

Frontier School Division

Pandemic Response Plan

EDITION 1



Approved by Frontier School Board, Motion #121-2009, September 17, 2009

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SECTION A: INTRODUCTION, LEADERSHIP AND PANDEMIC INFORMATION

1. Introduction

Overview

This document is Frontier School Division's Pandemic Response Plan. It responds to the global concern about pandemic influenza. It provides the initial mechanism to educate employees, students, parents, and community members about influenza and the planned response to this health risk. Included in the plan are key points such as infection control measures, communication processes, safety, maintenance of educational and administrative operations, and working relationships with local federal and provincial health professionals and authorities.

The Division appreciates the input from the many staff members and employee groups for their comments, advice, and editorial assistance in shaping this document. The final result is a response plan that will serve all schools and communities that form Frontier School Division.

Purpose

This Pandemic Response Plan has several purposes. They are to:

- Provide important information about pandemic to staff and community members.
- Address both proactive and reactive procedures in dealing pandemic preparedness.
- Provide a safe, orderly, and efficient transition from normal to emergency procedures for staff and students.
- Provide direction, guidelines, and checklists for addressing unique circumstances at the school, area, and Division level.
- Clarify communication processes to be used during an emergency.
- Ensure consistent and rational responses and action plans.
- Eliminate action contrary to Division mission, policies, and procedures.
- Identify decision making procedures and authorities in emergency situations.

Audience

In order of priority, the audiences for this response plan are:

- Schools, including all students and staff members,
- Staff members at the Area and Division level,
- Community members, including parents, leaders, and health professionals authorities.

Board Support and Direction

This response plan will be reviewed and approved as a working draft by the Board of Trustees at their September 2009 meeting. Further, the Board gave direction to Division leaders to ensure input is obtained from various employees groups and departments. Further, the Board expects this Pandemic Response Plan to be distributed and explained throughout the Division as soon as possible after the beginning of the school year. The Board will regularly and frequently monitor the implementation of this plan.

SECTION A: INTRODUCTION, LEADERSHIP AND PANDEMIC INFORMATION

2. Pandemic Planning Leadership

Membership

- Chief Superintendent
- Secretary-Treasurer
- Area Superintendent
- Director of Human Resources
- Assistant Superintendent, Technology
- Coordinator of Special Services

Alternate Membership

- Alternates shall be identified for each member in case of illness.

Mandate

The mandate of the Division is to continue to operate during a pandemic and to:

- provide a safe environment for students and staff before, during and following a pandemic
- maintain instructional services (e.g., teaching, curricular requirements, assessment, reporting, special services support)
- continue to provide essential operational services (e.g., supervision, transportation, communication, payroll, building security)
- communicate accurately and in a timely manner with management, staff, students and families regarding operations before, during and after a pandemic period
- track and monitor the activities and additional costs of responding to the pandemic

To fulfill this mandate, Frontier School Division will formulate a Pandemic Response Plan that address the needs of its staff, students and their families and that complements the work of the existing emergency response plan at each of its 41 schools. This plan will address the size and scope of the Division, the range of enrollment of its schools, the teamwork required between schools and school committees, linkages with community leaders such as Chief and Council and Mayor and Council, and the requirement to work closely and cooperatively with both federal and provincial health authorities.

The decision to close or re-open a school shall be based upon factual medical information and written direction of the local provincial or federal health authority. Division leadership personnel (principal, area superintendent, chief superintendent) shall work cooperatively with local and provincial health authorities. The Chief Superintendent shall formally communicate closure or re-opening of a school to staff members, parents, community leaders, and Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth.

Frontier School Division has assembled a Pandemic Leadership Group and assigned responsibility for coordinating:

- Preparation of *Pandemic Response Plan* for the Division and its schools.
- Preparedness activities.
- Response and recovery activities during and after a pandemic.

As required, additional input regarding the pandemic response plan will be sought from appropriate staff members, external resource people, representatives of employee groups and unions. This input will be provided to the Division Leadership Group.

Groups to contact:

- United Steel Workers
- Frontier Teachers Association
- Manitoba Teachers' Society
- Support Staff Liaison Committee
- Other

Communication Process

- The pandemic response plan will be reviewed by all schools, with the review led by the Principal,
- web site postings will be provided and updated monthly, or more frequently if required,
- written communication will be provided by the Chief Superintendent's office or identified delegate/alternate, and
- pandemic impact reports will be completed and submitted by principals and other supervisors as required or requested (impact form to be drafted and included in Appendix).

SECTION A: INTRODUCTION, LEADERSHIP AND PANDEMIC INFORMATION

3. Fundamental Information Regarding Pandemic Influenza

Source: Manitoba Education Citizenship and Youth, *Preparedness Guidelines for Manitoba School Divisions and Schools (K-12)*.

Education of Employees

This section provides fundamental information about influenza. This information serves the purpose of educating all employees about pandemic influenza.

What is Pandemic Influenza?

Pandemic influenza is an epidemic that spreads throughout the world. Influenza A is the type of influenza virus involved in all known influenza pandemics. Influenza A viruses can undergo major changes or shifts in genetic makeup, producing a completely new strain for which most people have little or no specific immunity. As a result, large numbers of individuals become infected as it spreads.

For an influenza virus to be considered a pandemic, it must be a new virus with the ability to spread efficiently among people, causing widespread illness and death.

While much has been learned from past pandemics in history (1918-19; 1957-58, and 1968-69), there is much we do not know and research is ongoing.

How is Influenza Spread?

The influenza virus enters the body through the nose, eyes or throat.

- When people with influenza cough or sneeze, large droplets containing the virus are produced and can travel up to one metre in the air.
- Inhaling these droplets or having them come into contact with your mouth, eyes or nose can result in infection. This can occur by:
 - Hand-to-hand contact with infected individuals, or by
 - Touching surfaces or handling objects contaminated by infected individuals.
- Infected persons can be contagious from the day before they develop symptoms and up to seven days afterwards (typically three to five days in healthy adults and up to seven days in children). This timeframe may be longer for children and people with decreased immune system functioning.
- Not everyone who comes in contact with influenza virus will become ill. However, they may still spread it to others.

What are the Symptoms?

Once infected with influenza, it usually takes from one to three days to develop symptoms. Symptoms include:

- fever and a cough often accompanied by one or more of the following:

- aching muscles and joints
- headache
- severe weakness and fatigue
- sore throat
- runny nose
- Children can have additional gastrointestinal symptoms such as nausea, vomiting and diarrhea, but these symptoms are uncommon in adults.

Generally, symptoms can last four to seven days. A cough and general fatigue may persist for several weeks. A fever over 38 degrees Celsius may not be present in children under 5 years of age or in the elderly.

Most people recover from influenza without medical intervention. However, some people, particularly the very young or old, and those with compromised immune systems, can develop complications including bacterial infections such as pneumonia, which can result in prolonged illness or even death.

How Will Pandemic Influenza Impact Us?

During a pandemic, it is expected there will be a greater extent of illness and death than experienced during an ordinary influenza season. However, most people who get ill will recover. Public health experts assume that:

- 35 per cent of people could become sick enough to miss at least one-half day or more of work.
- Of those who get sick, 0.5 per cent could die.

A pandemic may occur over a two-year period. It may occur in waves with each wave lasting six to eight weeks and separated by three to nine months. A second wave may cause more serious illness and deaths than the first.

It is anticipated there will be three months warning from the time a pandemic is declared by the World Health Organization until the virus arrives in Canada. This is based on the assumption that a pandemic will start elsewhere in the world, then spread to North America. It is possible the warning period will be shorter.

Educational continuity in schools could be impacted by:

- staff and students becoming ill at school,
- employee absenteeism,
- student absenteeism,
- interruption of services and supplies and reduction in outside supports,
- potential school closures,
- potential additional duties,
- financial losses or incremental costs,
- potential spread of infection at school.

Will Our Schools Close?

Schools will not automatically close. The working expectation is that schools will continue to operate and provide an environment that is as safe as possible during a pandemic. As much as possible, the decision to close the school should be a consultative process involving the Division and local health authorities. This process should result in a joint or mutually agreed upon decision and related action plans.

It is possible a school or schools in Frontier School Division may close if Manitoba public health officials order the temporary closure of all public facilities where people congregate, including schools, in the early stages of a pandemic, in an attempt to slow the spread and impact of the disease.

It is possible circumstances may cause a temporary, incidental closure of a school in Frontier School Division. This could be due to excessive employee absenteeism or a critical building system failure that results in the inability to maintain a safe environment for students. The Division will make this type of decision following the same procedure used for winter storms and other hazardous conditions.

Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth (MECY) or other government authorities could potentially ask a school in Frontier to close if the building is required for other purposes during a pandemic. Such a decision would be made collaboratively with the school division.

Although Manitoba Health and Healthy Living, Manitoba Emergency Measures Organization, and MECY have the authority to close schools for health, emergency response or educational reasons respectively, the working expectation is that decisions about school closure will remain a local responsibility as much as possible.

SECTION B: RESPONSIBILITIES, INFECTION CONTROL AND INFLUENZA PREVENTION

Division Responsibility to Students and Families

1. During a pandemic, every effort will be made to continue to offer school services as normally as possible.
2. The interest of students is the main focus in the event of a pandemic.
3. Students will be educated, at a developmentally-appropriate level, about flu prevention and symptoms before a pandemic, and will be encouraged to make appropriate personal health decisions during a pandemic.
4. Schools will provide students and parents/guardians with timely communication regarding the school's plans and expectations for continued instruction. (Appendix H, Guidelines for Parents)
5. Where possible, continuation of course work and assignments may be facilitated through independent course or subject work and technology.
6. Decisions on day-to-day instructional matters will be the responsibility of the school Principal and/or Area Superintendent with responsibility for that school.
7. Decisions to extend the term, revise exam schedules or alter the academic schedule will be made by superintendents and Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth.
8. Decisions will be made at the school level regarding students who have missed or not completed work due to illness, class cancellations, or other reasons connected to the pandemic.
9. In the event any schools close, schools will provide parents with as much lead time as possible, the reasons for the closure, and a realistic estimate of the duration of the closure.

Division Responsibility to Students with Special Needs

In accordance with Manitoba's Philosophy of Inclusion and requirement for appropriate educational programming, Frontier School Division will continue to consider all students with special needs, in the event of a pandemic.

Where students require additional services such as an instructional assistant to participate in a meaningful and safe way in the educational program, the services may be interrupted if key staff members are absent due to illness. Every effort will be made to meet with parents of students with exceptional needs and to develop plans for the event of widespread school closure or shortage of staff. Consideration will be made for the student's educational programming, the availability of alternate staff support and in some cases, transportation. Whenever possible, the planning will take place early, allowing parents to be involved and aware of potential issues that may interrupt their child's educational programming. In a pandemic situation, any potential health risk to the student will also be discussed with the family in developing a plan, and, as appropriate, consulting with a medical professional.

Family Responsibility

1. Section 2.62 of *The Public Schools Act* allows parents to keep children home from school if they are ill.
2. All students are to remain home and not attend classes if they are showing flu symptoms. Parents and guardians are to contact the school and inform the office of the reason for the student's absence.
3. If closure of their school is announced, parents are to:
 - Keep their children home during the closure.
 - Monitor the Division web site to determine the state of the pandemic alert at the school, access emergency information, and establish when they can return.
 - Monitor local community bulletin boards, television, and radio for announcements concerning their school.
 - Phone or contact the school, Area office, or Division office for further information.
4. Once a re-opening of the school has been announced, students will be expected to:
 - Report to class on the identified day.
 - If they are unable to report to class because they are in quarantine, nursing an infected person, or are ill with the pandemic influenza, they are to contact the school and inform the office of the reason for their absence.

Emergent Illness Among Students While at School

Schools will identify an area where children who become ill at school can be accommodated until their parents can be contacted to take them home.

Ill children will stay in a separate area and be kept a metre apart even if they are not displaying characteristic influenza symptoms. This serves to minimize the likelihood of transmission between those with influenza and those ill due to other causes.

Frontier School Division will communicate Manitoba Health and Healthy Living, First Nation Health (local), or First Nations Health Authorities information, advice and direction on return-to-school timelines to students and parents.

Potential Spread of Infection at School

Measures to reduce interpersonal exposure in Division buildings will be balanced with the need to maintain normal routines and school operations. The Division will:

- Establish a clear and well-communicated message that stresses the need for students and staff to stay home if they are displaying any flu-like symptoms. This plan will combat the phenomenon labelled “presenteeism” where sick students or staff members attend school and their physical presence poses a risk to healthy students and staff members.

- Minimize social interaction by:
 - Limiting visitor access to the school.
 - Limiting face-to-face meetings or number of persons in attendance.
 - Postponing some events that are open to the public and/or parents, including travel for school activities.
 - Increasing distance education and work-at-home options.
- Promote personal hygiene practices by:
 - Educating and reminding students and others of the importance of preventive measures.

Prevention

Steps can be taken to prevent people from becoming infected and from spreading infection to others. These steps may include:

- Making efforts to improve your general health status through healthy living behaviours such as exercising, eating well, getting enough sleep and not smoking.
- Washing your hands often and teaching others to do the same.
- Keeping your hands away from your mouth, nose and eyes.
- Not sharing eating utensils or drinks or school supplies such as pencils or rulers, or musical instruments with mouthpieces.
- Covering your cough with arm or elbow, rather than hand.
- Getting a vaccine (when available).
- Staying home if you are sick.
- Manitoba Health and Healthy Living's goal is to ensure all Manitobans can receive a pandemic vaccine as quickly as possible once a vaccine becomes available.

Refer to these handouts included in the government document "Preparedness Guidelines for Manitoba School Divisions and Schools (K-12):

- Appendix A– Hand Hygiene
- Appendix B – What can I do to prevent myself from getting infected with influenza during a pandemic?
- Appendix C – How can I care for myself when I have the flu?
- Appendix D – Building Hygiene

SECTION C: COMMUNICATION AND INFORMATION SHARING

Introduction and General Approach

In the event of a pandemic, all communications will come from the Chief Superintendent's department.

- The Chief Superintendent will be the official Division spokesperson through which information from the Division Pandemic Leadership Group and the Board of Trustees will be communicated to employees, students, parents/guardians before and during a pandemic. This approach is consistent with Policy C.2.E (Media Relations).
- The Division Leadership Group will review the latest information on the pandemic. Pandemic information will be obtained by consulting the federal and provincial regional health authorities, and reviewing material on the Manitoba Government, Manitoba Health and Healthy Living, and First Nations Health Authorities' websites.

Communication mechanisms will include:

- Division website information updated on a regular and timely basis,
- written communications such as memos, posters, etc. from the Chief Superintendent's department,
- local community bulletin boards,
- e-mail,
- telephone information from the school, Area office, and Division office, and
- radio and television for public service announcements.

Division Pandemic Response Plan for Employees, Parents and Students

Upon completion of the Pandemic Response Plan, the Pandemic Leadership Group will:

- present an overview of the plan at a Superintendents' meeting,
- Area Superintendents will review this document with principals,
- principals shall review this document with all staff and school committee members, and
- provide an article for publication in school newsletters and the Division web site, informing parents and students that a pandemic response plan is in place and will be activated if a pandemic is declared.

Pre-Pandemic Information for Employees

Once a pandemic is declared but not yet arrived in Manitoba (the pre-pandemic stage), the Division will review its pandemic response plan with all staff and school committee members.

The Division will provide its employees with reliable sources where they can find information on how to prepare themselves and their families for a pandemic and what to do if they become infected.

These sources will include:

- Manitoba Health and Healthy Living: www.gov.mb.ca/health/odm/index.html
- Government of Manitoba: www.gov.mb.ca/influenza/pandemic
- Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth: www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/policy
- Government of Canada: www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/cpip-pclcpi
- World Health Organization: www.who.int/csr/disease/avian_influenza/en

As appropriate, the Division will distribute materials from these sites. The communication mechanisms used will be those noted on page 10 of the document.

Pre-Pandemic Information for Parents and Students

Using information provided by the official spokesperson, Division schools will provide parents and students with reliable sources where they can find information on how to prepare themselves for a pandemic and what to do if they become infected. These sources will include those listed previously in this section under *Sharing Pre-Pandemic Information with Employees*. As appropriate, the Division will distribute materials from these sites.

Using the communication mechanisms cited on page 10, the Division will:

- Communicate the measures to remain operational and to provide a safe and healthy environment for employees and students.
- Explain how closures and other changes will be communicated to students and parents. (Appendix H, Guidelines for Parents)

Information for Employees During a Pandemic

Using the communication mechanisms cited on page 10, the Division will:

- Disseminate critical information about the pandemic to all of its schools and worksites.
- Keep employees informed of changes to operations within the school, area, and Division.

Information for Parents and Students During a Pandemic

Using information provided by the official spokesperson, Division schools will:

- Reinforce messages from the pre-pandemic phase.
- Keep parents and students informed of changes to school services. Messages will provide concise, factual information regarding:
 - the impact of the pandemic on the school, area, and Division,
 - what students/parents can expect from their school, area, and Division,
 - what they can do to work with their school, area, and Division, and
 - when suspended services or reduced services will be restored.

Communication mechanisms cited on page 11 will be used for this purpose.

Information for the Community and Regional Health Authority During a Pandemic

The Chief Superintendent, or designate, will communicate as necessary with the community and regional health authority regarding issues, needs identification, and support that Division schools may be able to provide.

Information for Employees, Parents, and Students After a Pandemic

Following a pandemic, Frontier School Division and its schools will:

- Communicate strategies for addressing missed instructional time or backlogged work.
- Communicate with employees, parents and students regarding the return to normal operations.
- Help students and their families by identifying community resources to help cope with loss and stress.
- Communicate information regarding ceremonies schools may hold to remember deceased employees or students, and in-class programs schools may hold to help students deal with stress and the impact of the pandemic.

SECTION D: HUMAN RESOURCES

Introduction

During a pandemic, the Division will implement measures to minimize or slow the spread of influenza within its facilities. Clear, well-communicated messages will stress that coming to work while sick is unacceptable. The definition of “sick” should follow guidelines for exclusion periods set out by Manitoba Health and Healthy Living. Messages will address compensation issues and assurances a system is in place to cover the work of those who are ill.

The Division will communicate Manitoba Health and Healthy Living advice on return to school and work timelines to staff, students and parents.

Division Responsibilities Concerning Environmental Health and Safety

The Division will:

- Continue, as far as reasonably practical, to provide a safe and healthy environment in order to continue normal operations during a pandemic.
- Rely on the appropriate public health authorities (e.g. Public Health Agency of Canada, Manitoba Health and Healthy Living, Regional Health Authorities, First Nation Health Authorities) to provide advice, guidance, and support to the Division on safety, health and environmental matters during a pandemic.
- Communicate with its schools and work sites regarding pandemic mitigation, preparedness, and response and recovery action.
- Respond to requests for assistance based on a risk assessment of the issue/hazards.
- Evaluate and promote measures that are proven effective during a pandemic in protecting employees as endorsed by the public health authorities of Manitoba.

Frontier School Division Responsibilities to Employees

The Division will:

- Continue to pay regular employees who would be scheduled to work if a school is closed. This decision will be reviewed as the duration of the closure is being assessed.
- Cover employees, who are unable to attend work due to illness, through the existing sick leave provisions in appropriate collective agreements or Division policies and procedures.
- Request employees to work from home, where appropriate.
- Maintain payroll, pension and benefits as a priority. In instances where inaccurate disbursements are being made, the Division will take corrective steps in the post pandemic stage.
- Educate employees on flu symptoms and require them to stay home if showing symptoms.

- Communicate income and benefit information to the affected employees in the event of a school closure.
- Consider deferring staff leaves for non-health reasons (e.g. professional development, vacation or other reasons), if staff members are needed to cover for absent employees in the event of a school closure.

Employee Responsibilities to Frontier School Division

At any time during or preparing for work, the employee is expected to:

- Immediately contact their supervisor if they are showing influenza symptoms for the required period as recommended by Manitoba Health and Healthy Living or the local health authority.
- Follow the directions of their supervisor, including immediately departing the school or work site, and contacting their physician or local health authority by telephone.

If a school or work site closure is announced while the employee is at work, the employee is expected to:

- Report to their supervisors/managers/administrators prior to leaving the school or work site.
- Follow their supervisor's/manager's/administrator's directions, such as reporting to a temporary reassignment, or remaining away from work until notified.
- Keep in contact with their supervisor/manager/administrator by phone or e-mail and establish when they are to return.

Once a re-opening of the school or work site is announced, the employee is expected to:

- Report to work on the identified day, unless they have been advised otherwise by their supervisor/manager/administrator.
- If they are unable to report, they are to contact their supervisor/manager/administrator to indicate the reason (e.g. under quarantine, nursing an infected person, are ill with the pandemic influenza, etc).

Response Plan for Employee Absenteeism

If the pandemic causes illness in 35 per cent of the population, employers should expect approximately 25 per cent of their staff to be away from work during the peak two weeks of a pandemic wave of activity. Public health officials are using 25 per cent absenteeism rates for planning purposes. Absenteeism among staff may be due to either personal or family illness.

The Division may consider the following measures in response to high rates of employee absenteeism:

- Identify or designate alternates for leadership positions and arrange for delegation of decision making and financial authority.
- Discuss the above arrangements with the staff currently filling leadership roles.
- Consider all employees' teaching, administrative or other skills and knowledge in order to determine how they can provide alternate leadership services.
- Consider the availability of all employees for the purposes of managing and re-assigning personnel as needed.

Response Plan for Administrative Activities Across the Division

The Frontier School Division may consider these strategies for addressing periods of high administrative absenteeism:

- Identify any administrative activities that might be added during a pandemic or might increase in terms of workload (i.e. contacting the parents of absent children, compiling and disseminating absentee information, etc.)
- Cross-train staff on any specialized or technical activities.
- Document location of key information and means of access (e.g. passwords, keys).
- Report extreme absenteeism to health officials for pandemic surveillance purposes. At a time of pandemic, Manitoba Health and Healthy Living will provide absenteeism reporting guidelines.

Response Plan for Teaching Activities

The Division may consider the following strategies for addressing periods of high teacher absenteeism:

Replacement Personnel

- Use administrative personnel, substitutes, retired teachers, parents, volunteers or education students to assist teachers, and have criminal record checks done well in advance.
- Have some people licensed on temporary permits in advance of the pandemic, and complete criminal record checks well in advance.

Alternative Service Delivery

- Combine similar grades, since student absenteeism will likely reduce class sizes.
- Provide alternate activities that can be accommodated by fewer teaching staff.
- Continue instruction for students who are home and well enough to do school work, including home work with phone or e-mail contact.

Scale Back Services

- Re-schedule, reduce, postpone or cancel classes or events when necessary.
- Close the school until service can resume at an acceptable level (as a last resort.)

Leadership Alternatives

During a pandemic, Division leaders may be unable to function due to illness. The following approaches outline alternative leadership approaches.

<u>Current</u>	<u>Alternative</u>
Chief Superintendent	Secretary-Treasurer and an Area Superintendent identified by the Board of Trustees
Area Superintendent	Another Area Superintendent(s), or retired superintendent through contracted services
Assistant Superintendent	Designated alternates (2)

Alternatives for all other positions are to be based upon the normal organizational hierarchy and succession plans of the Division and departments.

SECTION E: OPERATIONS AND SYSTEMS**Maintenance**

In the event of a pandemic, the Maintenance Department will:

Pre-Pandemic

- Document and review building maintenance activities and prioritize maintenance functions by the length of pandemic recovery time (a day, a week, two weeks, a month).
- Identify essential services to be continued in the event of a closure (e.g. heat, security).
- Review required changes to maintenance during a pandemic (e.g. increased cleaning).
- Cross-train maintenance staff with regard to any specialized or technical activities, including staff who normally perform other functions and work in other buildings.
- Prepare written instructions so that untrained employees or volunteers can complete some essential tasks.
- Document the locations of critical equipment, building systems (e.g. service panels) and means of accessing them (e.g. passwords, keys).

During a Pandemic, the Maintenance Department will:

- Maintain services as long as possible provided there are adequate supplies and staffing levels, and make cleaning of washrooms and public areas a priority.
- Promote building hygiene by following the measures outlined in Appendix D: Building Hygiene.
- Rely on major utility providers to provide service.
- Maintain only essential services in the event of a shutdown, with minimal to no snow clearing, maintenance, etc. done, and buildings will be monitored.

Refer to these handouts included in the government document “Preparedness Guidelines for Manitoba School Divisions and Schools (K-12):

- Appendix D– Building Hygiene

Transportation

In the event of a pandemic, the Transportation Department will make every effort to continue to provide busing service to students.

Staffing guidelines outlined in the Human Resources section of this manual will apply to employees in the Transportation Department.

Cleaning of buses will follow the guidelines outlined in the Maintenance section of this manual.

Secretary-Treasurer's Department

In the event of a pandemic, the Secretary-Treasurer's Department will make every effort to continue to provide busing service to students. In a pandemic, there will be a variety of financial implications for schools. These could include, for example:

- Incremental costs associated with preparing for, responding to and recovering from the emergency. This could include the cost of substitute staff, additional supplies, alternate instruction venues, counselling and communication associated with emergency responsibilities for the school population. If extended hours for child care centres located in the school are required, there may be additional overtime costs for custodians.
- Extra costs associated with duties assigned for the broader community (if any.)
- Budgeting processes
- Tracking preparation, response, and recovery activities and costs for:
 - Legal issues that may arise.
 - Reimbursement of eligible costs under any announced disaster recovery programs.
 - School insurance policies that may include business continuity insurance which normally covers temporary costs (e.g. temporary space) that arise from a disaster.
 - The school division will plan to track incremental costs (the extra costs due to pandemic activities, less any savings from not having to provide some services). This will be useful for planning purposes in future as well as in the event there is any level of compensation made available from the various levels of government.

Initially, Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth and Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC) will continue to fund school divisions during an emergency. However, funding will be contingent on a number of factors including reasonable efforts to maintain contact with students, continue instruction and provide opportunity for student learning and progress.

SECTION F: INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

In the event of a pandemic, the IT Department will:

- Keep the web space, core data network, e-mail and other systems operating.
- Maintain the IT server and network infrastructure without on-site staff, and from time to time, staff will come to work to perform some maintenance functions.
- Establish protocol for allowing IT staff access to computer locations in all Division sites in order to perform maintenance and recovery functions.
- Provide call centre infrastructure for an off-site systems support desk, student, staff and public queries and other functions.
- Provide emergency cell phone numbers to administrators.
- Provide administrative systems as defined by the requirements of the Secretary-Treasurer's department.
- Allow access to systems for staff to work at home, as appropriate and where approved.

SECTION G: RECOVERY**Recovery Plans**

A pandemic may come in two or more waves and last up to two years. It will impact the school division in a variety of ways, including:

- Significant loss of instructional time and backlog of work postponed due to the pandemic.
- Disruption of communication with students, families and others.
- Permanent loss of employees and their corporate knowledge due to death or disability.
- Psychological stress and low morale. Individuals' coping abilities will be challenged by a variety of issues such as: deaths of colleagues, friends and loved ones, financial hardship associated with unemployment, incomplete schooling and other issues.
- Additional costs to the school.

The Division will consider developing the following approaches as part of recovery plans:

- Implementing strategies to address missed instructional time or backlogged work.
- Continuing communications with employees, parents and students regarding the return to normal operations.
- Implementing programs for students and staff to help them deal with stress and the impact of the pandemic.
- Identifying resources for stress counselling for employees, students and their families.
- Recruiting and training of replacement employees and the temporary or permanent reassignment of employees to maintain operations.
- Compiling necessary information to participate in any financial recovery programs.

1. Information

Hand Hygiene

Hand-washing/hand hygiene reduces the number of micro-organisms on the hands and is the most important practice to prevent the spread of infection.

WHEN

Before:

- Direct hands-on care of others.
- Preparing, handling, serving or eating food.
- Feeding others.

After:

- Contact with items known or considered to be contaminated.
- Personal use of toilet, wiping nose or coughing.

PRODUCTS

Plain soap and water:

- Recommended for routine hand washing.

Alcohol-based hand rub:

- Products containing a minimum of 60% alcohol are an alternative when plain soap and water are not available, except if hands are visibly soiled.
- If hands are visibly soiled, heavy soiling should be removed before using alcohol-based hand rubs for maximum effectiveness.

HOW TO WASH YOUR HANDS

Using plain soap and water:

- Wet hands under warm running water. Use either liquid or bar soap.
- Apply soap and distribute over hands.
- Rub hands vigorously for 10 to 15 seconds to create a good lather.
- Using friction, cover all hand surfaces including wrists, fingernails, web spaces, thumbs and palms.
- Rinse under warm running water.
- Dry hands gently and thoroughly with a disposable towel.
- Turn off faucet using a clean disposable towel.

Using an alcohol-based hand rub:

- Apply two to three milliliters of the product to the palm of one hand.
- Rub hands together covering all surfaces including wrists, fingernails, web spaces, thumbs and palms.
- The product generally dries within 15 to 20 seconds.
- Ensure hands are completely dry before performing another task.

Note: Alcohol-based products are flammable.

Source: Manitoba Education Citizenship and Youth, *Preparedness Guidelines for Manitoba School Divisions and Schools (K-12)*.

What can I do to prevent myself from getting infected with influenza during a pandemic?

Public health officials expect that if a new type of influenza emerges and causes a pandemic, this virus will spread in a similar fashion to the influenza viruses that causes outbreaks each winter. Influenza is highly contagious so it spreads quickly in families and communities. There are, however, some steps you can take to reduce your risk of infection.

Improve your overall health.

In general, healthier people are better at fighting off disease. To stay healthy, you should eat healthy foods, get plenty of sleep, exercise and not smoke. Avoid heavy alcohol consumption and try to maintain a positive and balanced outlook.

Wash your hands often.

Washing hands is the most effective way of preventing the spread of disease. Get into the habit of washing your hands often with soap and warm water, scrubbing your wrists, palms, web spaces, thumbs, fingers, and nails for 10 to 15 seconds. Rinse and dry with a clean towel. This should be done especially before meals, after using the toilet, and after you cough, sneeze or blow your nose. Teach your children to do the same.

Avoid visiting people who have the flu if practical to do so.

This will help prevent you from becoming infected. This advice must be balanced with the need to provide support and care to sick people. Caregivers looking after sick people should wear a mask when coming face-to-face with a coughing individual to minimize influenza transmission.

Avoid large crowds.

Remember that large crowds are ideal for the spread of influenza, so consider staying at home. Wearing masks to prevent transmission of influenza is not helpful when it is circulating in the community.

Don't share eating utensils or drinks.

If a family member is sick, keep their personal items (ex. towels and toothbrushes) separate from those of the rest of the family.

Get a vaccine when available.

Vaccination is the principal measure for preventing influenza and reducing the impact of epidemics. Various types of influenza vaccines have been available for use for more than 60 years.

Take antivirals if recommended by your doctor.

Antivirals are drugs used for the prevention and early treatment of influenza. If taken shortly after getting sick (within 48 hours), they can reduce influenza symptoms, shorten the length of the illness and potentially reduce any serious complications. Antivirals work by reducing the ability of the virus to reproduce; however, they do not provide immunity from the virus.

Antiviral drugs, given at the onset of the disease, may assist but are not likely to be available in sufficient quantities to treat the majority of the population. Planning for antiviral use during a pandemic is ongoing at the national level; however, it is most likely that antiviral drugs will be used at the beginning of a pandemic to treat people who become ill pending the development of the vaccine.

What if I think I have the flu?

Most people with influenza recover without any serious problem. The disease can last for 4 to 7 days and leave a cough and tiredness for several weeks. In general, there is no specific treatment for influenza. Antivirals may occasionally be prescribed by your doctor. Antibiotics are not effective against the influenza virus, although, they will be effective against complications caused by bacteria such as pneumonia. Avoid going to work or social gatherings if you are ill. Wear a mask if you need to visit your doctor. At the time of a pandemic, Manitoba Health and Healthy Living will provide information on steps you can take to help care for yourself if you have influenza.

What if my child is sick?

Like with adults, most children get better from influenza without any special treatment. Sick children should be kept home from school and daycare. At the time of a pandemic, Manitoba Health and Healthy Living will provide information on steps you can take to help care for your children if they have influenza.

DURING A PANDEMIC, IT WILL BE IMPORTANT TO:

- Follow directions given by public health. These may change as more information becomes available about the characteristics of the particular virus causing the outbreak.
- Follow infection control procedures if caring for a person with influenza. Providing care to an individual with an influenza-like illness will be common during a pandemic. The likelihood of transmitting the disease is reduced by following basic precautions. Watch the Manitoba Health and Healthy Living website for updates at www.gov.mb.ca/health

See also *Questions and Answers: Public Health Measures, Vaccines and Antivirals during a pandemic*, online at <http://www.gov.mb.ca/influenza/pandemic>

Source: Manitoba Education Citizenship and Youth, *Preparedness Guidelines for Manitoba School Divisions and Schools (K-12)*.

How can I care for myself when I have the flu?

- Stay home and rest.
- Drink plenty of fluids.
- Take medication for your symptoms.

NOTE: Do not give children or teenagers any products containing aspirin or ASA (acetylsalicylic acid) as it can cause a very serious illness called Reye's syndrome, which affects the nervous system and liver.

- For a sore throat, gargle a glass of warm water mixed with a half-teaspoon of salt. Throat lozenges are also effective for relieving a sore throat.
- For a stuffy nose adults can take a decongestant, but consult with a health care professional such as a pharmacist, nurse or doctor. Children can be given saline nose drops.
- Wash your hands frequently.
- Ask for help – you may need to ask for help at home until you are feeling better.
- If you require further advice call **Health Links/info Sante** at **788-8200** (in Winnipeg) or toll-free **1-888-315-9257** (outside of Winnipeg) or a health care provider.

Should I wear a mask?

- Ill people or those caring for them may be advised to wear a surgical mask to reduce the spread of the disease.
- Wearing of masks by well people in the community is not recommended as a general measure. This is because it is unlikely to be sustainable for the entire duration of a pandemic. In addition, masks can provide false security and can lead to contamination unless properly handled.

When should I see a doctor?

If you or your child experiences any of the following:

- shortness of breath or difficulty breathing,
- chest pain or pressure,
- coughing up dark-coloured or bloody sputum,
- wheezing,
- extreme ear pain,
- fever for three or more days that is not going down or if you do not start feeling better in a few days,
- you have started to feel better and suddenly feel much worse,
- confusion, extreme drowsiness or difficulty waking up.

Source: Manitoba Education Citizenship and Youth, *Preparedness Guidelines for Manitoba School Divisions and Schools (K-12)*.

Building Hygiene

The following steps are recommended to maximize hygiene in schools during a pandemic. They focus on reducing the spread of viral infection. Most of these activities are standard in schools and should be undertaken routinely. These activities will be equally important during a pandemic. Building hygiene should be addressed in school contingency plans, including supply and human resource management.

General

- Surfaces must not show any visible soil before they are sanitized.
- Cleaning equipment should be maintained in a clean, dry state after use. Cloths, mop heads and other supplies should have single purpose use (floors or walls or furnishings only) and be changed when soiled after use.
- Waste baskets for disposal of soiled tissues are needed throughout the school, close to the point of use.

Products for Cleaning and Sanitizing

- Cleaning with detergent and water is generally acceptable.
- Commercial household products are acceptable to sanitize environmental surfaces when used according to manufacturer's instructions.
- To prepare a noncommercial sanitizing solution, use unscented chlorine bleach:
 - for wiping surfaces, etc. mix one tablespoon (15 millilitres) in four litres (3.5 quarts) of water,
 - for immersing dishes, toys, dishcloths, etc., mix one tablespoon (15 millilitres) in four litres (3.5 quarts) of water.
- Mix fresh solutions daily.
- Either liquid or bar soap can be used in washrooms. Liquid soap containers should not be "topped up"; instead, liquid soap should be supplied in disposable bags in wall containers by sinks or in small, non-refillable containers to avoid product contamination. Bar soap should be stored in racks which allow drainage of excess water (disease producing organisms can survive in stagnant water).
- Disposable (paper) towels should be used in public washrooms. If possible, install dispensers that require no hand contact to remove a towel. Individual cloth towels should not be shared.
- Provide a waste basket for towels used to open washroom doors upon exiting, or leave washroom doors open.

Cleaning Methods

- Cleaning should proceed from least to most soiled. Cleaning solutions should be changed when they appear dirty and/or after a spill cleanup.
- Cleaning primarily involves horizontal surfaces (ex. desks, countertops, table tops, floors) and surfaces that are frequently handled (ex. door knobs, telephones, bathroom fixtures).

Cleaning Schedules

Cleaning schedules should be established according to the types of surface to be cleaned and the type of soiling that occurs. For example:

- spills – clean immediately.
- Surfaces used for food preparation or diapering – clean after each use.
- Kitchen, bathrooms, playroom – clean daily and as necessary.
- Offices, countertops, computer keyboards, phones, appliances – clean weekly and as necessary.
- Furniture, walls and carpets – follow a rotating schedule (monthly/yearly) and as necessary.
- Sports equipment such as balls for games – clean weekly.
- Reusable gloves – clean after each use.

Adequate Supplies

Schools should plan in advance for maintaining adequate resources for infection prevention and control in schools (soap, paper towels, alcohol-based hand rubs) as there may be an interruption of supply availability.

Source: Manitoba Education Citizenship and Youth, *Preparedness Guidelines for Manitoba School Divisions and Schools (K-12)*.

2. Preparedness

Pandemic Preparedness Summary

School Closure

- School closure will be determined by the Chief Superintendent or designate.
- School closure should be a consultative process, involving a joint decision of the Division and community health authority.
- The Chief Superintendent or designate will direct schools on the process for notifying the community regarding school closures.
- Refer to Policy C.2.H – Emergency School Closures for procedures.

Staff

- Staff should remain at home if symptoms appear during the pandemic to reduce or minimize the spread of influenza.
- When a staff member becomes ill at school, he/she will go home immediately. If a staff member is unable to go home on their own they will report to a designated sick area. There will be immediate communication with family members if they if they are unable to go home on their own.
- If a staff member is late, preparations will be made to cover classes until they arrive.

Students

- Students should remain at home if symptoms appear during the pandemic to reduce or minimize the spread of influenza.
- When a student becomes ill at school, they will go home immediately if contact can be made with a parent/guardian. If they are unable to go home, they will report to a designated sick area until a parent/guardian is notified.

Extracurricular Activities

- Extracurricular activities may be postponed during a pandemic to minimize the spread of influenza.

Field Trips

- Field trips may be postponed during a pandemic to reduce or minimize the transmission of influenza.

Communication During A Pandemic

- The Chief Superintendent or designate will provide communication information to schools. This will include but not be limited to information regarding school closures, alternate locations, transportation, reliable websites, reliable pandemic information, information to put on websites/newsletters.
- Dissemination of information from the Chief Superintendent's department at the school level will be developed. This will include but is not limited to email, daily check-in, newsletter, bulletin boards, phone tree.

Custodial Operations

- Essential services will be provided by custodial staff as arranged by the maintenance department.

Volunteers

- Volunteers will be permitted to assist with classroom responsibilities as long as they have submitted a child abuse registry record check and are on the approved list of volunteers.

Visitors

- Visitors will be limited to essential services to reduce or minimize the spread of influenza.

Pandemic Preparedness Checklist

	Completed	In Progress	Not Started	Action by
Preparedness				
Identify team				
Review guidelines summary				
Review checklist				
Prepare and share school response (designates, communication, timelines, location)				
Student Needs				
Identify students with medical conditions				
Identify students with specific needs				
Identify students requiring medication				
Identify staff who administer medication				
Identify students who require transportation				
Staff Needs				
Communicate self-declaration of medical information				
Identify staff who self-declare medical information				
Sick Room				
Allocate space				
Equip space				
Identify supervisors				
Response Plan for Teaching Activities (pg. ____)				
Identify replacement personnel				
Determine alternate service delivery				
Essential Front Office Operations				
Identify staff to maintain phone, staff/student attendance, financial business (e.g., purchase orders, cheque signing authority), other				

	Completed	In Progress	Not Started	Action by
Socio-Emotional Health Support				
Identify a crisis team to deal with socio-emotional needs (e.g., anxiety, death)				
Lunch Procedures				
Identify a backup plan				
School Phone Tree				
Update and distribute phone tree				
Identify teacher-in-charge				
Submit phone tree to family of schools superintendent				
Education				
Promote respiratory etiquette, stop spread of germs (sneezing, washing, coughing)				

3. Reporting

Impact Report

(MECY requirement and format pending)

4. Guidelines

Guidelines for Parents, Preparing for a Pandemic

In response to recent news reports of a possible Pandemic Influenza occurrence, Frontier School Division feels it is appropriate to advise parents that schools within the Division will continue to operate as normally as possible in order to lessen potential disruption to society at large.

School will remind students and staff to take precautions to improve general hygiene in order to prevent becoming infected and from spreading infection to others. At the same time we would also advise parents to take steps at home to limit the spreading of infection.

These include:

- Washing your hands often and teaching others to do the same
- Keeping your hands away from your mouth, nose, and eyes
- Not sharing eating utensils or drinks, or school supplies such as pencils, rulers or musical instruments with mouthpieces
- Covering your cough or coughing into your elbow
- Staying home if you are sick

Parents can access further information online by consulting the document entitled "Preparing for Pandemic Influenza in Manitoba." This document can be found online at:

www.gov.mb.ca/health/publichealth/cmoh/docs/ppim/pdf.

School Contact Information: Schools can provide information in this space regarding web sites and email addresses for accessing homework or home study materials as well as phone numbers, fax numbers, contact names, hours of operation, or other information as appropriate.

Guidelines for Schools, Preparing for a Pandemic

Schools can implement effective health practices and inform parents and others how to do so. Schools can lessen potential societal disruption by continuing their operation as smoothly, and as normally as possible (if community members feel confident in sending their children to school, they will be able to carry on with their own work).

Impact on Schools

- Employee absenteeism.
- Student absenteeism.
- Interruption of services and supplies and a reduction of outside supports.
- Potential school closures.
- Financial losses or incremental costs.
- Potential spread of infection at school.
- Staff and students becoming ill at school.

The working expectation is that schools will continue to operate and provide an environment that is as safe as possible during a pandemic.

Preventative Steps

- Washing your hands often and teaching others to do the same.
- Keeping your hands away from your mouth, nose, and eyes.
- Not sharing eating utensils or drinks, or school supplies such as pencils or rulers, or musical instruments with mouthpieces.
- Covering your cough.
- Getting a vaccine (when available).
- Staying home if you are sick.

Further information can be accessed from the document entitled “Pandemic Influenza Preparedness Guidelines for Manitoba School Divisions and Schools (K-12). This document is available online at: www.gov.mb.ca/health/documents/pandemic_school.pdf.

5. Checklists

Checklist for Administrators, Pandemic Planning

- Send memo to parents/guardians entitled "Preparing for a Pandemic -Parents."
- Inventory lists of current staff with interchangeable skills according to the following groupings:
 - Teaching staff
 - Operations/Maintenance/Cleaning
 - Clerical & Secretarial
 - Educational Assistants
 - Student Services
 - Administration
- Consult with Student Services Coordinator, regarding students with special learning and/or medical needs.
- Consult with Social Worker and/or Outreach Coordinator regarding plans for home-bound students.
- Consult with Computer Consultant regarding the establishment and maintenance of web sites and email addresses for the purposes of continued communication with home-bound students as well as for communication purposes with staff and the community as a whole.
- Meet with all school staff members regarding plans and related critical steps (e.g. adjustments to educational services, cleaning procedures, communication)
- Ensure students are receiving regular briefings regarding preventative measures.
- Distribute memo to staff entitled "Preparing for a Pandemic - Schools", and, if appropriate, establish a school level Pandemic Response Team/committee.
- Contact R.H.A. and/or local medical services regarding a list of major symptoms as per the illness of concern. Attach this list of symptoms to the above mentioned memo.
- As soon as is reasonably possible, provide a written summary to the Superintendent's Dept. as to the current status of planning for your school.
- Inventory lists of possible community based volunteers who may be able to assist in the continued provision of school services.
- Inventory lists of home study materials available for students of differing grade and skill levels.
- Meet, as appropriate, with community leaders to share and integrate pandemic response plans.

Checklist for Student Services, Pandemic Planning

- Inventory list of interchangeable Educational Assistants trained to administer to specific special needs.
- Consult with R.H.A. and/or local medical services regarding current URIS plans.
- Inventory and request top-ups for any medical inventory necessary to address URIS plans.
- Review current transportation plans for students with mobility problems. Liaise with Transportation department and parents to address alternatives should qualified special needs bus drivers not be available.
- Hold staff meeting with Clinicians and Resource personnel to schedule training teams for Educational Assistants regarding the schools most affected.
- As soon as is reasonably possible, provide a written summary to the Chief Superintendent's department as to the current status of planning for Student Services.
- Advise Division Special Services Coordinator of any students restricted to their homes. Make provisions for these personnel to deliver school materials via the safest means possible.
- Have Resource Teachers liaise with Division Special Services Coordinator to provide home study access for home-bound students via the safest means possible. If home delivery is of questionable safety, staff may want to consider mailing materials or contact via the Internet.

Checklist for Operations, Pandemic Planning

- Inventory list of current available spare bus drivers.
- Inventory list of current available spare cleaners.
- Inventory list of current and past employees who are qualified to operate school boiler systems.
- Inventory list of current contractors who are most familiar with Division buildings.
- Determine current level of critical and non-critical supplies such as fuel, cleaning supplies, etc. Note and address any levels that could be of concern if the pandemic situation continues for an indeterminate period of time.
- Assign maintenance staff to inspect and address issues at the schools that could result in the failure of the following systems:
 - Heating
 - Water
 - Electrical
 - Air Exchange
 - Transportation
- Confirm lists of interchangeable staff as per the following categories:
 - Essential Maintenance -Heating, Plumbing, Electrical
 - Cleaning
 - Transportation
 - Clerical/Supplies
 - Management/Coordination
- As soon as reasonably possible, provide a written report to the Secretary-Treasurer's department as to the current state of planning.
- Ensure that all school administrators and central office staff have current lists of applicable security codes and keys for Division buildings under their supervision.

Checklist for Division, Pandemic Planning

- Inventory lists of current available substitute teachers and retired teachers.
- Burn CD of current student and staff contact information for RHA.
- Confirm list of interchangeable staff with similar duties as per the following people:
 - Group 1: Chief Superintendent, Area and Assistant Superintendents, Secretary-Treasurer, Human Resources Director
 - Group 2: Human Resources department, Payroll department
 - Group 3: Assistant Secretary-Treasurer, Accounting department
 - Group 4: Facilities Manager, Assistant Facilities Manager, Transportation Coordinator
 - Group 5: IT department, technicians, help desk analyst
- Notify Regional Healthy Authorities or First Nations Health Authorities (Public Health: 239-3070) of any reported influenza cases.
- Notify MECY of outbreak or reported cases. (Education Admin. Services 204-945-6899)
- Instruct the following groups to institute their plans/checklists:
 - Operations
 - School Administrators
 - Student Services
- Institute Media contact provisions from Crisis Response Plan.
- Senior Administration to meet with Assistant Superintendent - Technology. Update on current state of communications technology at all sites. Inventory outside service providers who may assist in trouble shooting. If possible, attempt to accelerate the resolution of any current issues affecting IT.
- As soon as reasonably possible, provide a report to the Board of Trustees on the current state of planning for the school division.
- Liaise with outside agencies (Mayor/Council, Chief/Council, Local Incorporated and Unincorporated Districts, Province, Regional Health Authorities, First Nations Health Authorities) as to the current state of planning for the school division.