

# PHCS Pandemic Plan

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## Pandemic Management

### Background

According to the CDC (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention,) An influenza pandemic is a global outbreak of a new influenza A virus that is very different from current and recently circulating human seasonal influenza A viruses. Pandemics happen when new (novel) influenza A viruses emerge which are able to infect people easily and spread from person to person in an efficient and sustained way. Different animals—including birds and pigs—are hosts to influenza A viruses that do not normally infect people. Influenza A viruses are constantly changing, making it possible on very rare occasions for non-human influenza viruses to change in such a way that they can infect people easily and spread efficiently from person to person. When a pandemic influenza virus emerges, the virus can spread quickly because most people will not be immune and a vaccine might not be widely available to offer immediate protection. Spread of a pandemic influenza virus may occur in multiple disease “waves” that are separated by several months. As a pandemic influenza virus spreads, large numbers of people may need medical care worldwide. Schools, childcare centers, workplaces, and other places for mass gatherings may experience more absenteeism. Public health and healthcare systems can become overloaded, with elevated rates of hospitalizations and deaths. Other critical infrastructure, such as law enforcement, emergency medical services, and transportation industry may also be affected.

### Goals

- Limit the number of illnesses
- Reduce the spread of the virus within school facilities
- Preserve continuity of essential school functions
- Minimize educational and social disruption
- Minimize economic and academic losses
- Work with local and state health departments to coordinate pandemic plans

### Procedures

- Ensure that staff members are trained in preventative measures such hygiene & respiratory etiquette and universal precautions.
- Ensure that staff members understand early detection and report any children exhibiting signs of illness to the school nurse.
- School campus will closely monitor attendance of students and staff and report findings.
- Set up prominent notices at all entry points to facility, advising staff, students and visitors not to enter if they have symptoms of influenza.
- Ensure that all personnel are informed with latest developments of any pandemic episode.

- Maximize communication with parents and school community related to health and safety and any pandemic episode. Educate each person about what they can do to prepare or respond to minimize health risks. Information may be disseminated through parent letters, mass communication service, news media, website postings, school newsletters or social media.
- Educate employees, students, parents and visitors on how to stop the spread of the virus and notices may be placed around the school (including entrances, notice boards, meeting rooms and restrooms.) Notices should contain information regarding hand hygiene, covering coughs and sneezes, and student spacing.
- Ensure maximum support and education for ill and affected children.
- Follow guidelines of local and state health departments related to school closings and guidelines for pandemic episode.
- Support and work with local/county/state departments in the event vaccinations are offered through school sites.
- Follow the health department recommendations/guidelines related to social distancing, extracurricular activities, and school closings.  
*Student spacing* refers to distancing individuals and strategies to reduce the spread of the virus between people; information should be distributed to all staff, students and parents.
- Space students' desks three (3) feet apart, in small pods or clusters.
- Discourage prolonged congregation in the hallways, lunch rooms, etc.
- Limit group activities and interaction between classes.
- Cancel school activities/events that place individuals in close proximity.

### School Cleaning

- Ensure adequate supplies of tissues, hand sanitizing gels, soap and water and cleaning supplies are available for employees and students.
  - Disinfecting shared work areas, counters, railings, and door knobs should be performed more frequently during the influenza pandemic.
- Filters of air conditioning systems should be cleaned and changed frequently
- Telephones should not be shared if at all possible.
- Where operationally possible, during the day increase ventilation to the facility to decrease spread of disease and following each school day the school may be thoroughly ventilated and cleaned (either opening all doors and windows or turning up the air conditioning/heating systems.)
- As a last resort and in consultation with public health officials, dependent upon the significance of the outbreak, consider if/when the school will close. School closures may actually increase disease transmission if not orchestrated correctly. Education, communication, and guidance to the community that closing schools is a last resort and is only effective for disease containment if the staff and students are directed to stay at home during the school closure.

## **Recovery**

In the event of a school closing, school recovery from an influenza pandemic will begin when school officials determine that normal supplies, resources and response systems can manage ongoing school activities. School officials will assess the economic and educational impact of the pandemic. The district will follow public health recommendations in the event specific actions are required to return to school including environmental sanitation. School opening will be communicated through local TV, radio stations, mass communication service, social media outlets, and the District's website.

### **Resources:**

<https://www.cdc.gov/flu/pandemic-resources/basics/faq.html>

<https://www.cdc.gov/flu/pandemic-resources/archived/schools-child-care-planning.html>

<https://www.cdc.gov/flu/pandemic-resources/index.htm>