awareness and take extra precautionary measures in Schools and Board Offices.

Pandemic Alert Period Phase: 3, 4 &5	
PHASE 3 Reinforcement	<p>Educate and reinforce reporting requirements.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Principal to report to Health Unit and Board (10% of staff and students absent). <p>Communicate to staff.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Encourage vigilance in hand washing techniques. ▪ Encourage use of all preventative programs. ▪ Reinforce cross training of jobs to ensure essential services. ▪ Check with suppliers. ▪ Enhance training / communication with custodians to ensure a high standard of infection control, and to ensure there are proper procedures in place to respond to an outbreak.
PHASE 4 Action	<p>Communicate to Parents.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage parents to find alternate child care options. • Continue to provide ongoing briefings to staff. <p>Obey all Medical Officers orders.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Custodians will monitor and may implement preventative cleaning practices. <p>Follow identified precautionary measures.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Order additional supplies to ensure business continuity • Ensure staff availability to remain operational. • Transportation – notify bus contractors if required.
PHASE 5 Action	<p>Communications.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue all procedures in Phase 4. • EAP, confirm additional hours.

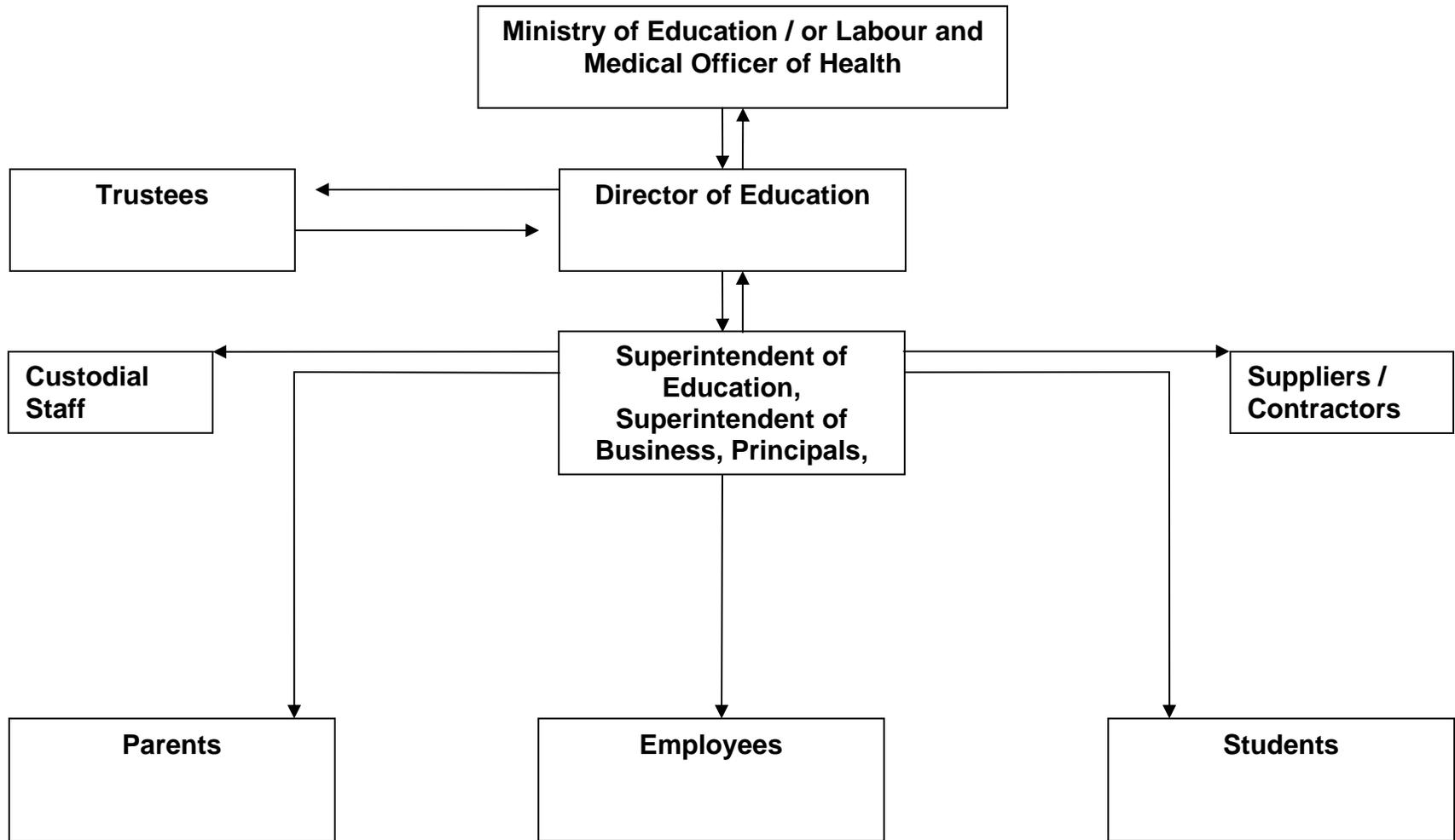
Pandemic Period: Cases have been confirmed in our area.

Pandemic Period: Phase 6 Implement plan	
PHASE 6 Action	<p>Comply with Medical Officer of Health orders.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Schools will most likely remain open, however, if we close schools, they may be commandeered to provide functions under the Medical Officer of Health such as clinics, dissemination points, day care centres etc. <p>Rigorous Infection Control procedures implemented.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Custodial staff may be directed to implement rigorous cleaning practices, depending on severity. <p>Communication</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Prepare for the possibility of school and Board office closures, pending severity.• Communicate closure to staff, parents if necessary.• Step up communications day by day, hour by hour if necessary.• Notify community use of school users of possibility of restricting or cancelling access to the school. <p>Convene meetings with key staff members / Trustees to review to action plan.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• May restrict and or cancel community, volunteers, or visitor access.• Provide direction and information to key staff members / Trustees on business continuity. <p>Travel restrictions may be implemented.</p>

Post Pandemic Period: The pandemic has been abated.

Post Pandemic Period: Phase 7	
PHASE 7	<p>Determine staffing needs based on returning student population, Note: a person can be infectious for up to 21 days from when they first display symptoms.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Assess capacity of staff to resume normal school operations <p>Follow the advice of Chief Medical Officer in managing return to work.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Resume rigorous cleaning policy.• Communicate to parents and staff. <p>Crisis Recovery - plan for crisis management & recovery.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Monitor and support the well being of staff/students.• Plan for loss of staff/students.• Post EAP information – plan for increased usage= cost.• Make educational materials available to staff and students• Plan for long term effects. <p>Evaluate the success of the pandemic plan and make adjustments.</p>

RESPONSE FLOW CHART



ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Pandemic Team

Director of Education
Superintendent of Education
Superintendent of Business
Human Resources
Designated Trustee

The purpose of the Pandemic Team is to provide direction and guidance to the Board and staff in the event of a community pandemic by:

- Ensuring a systematic coordinated response that ensure the safety of students, staff and school properties.
- Ensuring clarity in all communities.
- Providing a forum for effective problem solving.
- Minimizing any detrimental effect to the system.
- Collaborating with community agencies as necessary.
- Coordinating an expeditious and normal return to school functions.
- Participating in any or all debriefing processes.

Director of Education

- Will receive direction, and information from the Chief Medical Officer of Health;
- Communicate directly with the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Labour and other Boards if necessary.
- Ensure all communication directives are communicated to Trustees, staff and community.
- Monitor the status of the school Communities.
- Convene Trustees, Senior Administrators, Management, Principals and other key staff members if and when required.
- Monitor the situation on a daily basis and provide regular updates.
- Handle all press releases, press conferences, newspaper, radio, and television advertisements that are only related to the operation of schools and Board function as directed by the Board. **NOTE:** The Chief Medical Officer of Health in conjunction with the Health Unit will communicate with the media in all other matters.

Superintendent of Education

- Give direction and communication to Principals and Vice-Principals as per determined by the Pandemic Team.
- Is the designate in charge in the absence of the Director of Education.
- Is the designate in charge in the absence of the Superintendent of Business.
- Report back to the Pandemic Team.

Superintendent of Business

- Work in conjunction with school Principals to develop rigorous cleaning procedures, done in advance of Phase 4.
- Give direction in cleaning /disinfection schedule to Principals.
- Develop a letter and send to all community school users and permit holders, to indicate that the pandemic may result in school closures.
- Is the designate in charge in the absence Superintendent of Education.
- Communicate with Suppliers, and bussing companies.
- Report back to the Pandemic team.

Human Resources Administrator

- Work directly with the Pandemic team, take direction and implement the plan as directed by the Team.
- Monitor voicemail and email regularly throughout the day to ensure communications are received in a prompt manner.
- Prepare and distribute communications.
- Assist in the preparation of School and Board office closure.

Principals and Vice Principals

- Monitor voicemail and email regularly throughout the school day to ensure communications are received in a prompt manner.
- Monitor symptoms and advise staff to report any flu like symptoms to the office.
- Continue to report absenteeism (10%) to the Health unit (advise the Superintendent of Education when a report to the Health Unit has been made).
- Follow all safe Schools and school closure procedures when necessary.
- Identify any areas of concern to Superintendent or designate.
- Facilitate and cooperate with community agencies in school utilization issues.
- Isolate ill students until parent or guardian can pick the child up.
- Promote Ministry of Health guidelines to staff.

Designated Services

The Board will take direction from the Ministry of Health or Ministry of Labour with regard to the designation of essential services.

Designated employees are expected to report to work. Where their safety may be in jeopardy, the Director will advise on their needs. Some sites may be appropriated by community agencies, (ie: triage centres, information depots, crucial supply depots) therefore, adequate staffing must be maintained.

Processing of regular employees salary will be maintained at the Board office or by a remote site by the Business Administrator or designate (Manager of Finance or Superintendent of Business).

The Manager of Information Systems will be needed to maintain systems, and provide support as required.

Teachers

Teachers (including Supply and Long Term Occasional Teachers) Must;

- Notify such person as is designated by the Board if the teacher is to be absent from school and the reason therefore, (s264).
- Carry out the supervisory duties and instructional program assigned to the teacher by the Principal and supply such information related thereto as the Principal may require (Reg. 298).
- Ensure proper procedures are followed during this process.
- Direct enquires to the Principal or Vice Principal.

Support Staff

- Ensure proper procedures are followed.
- Direct enquires to the Principal or Vice Principal.

All Employees

When an outbreak occurs, communication is essential. Employees play a vital role in educating and disseminating accurate information. The control of influenza diseases is the responsibility of all employees of the Northwest Catholic District School Board. Maintaining proper immunizations, applying hygiene principles when exposed to viruses, bacteria and body fluids requires knowledge, vigilance and personal responsibilities.

Travel Restrictions

To contain the spread of influenza and protect the health of staff and students, travel restrictions may be implemented. Depending on the severity, when pandemic phase 6 is reached in a specific area, staff may be restricted from travelling to that area. Likewise, dependent upon severity student travel to specific areas may be restricted. The Director of Education or designate will, in consultation with the pandemic team, decide to restrict travel.

PREPAREDNESS FOR CUSTODIAL STAFF

Phase 1

- Educate Custodial staff on proper hand washing – provide posters for custodial rooms.
- Emphasize proper cleaning techniques on disinfecting, washrooms, surfaces, door hardware and light switches.

Phase 2

- Train Custodial staff on enhanced approach to washroom sanitation with emphasis on chemical contact time and workflow procedures.
- Order disinfectant cleaner stock for each school.

Phase 3

- Custodians receive continued training on procedures for disinfecting contact surfaces.
- A schedule will be developed for each school on rigorous cleaning/disinfecting surfaces. ie; the Head Custodian will disinfect and sanitize surfaces every hour.

Phase 4

- Promote concentrated effort by all staff to prioritize the disinfection of contact surfaces while letting other duties lag.
- Order a supply of washroom paper towel to stockpile at each school.
- Order a new disinfectant for the system as a second wave of attack against more resistant virus.

Phase 5

- Implement rigorous cleaning/disinfecting schedule for each school.

School Closure

Under the authority of the *Health Protection and Promotion Act*, the Medical Officer of Health (MOH) has the authority to implement public health measures (e.g. isolation, quarantine, or school closures) in the local jurisdiction.

In the case of an influenza pandemic, the decision to use particular public health measures will be made by the Ontario Chief Medical Officer of Health, in consultation with Ministry of Health. This will lead to consistency in the application of measures across the province, and thereby help to ensure public confidence, compliance and reduce confusion. The specific timing for the implementation of a measure may vary across the province, as this depends on the phase and severity of the pandemic in each local area.

Alternatively, the Board might decide to close schools individually, or en masse, if they are severely impacted by pupil or teacher absenteeism. Teacher absenteeism may impact on the ability of the school to operate safely, see below for staff threshold:

St. Michael's School

9 Teachers
1 Custodian
1 Secretary
1 Principal / or Vice Principal

Our Lady of the Way School

4 Teachers
2 Educational Assistants
1 Custodian
1 Principal

St. Francis School

10 teachers
1 Educational Assistant
1 Secretary
1 custodian
1 vice-principal
1 principal

Sacred Heart School

13 Teachers
1 Secretary
2 Custodians
1 Vice Principal
1 Principal

St. Joseph's School

15 Teachers
5 Educational Assistants
2 Custodians
1 Vice Principal
1 Principal
1 Secretary

St. Patrick's School

7.5 teachers
4 Educational Assistants
2 Custodians
1 Secretary