

Pandemic Influenza

Preparedness Guidelines for Manitoba School Divisions
and Schools (K - 12)

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FURTHER INFORMATION

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INTRODUCTION

Pandemic influenza could cause a great deal of illness and death while affecting society's ability to function. Recognizing this, Manitobans – like others around the world – are preparing to respond for when another pandemic arrives.

School divisions and schools¹ have emergency plans for a number of crises, but have not generally planned for a community-wide health emergency such as an influenza pandemic. The purposes of these guidelines are to help give Manitoba school leaders a broad understanding of the issues associated with pandemic influenza and to support their planning for educational continuity during a pandemic.

These *Pandemic Influenza Preparedness Guidelines* are organized into three sections. Section One – Pandemic Influenza in Context – provides background on the nature of pandemic influenza, its general effects and management and Manitoba preparations for co-ordinating a response. Section Two – Education System Planning – describes a process for preparatory planning, including the major impacts that schools will face and suggestions for dealing with them. Section Three – Preparedness – is a brief conclusion about maintaining the plan and training. The appendices provide a range of supplementary information about contacts, dealing with influenza and planning.

Throughout the document are references to Internet information sources. Two of the most useful are:

- the Manitoba Government website for influenza information which links to a broad range of Manitoba information (www.gov.mb.ca/influenza), and
- the Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth web page on policy and planning that links to topics like business continuity planning (www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/policy).

Planning for a possible pandemic continues to evolve and is ongoing. A number of factors are unknown and some will not be known until the time of a pandemic. In Manitoba, the Emergency Measures Organization, Manitoba Health and Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth are continually refining their own plans and capacities. In fact, emergency planning is never “written in stone.” Rather, it provides a context for more efficient problem solving at the time of an emergency. As a result, this document is not a final product. It will be updated as provincial plans develop and more detailed information will be distributed as a pandemic becomes imminent.

In addition, no provincial document can adequately anticipate or reflect differences across school divisions. For example, there are important differences across urban, rural and northern settings. This document suggests processes and structures to allow planning to start. However, to be responsive to local situations, a realistic pandemic preparation plan must be developed by each school division.

¹ These guidelines are aimed at public school divisions but will be useful with adaptations for independent schools.



Why should school divisions prepare for a pandemic?

During a pandemic there are various effects that schools can help mitigate. Schools can implement effective health practices and inform students, parents and others how to do so. Every person who does not become sick during the early stages of a pandemic might benefit from a vaccine once it is developed. Perhaps most importantly, schools can lessen potential societal disruption by continuing their operations 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.

1 PANDEMIC INFLUENZA IN CONTEXT

1.1 Understanding the Hazard

This section provides some general background on an influenza pandemic and its potential effects. Access the Manitoba Government public health website at www.gov.mb.ca/influenza/pandemic/ for current information including fact sheets and preparedness guidelines.

Until it occurs, no one knows exactly what the next pandemic will look like. A number of assumptions, based on previous pandemics and medical research, have been made for planning purposes.

1.1.1 Characteristics of Pandemic Influenza

- What is a pandemic influenza? By definition, it 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 we have learned from past pandemics in history (1918-19; 1957-58; and 1968-69), there is much we do not know and research is ongoing.

1.1.1.1 Influenza Transmission

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 meter 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.

Planning Assumption:

Influenza spreads easily among people. People can be infected with influenza and spread it to others before they become ill. They can spread it to others even if they do not become ill.

1.1.1.2 Disease Symptoms

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

Pandemic influenza is expected to cause symptoms similar to ordinary influenza, though illness may be more severe. Influenza 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, and
 - runny nose.
- among children, gastrointestinal symptoms, such as nausea, vomiting and diarrhea. (Gastrointestinal symptoms are uncommon in adults.)

Generally, influenza (flu) symptoms can last four to seven days. A cough and general fatigue may persist for several weeks.

Most people recover from influenza without medical intervention. However, some people, particularly the very young, the very 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.

Planning Tip:

Remember that when a pandemic does begin these disease assumptions will need to be checked against the latest information and plans updated as necessary. This information can be found at: www.gov.mb.ca/influenza/pandemic/

1.1.2 Impact on Society

Population

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 ill, and
- of those who get sick, 0.5 per cent could die.

Planning Assumption:

During an influenza pandemic, there will be more illness than during an ordinary influenza season. It has been estimated that 35 per cent of people could get sick enough to miss at least one half-day or more of work.

While we know that virtually no one will be immune to a pandemic strain of influenza virus, we do not know which age groups a pandemic will affect most severely and have no way of predicting this in advance.

A pandemic influenza virus may have greater effects on groups who are at increased risk of influenza in annual outbreaks, including the very young and the very old, or may adversely affect different age groups. For instance, in the 1918-19 pandemic, 20 to 50-year-olds were most severely affected. This is different from what happens every flu season and different from the pandemics of 1957-58 and 1968-69.

At the time of a pandemic, public health experts, including epidemiologists, will work together across international borders to identify which segments of our population are at increased risk of complications due to pandemic influenza and our response efforts will be adjusted accordingly.

Area of Impact

A pandemic will have an impact upon all of Manitoba, the rest of Canada, North America and the world. All areas of society, including school systems, could be addressing the same issues within similar timeframes.

Planning Tip:

To learn more about influenza and pandemic influenza, consult with your regional health authority or see the resources in Appendix B (page 33) or on the Internet at www.gov.mb.ca/influenza/

Duration

A pandemic may occur over a two-year period. Based on previous experience, pandemics 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.

Warning Period

We anticipate having up to 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 that the warning period may be shorter.

1.1.3 Impact on Schools

Educational continuity in schools could be affected by:

- 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, and
- staff and students becoming ill at school.

Suggestions for dealing with these potential effects will be described later.

1.2 Management of Pandemic Influenza

1.2.1 Preventative Steps

We are a considerably healthier population now than in the past, and we have access to a wide range of interventions, such as antiviral drugs, vaccines and antibiotics, supported by a highly developed health care system.

People should take steps to prevent themselves from becoming infected and from spreading infection to others. These 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;
- getting a vaccine (when available); and
- staying home if you are sick.

These measures are recommended every year for annual influenza outbreaks to reduce your risk of getting or spreading influenza.

For general prevention information see Appendix C (page 34) for advice on hand hygiene techniques and Appendix D

(page 35) for information about what you can do to reduce the risk of becoming infected with influenza during a pandemic.

Curriculum information on healthy lifestyle practices can be found at www.edu.gov.mb.ca/ks4/cur/physlth/index.html

1.2.1.1 Vaccine

Vaccination against influenza is the most effective tool to prevent infection with influenza and complications of the disease. Vaccines cause the production of antibodies against the specific strains of influenza virus contained in the vaccine, providing immunity. The vaccine does not contain live virus, so it cannot cause influenza. Influenza vaccines have been used for decades with great success in minimizing the impact of annually circulating influenza viruses as well as for recent pandemics. A new vaccine is produced each year to ensure people are protected against circulating influenza viruses, which undergo minor changes from year to year.

During a pandemic, a completely new influenza virus will be circulating among people around the world. It will be necessary to develop a completely new vaccine to protect people from the pandemic virus. It could take four to six months for a vaccine to be developed and become available. Manitoba Health's goal is to ensure all Manitobans can receive the pandemic vaccine as quickly as possible once the vaccine becomes available.

However, it is important to note that due to the need to produce an entirely new vaccine for a pandemic virus, the vaccine will be available in batches. In keeping with the rest of Canada, Manitobans will be immunized according to nationally agreed upon priority groups. While these groups

are known at this point in time, adjustments may be deemed necessary at the time of a pandemic to protect those age groups at increased risk of illness and death. Again, we will not know who will be most severely affected until the time of a pandemic.

1.2.2 Building Hygiene

Although it is impossible to maintain an infection-free building, there are some steps that can minimize and slow the spread of the virus.

A list of specific suggestions is outlined in Appendix F (page 38).

1.2.3 Disease Management

Caring for Yourself if Sick

Appendix E (page 37) outlines ways to care for yourself when you have the flu.

Antiviral Drugs

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. 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 development of a vaccine.

Antibiotics

Influenza is caused by a virus, not bacteria, so antibiotics cannot be used to treat influenza specifically. However, antibiotics are very useful in treating bacterial complications of influenza such as

pneumonia, which can result in prolonged illness or even death. The same will be true during a pandemic.

1.3 Pandemic Co-ordination

As with preparedness efforts, a response to pandemic influenza will occur in a national context. Canada co-operates with other countries. Each province or territory has responsibility for health care but acts within a national plan. Organizations (municipalities, regional health authorities, school divisions, independent schools, post-secondary institutions, businesses, and others) maintain their own services, but do so in co-operation with and, if necessary, under the direction of the provincial government.

Goals of a pandemic response in Canada, as outlined in the *Canadian Pandemic Influenza Plan for the Health Sector*, in which Manitoba is a participant and partner, are:

- to minimize serious illness and overall deaths, and,
- to minimize societal disruption among Canadians due to pandemic influenza.

Manitoba shares these goals for its pandemic response.

While we cannot prevent a pandemic from occurring or stop it completely once it occurs, public health measures will be implemented to minimize the impact of a pandemic on the population. This includes slowing the spread to allow more time for vaccine production and implementation of mass immunization campaigns within Manitoba and across Canada.

1.3.1 Provincial Government Planning

1.3.1.1 Legislative Powers During Emergencies

During emergencies, governments may need to access powers that are not normally available and therefore require special legislation.

Under the authority of *The Public Health Act*, public health officials in Manitoba have the authority to take actions to protect the health of the public. This could include closure of certain buildings or suspension of public gatherings, including schools. This legislated authority has been in place for many years and in practice is used only as deemed necessary to protect the health of the public. *The Public Health Act* will be a key public health tool during a pandemic.

Municipal governments have access to emergency powers under *The Emergency Measures Act*. This legislation allows a municipal council to invoke powers (after a majority vote) such as public evacuation, building closures, trespassing on property without a search warrant and the authority to compel persons to assist in an emergency.

The Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, who is responsible for *The Emergency Measures Act*, has the power to implement a state of emergency in places that are unable to hold a municipal council vote. The Intergovernmental Affairs Minister also has the ability to limit the powers used under this act. The act ensures that in an area where provincial and municipal interests may conflict, the minister's orders shall prevail.

The Government of Canada is also able to invoke its *Emergencies Act* (formerly the *War Measures Act*). This act gives the Government of Canada powers that enable it to assist in the response to regional, national and international emergencies. The federal act prevails in the event of a conflict with any provincial emergency measures legislation.

1.3.1.2 Roles and Responsibilities During Emergencies

Government of Manitoba

The Government of Manitoba will establish an Incident Management System (IMS) during an influenza pandemic or any large-scale emergency that affects the province. This system will provide a governance and problem-solving structure that will allow the Manitoba government to concentrate resources to manage the emergency. Who participates in the management of an emergency will depend on the sectors affected. During a pandemic influenza there will be several departments involved in managing the emergency to ensure that stakeholders receive the support, operational guidance and communications necessary to ensure the continuity of government services.

Some key organizations that will be leading a response to a pandemic influenza are:

Manitoba Emergency Measures

Organization (EMO): EMO will lead the Government of Manitoba response to an influenza pandemic. Primarily, it will work with government departments at local, provincial and federal levels to help manage the emergency.

The Office of the Chief Medical Officer of Health: The Office of the Chief Medical Officer of Health leads public health emergency preparedness and response efforts for pandemic influenza as well as other potential public health emergencies. This office reports on and addresses threats to the health of the Manitoba public.

The Office of Disaster Management (ODM): This Manitoba Health organization is responsible for providing the framework for the health sector response to a pandemic influenza. ODM will work with federal and provincial health departments, regional health authorities and non-governmental organizations to ensure a co-ordinated response within the health sector.

Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth

The department is developing business continuity plans to enable important supports to schools to continue during emergencies.

The department will also support school divisions and schools with their pandemic response. This may include any necessary adaptations for departmental policy and funding issues, assistance in resolving unanticipated difficulties, and communicating common education issues to government to ensure the needs of schools are fully understood and addressed.

The department will be involved in facilitating or delivering communications services from official authorities to divisions and schools, as directed by the communications services section of the province's Incident Management System (IMS) at the time.

Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth has designated contacts for school divisions and independent schools to obtain information regarding departmental policies and school funding during a pandemic. See Appendix A (page 31).

1.3.2 Other Organizational Roles

1.3.2.1 Local Government

The role of a municipal or other local government during an emergency is to continue normal services. The municipal government is obligated to ensure that its citizens' basic humanitarian needs are supported during any emergency. These needs could include emergency social services.

1.3.2.2 Health Service Providers

During any emergency, the regional health authorities will continue to provide health services and will provide public health advice to local citizens, businesses and organizations. During a pandemic influenza, the regional health authority will also distribute and administer vaccines and antiviral medications. Each regional health authority has a Medical Officer of Health and public health doctors with expertise in areas such as controlling the spread of communicable diseases and authority to issue orders under *The Public Health Act*. Medical Officers of Health will have a key leadership role to play during a local response to a pandemic.

1.3.2.3 School Divisions and Schools

Schools will not be automatically closed. The working expectation is that schools will continue to operate and provide an environment that is as safe as possible during a pandemic.

Although Manitoba Health, Manitoba Emergency Measures Organization, and Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth 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. The possibility of school closure is a key reason for engaging in business and educational continuity planning. There is more on this in Section 2.4.2.4 (see page 21).

2 EDUCATION SYSTEM PLANNING

The following guidelines are based on an international model and language for emergency response planning. This model can be used by school divisions for all community-wide emergencies, such as floods, severe storms or extended power outages. However, the particular example in this document is an influenza pandemic. Some of the language might be foreign to schools, but using the generic language enables educators to communicate more effectively with community partners and to understand their documents and systems.

The model is based on “business continuity planning” and, as the term suggests, is aimed at maintaining operations, at least at a minimum level, even in the event of a disruptive incident. These *Pandemic Influenza Preparedness Guidelines* outline the business continuity planning process, but do not include all of the related forms and instructions. A complete set is available on the Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth website through the link to Policy and Planning – Business Continuity Planning (www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/policy/index.html).

Each school division must determine what planning and responsibility model works best. It should complement existing emergency response planning (ex: the work of the Safe School Advisory Committee² or plans for weather emergencies). If school divisions choose not to engage in a complete business continuity planning process, a simpler suggested outline for an emergency response plan is shown in Appendix G (see page 40).

The model suggests a central Business Continuity Planning (BCP) Team with broad

division-level responsibilities designated by the school board or superintendent. As with all designated responsibilities, the BCP Team and its members act with the authority of the school board or superintendent when carrying out assigned responsibilities.

2.1 Delegate Authority to the Business Continuity Planning Team

The BCP Team is usually assigned responsibility for:

- preparation of pandemic (and other emergency response) plans for the division and its schools,
- preparedness activities, and
- response and recovery activities during and after a pandemic.

The school board or superintendent should clearly delineate the authority delegated to the BCP Team, as well as mechanisms, timelines and formats for reporting to trustees, division administrators and others (ex: bargaining units, parents, student bodies and communities-at-large).

It will also be important to consider the liaison role of the BCP Team with community or regional planning groups such as regional health authorities and local governments.

Planning Tip: Since Business Continuity Planning Team members coordinate divisional operations during a pandemic, ensure there are backups in case the team leader or team members become ill.

² Established by the Safe School Regulations #77 -2005 under the Public Schools Act

2.1.1 Membership

The BCP Team is usually composed of:

1. **A BCP Co-ordinator**, usually a division-level administrator charged with overseeing the activities of the team and overall pandemic preparedness, response and recovery within the school division, and possibly as the official spokesperson for the school division in the event of a pandemic, and
2. **Team members** who represent a variety of division interests such as:
 - division trustees,
 - division management,
 - school representatives, and
 - representatives from various employee groups.

2.2 Create a Planning Framework

A framework for planning should include:

- a planning schedule, including regular BCP Team meetings and deadlines for stages of plan completion;
- delegated responsibilities for various tasks and administrative functions;
- timelines for reporting progress to the school division / board for the purpose of obtaining approvals and maintaining awareness and support;

- a plan format or template so that all plans and plan components have a similar look and feel - it will help make plans easier to use (ex: the BCP template link or Appendix G on page 40),
- an internal communication plan and process that keeps school division stakeholders informed about the planning process;
- input from professional associations, bargaining units, parent councils, student bodies, public health officials and government as appropriate;
- guidance on keeping plans user-friendly, as concise as reasonably possible, and minimizing use of technical jargon that may not be well understood by those called upon to implement parts of the plan; and
- identifying links to relevant government and non-government sources of emergency preparedness and regular meetings to share ideas, information and suggestions. For example, schools should link with local government officials and their regional health authority (ex: public health nurse for the area and the emergency preparedness officer).

Planning Tip: A pandemic will have a more gradual onset and a prolonged impact. In addition, human illness and death will decrease system response capacity.

2.3 Identify Goals and Objectives

Suggested goals and objectives for school pandemic preparedness plans are:

2.3.1 Goals

1. To minimize the impact of the pandemic on students and staff.
2. To maintain services to students and families as long as it is safe to do so, or until directed otherwise.
3. To respond to outside needs, if required, as determined by a central government authority or local government.

2.3.2 Objectives

1. To ensure a safe environment for students and staff (before, during and following a pandemic).
2. To remain operational and maintain instruction and services.
3. To ensure essential services continue during a pandemic (ex: supervision, curricular requirements, building security).
4. To communicate accurately and in a timely manner with management, staff, and students and families regarding operations before, during and after a pandemic period.
5. To track and monitor the activities and additional costs of responding to the pandemic.

2.4 Develop the Plan

To reiterate, the planning process outlined below is adapted from an approach (business continuity planning) and language that are standardized in emergency

planning. It takes an “all hazards” approach rather than being limited to pandemic planning. An all hazards approach might save time in the long term if school divisions undertake business continuity planning with all sorts of large-scale emergencies in mind (ex: floods, building closures due to fires). The same planning steps apply, but anticipating potential impacts becomes more complicated.

However, school divisions might wish to simplify their own approach by working through the following steps or a similar process in a more informal manner, addressing only pandemic planning at this time. Time and personnel resources are two important considerations in that decision since a complete business continuity planning process requires significant effort.

2.4.1 Business Continuity Planning (BCP) Process

1. Risk Analysis – use the risk analysis worksheet to develop an overview of the factors that might have to be dealt with in an emergency.
2. Business Impact Analysis – identify all critical business functions in the division or school including any added functions (ex: emergency contact with parents) that might be required during an emergency. This takes some thought, since schools are organized around roles rather than functions (ex: teachers’ roles include supervision and instruction). For each function complete a business impact analysis using the BCP instructions and worksheet. For each business function, two critical components are set:
 - a minimum operating standard, and
 - a recovery time objective.

3. Priorities for Restoration – create a table to rank all division or school functions by criticality and recovery time.
4. Function Restoration Planning – develop recovery plans for each function using the Function Restoration Strategy and Plan forms and instructions. The strategy describes the general approach to your recovery plans. The plan provides all the detail you need to respond in the event of a disruption and maintain your minimum operating standard and recovery time objectives.
5. Summarize and co-ordinate all the restoration plans into an overall divisional Business Continuity Plan.
6. Identify people, time, training, resources and, where applicable, additional supplies and incremental costs to develop and maintain an emergency preparedness program.
7. Include a communications plan (internal and external).
8. Obtain senior management approval and initiate action for the pre-incident phase.

(The detailed instructions and forms for business continuity planning are available at www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/policy/index.html)

2.4.2 Impacts and Possible Accommodations During a Pandemic

The following section describes anticipated effects on schools and identifies possible ways to manage the issues. While this section is particular to a pandemic, some of the impacts are common in other types of emergencies. The general ideas developed

in the business continuity planning process above will be useful context for this section.

In the event of a pandemic, there will be no perfect or universal solution to many of the anticipated effects. As with all societal disruptions, some rules, policies and established practices will be superseded by emergency powers or common-sense solutions that require interpersonal goodwill. However, anticipatory planning could mitigate many problems, and that is the purpose of this section.

Many of the suggested accommodations will take time to implement. There are two time periods to consider – the pre-pandemic period and the warning period between when a pandemic is recognized by the World Health Organization and when it arrives in Manitoba. We cannot predict the length of the pre-pandemic period or the warning period; however, the warning period is *estimated* to be up to three months. The BCP Team and school division leaders should consider the costs and benefits of implementing specific accommodation plans during either time period. For instance, routine, periodic building maintenance activities might be re-scheduled during the warning period so that they are less likely to be needed during the pandemic itself. As another example, cross-training building maintenance staff to cover in other buildings might be targeted during the pre-pandemic period. This strategy might also prove useful for non-pandemic purposes.

2.4.2.1 Employee Absenteeism

Health experts estimate that between 15 and 35 per cent of the population could become ill enough to miss at least one half-day of work. If the pandemic causes illness in 35 per cent of the population, employers should expect up to 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 either to personal or family illness.

MANAGING THE ISSUE

Document Human Resource Skill Sets

Document all employees' teaching, administrative or other skills and knowledge to determine how they can be used to backfill employees providing key services.

Establish a system for tracking the availability of all employees for the purposes of managing and re-assigning personnel as needed.

Discuss possible response measures with the staff who currently fill key roles.

Remember that once employees recover from influenza they will be immune to that strain. They may assume responsibilities that might put other employees at higher risk of becoming infected with influenza, such as dealing with persons who become ill while at school.

Leadership Activities

Designate backups for key decision makers and arrange for delegation of decision making and financial authority if they are unavailable.

Teaching Activities

Teachers are critical to effective student instruction and supervision. There may be a number of options for managing high levels of teacher absenteeism. The division planning process should include discussions with the teachers' association to brainstorm and consider creative strategies for addressing periods of high absenteeism. Some ideas might include:

Replacement Personnel

- Draw from the substitute pool.
- Use administrative personnel, retired teachers, parents, volunteers or education students to assist teachers. Have some people licensed on temporary permits in advance of the pandemic.

Where it is reasonably anticipated that the existing substitute pool will be depleted and no other qualified, certified teachers are available, school divisions may consider applying in advance to the Professional Certification and Student Records Unit for substitute teaching permits for persons who might potentially be called upon temporarily to replace ill staff.

It is particularly advisable to have criminal record checks done well in advance for all potential temporary staff as the system may become backlogged during a pandemic.

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.
- Be prepared to temporarily combine schools.
- Instruction should continue for students who are home and well enough to do school work, including homework and/or virtual instruction on the Internet with phone contact.
- School boards could consider Saturday classes or vacation school when conditions improve to make up for lost instruction.

Scale Back Services

- Postpone or cancel classes or events when necessary.
- Close the school until services can resume at an acceptable level (as a last resort).

Administrative Activities

- Consider any administrative activities that might be added during a pandemic or might increase in terms of workload (ex: contacting the parents of absent children, compiling and disseminating absentee information).
- Cross-train staff on any specialized or technical activities.

- Prepare written instructions so that partially trained employees or volunteers can complete essential tasks (identified in the business continuity planning process).
- Document location of key information and means of access (ex: passwords, keys).
- Prepare to report excessive absenteeism to health officials for pandemic surveillance purposes.

Building Maintenance Activities

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

2.4.2.2 Student Absenteeism

Depending on the age groups most affected by the specific pandemic influenza virus and how it spreads among the population, absenteeism rates may be the same, lower or higher among students than teachers.

In addition, any people with decreased immune system functioning related to chronic health conditions may be at higher risk of infection. The parents of such students may choose to keep them at home.

During periods of high absenteeism such as a pandemic, schools are expected to continue to offer instruction. Compulsory curricula should be taught to the extent possible, allowing students to progress academically.

Planning for Students' Special Needs:

In accordance with Manitoba's Philosophy of Inclusion and requirement for appropriate educational programming, continuity planning should consider all the staff and students, including those with disabilities and special health needs. Where students require additional supports, 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. Every effort should be made to meet with parents of students with exceptional needs and to develop plans for the event of widespread school closures or staff shortages. Consideration should be made for the student's educational programming, the availability of alternate staff support and in some cases transportation. Whenever possible, this planning should 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 should also be discussed with the family in developing a plan.

School divisions should identify a plan that will cause the least disruption to the student's programming while maintaining safety for all concerned.

Related Considerations:

Section 2.62 of *The Public Schools Act* allows parents to keep children out of school if they are ill.

Routine Reporting of Absenteeism to Public Health:

School divisions should contact the local public health office for advice about any potential health issue, such as unusually high absenteeism rates or a suspected outbreak of specific illness (ex: gastrointestinal or influenza-like illness).

At the time of a pandemic, Manitoba Health will provide absenteeism reporting guidelines.

MANAGING THE ISSUE

Alternate strategies for instruction may be needed so students are able to receive instruction and progress to the next level of education at the appropriate time. See the suggested teaching activities under Section 2.4.2.1 above.

Students will also need to receive timely communication regarding the school's plans and expectations for continued instruction. See Section 2.4.4, *Communications Plan*, on page 27.

2.4.2.3 Interruption of Services, Supplies and Reduction in Outside Supports

Suppliers are likely to experience operational, production and shipping difficulties and the demand for certain types of supplies may increase dramatically.

Some supplies may not be available at all.

Costs may also rise.

Government departments will also be dealing with a human health emergency. See *Provincial Government Planning* Section 1.3.1.

Some parents or volunteers may be unavailable.

Planning Assumption:

You can assume that utilities including electricity, natural gas and telephone services will not be disrupted.

MANAGING THE ISSUE

Talk to suppliers to determine if they have plans to deal with emergency conditions and will be able to continue despite transportation and staffing disruptions.

If it appears there may be supply difficulties, consider locating suitable service providers as a backup in case your regular suppliers are not available.

Check contracts for supplies and services (cleaning, snow removal) to see if they cover contingencies such as emergencies.

Build an inventory of critical supplies, gradually ordering extra. Ensure supplies particularly needed during emergencies are on hand in quantities required (ex: for a pandemic – hand soap, cleaning supplies, tissues, hand wipes).

Have maintenance inspections and repair work done in advance (ex: during the warning period before a pandemic arrives in Manitoba).

Determine how long some systems that require periodic maintenance can operate without inspection.

Determine beforehand whom to contact in government for regulatory and public health issues (See Appendix A, page 31).

2.4.2.4 Potential Closure

It is possible that schools may close due to:

- public health officials ordering 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. Closures could be province-wide or regional.
- circumstances that cause a school to close temporarily as an incidental closure. 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 or other government authorities could potentially ask a school to close, if required, for other purposes during a pandemic. Such a decision would be made collaboratively with the school division.

MANAGING THE ISSUE

Your plan should include provisions for handling temporary closures to help minimize impacts to students, their families, employees and others (See Section 2.4.4, Communications Plan, on page 27).

Students and Families

Redeploy students to other schools in the division, providing that transportation and space is available. This could include relocating teachers to other schools.

If all schools are closing, the division and schools should provide parents with as much lead time as possible, the reasons for the closure and a realistic estimate of the duration of the closure.

Employees

Your plan should outline a policy regarding employee income and benefits in the event of a school closure. This should be communicated to employees prior to any emergency as part of the preparation phase.

If income and benefits would not be provided for some employee groups, then communicate clearly with affected employees at the time of a pandemic and provide them with the information required to seek Employment Insurance or other financial assistance during the closure.

You may consider deferring staff leaves for non-health reasons, for example professional development, vacation or other reasons, if staff members are needed to cover for absent employees.

Building Maintenance

School buildings will still require routine inspection and maintenance to ensure that building systems remain operational, and damages or delays in re-opening the school are avoided. Make necessary arrangements to have the school checked as required.

Other School Facility Users

Many schools permit other users such as child care centres, community, sports or school groups to utilize school facilities. Of these, the loss of a child care centre can have particularly significant effects on working families and possibly essential services in the community.

Talk to public health officials to clarify the meaning of a potential health closure order - would it mean closing the facility to all uses or would some be permitted? Based on this information, talk to other groups that use the school and advise them of your findings so that they may plan for this possibility. Advise tenants of the school closure plan and clarify their responsibility for alternative relocation.

Schools Designated as Emergency Housing

In some situations, schools are an emergency housing alternative for other organizations (ex: for a senior citizen residence). If that is the case, the school should inform the other organization about the potential for school closure in a pandemic and clarify how communication will occur in that event.

Animals in the School

If there are animals in the school (ex: classroom pets, lab animals), schools could make the same kinds of arrangements that occur during holiday breaks.

Related Considerations:

Under *The Public Schools Act*, the minister has the authority to close a school in an emergency such as a pandemic. However, any such decision will take into account information and recommendations from the school division. The general expectation is that schools will continue operating for as long as it is safe to do so.

For a division-initiated request for closure to be approved, there must be indication that safety was at risk even after accommodations had been made. Schools facing this situation are advised to contact the superintendent's department in their school division (or Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth directly in the case of independent schools) (See Appendix A – Contacts, on page 31).

Manitoba Health (Public Health) and Manitoba Emergency Measures Organization (EMO) also have authority to take emergency community-wide actions, including closures of public facilities as outlined in Section 1.3.1 *Provincial Government Planning*. A public health order or directive would be issued and communicated to schools by public health, in collaboration with education officials.

Independent Schools

Some independent schools are located in buildings of worship. These schools may already be busy trying to work around clerical responsibilities of extra counselling, prayer vigils and funerals. Planners will need to keep in mind the other activities that may be occurring in these buildings.

2.4.2.5 Potential Additional Duties (none assigned as yet)

It is possible that schools will be directed to provide facilities or personnel, or both, for emergency responses in the community. The authority for this could come from the regional health authority, or local, provincial or federal governments. No additional duties are assigned at this time.

However, school divisions should be receptive to assisting response plans if needed. This could include providing gymnasium use (such as for health clinics), buses and/or staff. It could also include provision of child care services beyond regular school hours or distribution of materials to students and families in the community.

It is not anticipated that schools/school divisions will be responsible for leading or managing non-educational activities that use school resources. However, in an emergency situation, decisions will be made based on the needs at the time and schools may be called upon for leadership in certain circumstances.

MANAGING THE ISSUE

The school division Business Continuity Planning (or Emergency) Co-ordinator should meet with local government and regional health authority planning groups to share what resources the school division has and learn how the community plans are developing.

No additional duties are assigned at this time so specific plans are not needed until more is known.

2.4.2.6 Financial Losses

There may be a variety of financial implications for schools. These could include:

- Incremental costs³ 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).
- Lost school instruction time and revenue for independent schools with tuition fees.
- Loss of reputation, enrollment and funding for those schools that compete for student enrollment.

MANAGING THE ISSUE

School divisions should include emergency preparedness in their financial management processes. This may include:

- budgeting processes; and
- tracking preparation, response and recovery activities and costs for:
 - legal issues that may arise, and
 - reimbursement of eligible costs under any announced disaster recovery programs.

Some school insurance policies may include business continuity insurance, which normally covers temporary costs (ex: temporary space) that arise from a disaster. However, it is unlikely that this type of insurance will cover the unique costs associated with an influenza pandemic and it should be checked for specific wording.

In independent schools, there may be a need to manage lost revenue if student tuition is reduced due to closure or lower student registrations. Generally, lost revenue is less likely an issue in public schools.

At present, federal and provincial disaster assistance does not cover situations such as a pandemic. However, this might change as planning for a possible pandemic proceeds. School divisions and independent schools are advised to 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 the future, as well as in the event there is any level of compensation made available from the various levels of government.

Should schools be used for other purposes, those extra costs should be tracked as well, if only for subsequent budgetary reporting.

Funding Considerations

Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth will continue to fund school divisions and independent schools during an emergency. However, funding will be contingent on a

³ An incremental cost refers to the extra cost after any savings have been taken into account, for example reduced costs of busing students if schools are closed or students do not attend.

number of factors, including reasonable efforts to maintain contact with students, continue instruction and provide opportunities for student learning and progress.

2.4.2.7 Potential Spread of Infection at School

During a pandemic, schools will need to implement measures to minimize or slow the spread of influenza within their facilities. However, nothing can fully stop transmission. Public health officials will recommend that those who are ill should stay at home until they are well. This advice will be especially important during a pandemic. “Presenteeism,” or coming to work while sick, should be discouraged by schools and school divisions alike, by developing, implementing and communicating clear policies on staying home while ill, compensation issues, and ensuring a system is in place to cover the work of those who are ill.

MANAGING THE ISSUE

Schools and school divisions will need to promote the preventive measures outlined in this document. Measures to reduce interpersonal exposure within buildings need to be balanced with the need to maintain normal routines, school operations and societal functioning. Suggested measures include establishing a clear and well-communicated policy for students and staff on staying at home, even with minor symptoms (ex: combat the phenomenon labeled “presenteeism”).

At the time of a pandemic, public health officials will give specific advice regarding measures to minimize or slow the transmission of influenza. Examples of measures that may be recommended are:

- reducing visitors to the school,
- reducing the number and duration of face-to-face meetings or number of persons in attendance,
- considering postponing some events that are open to the public and/or parents, including travel for interschool activities, and
- increasing distance education and work-at-home options.

Travel advisory information will be communicated by public health officials.

Information on recommended public health measures can be obtained from local public health officials at the time of a pandemic.

Planning Tip: Compliance with staying home when ill will depend on the level of assurance employers can provide to employees that failure to attend work due to illness will not result in financial hardship or significant loss of benefits.

Promoting personal hygiene practices and maintaining building hygiene are also important. Strategies include:

- educating and reminding students and others of the importance of preventive measures (as outlined earlier in Section 1.2.1 - Preventative Steps),
- following hygiene measures (as outlined in Appendix F - Building Hygiene), in particular:
 - ensuring supplies are available for students to wash their hands and teaching them how to wash their hands properly,

- ensuring that washrooms are inspected regularly and faucets are easy to use by younger children,
- ensuring routine cleaning is maintained, including high-traffic areas and items being touched frequently (ex: washroom faucets, computer keyboards and eating areas), and
- ensuring that schools have sufficient cleaning supplies on hand to meet increased cleaning requirements.

Related Considerations

Under *The Public Schools Act*, the school principal is responsible for safety of the school premises and for reporting needs to the school division administration. Since influenza spreads very easily, it will not be possible to keep a school infection-free. However, school officials should take all reasonable steps to slow and reduce the spread among staff and students.

During a pandemic, Manitoba Health will provide advice regarding return to work/school for those who are ill.

The Manitoba Physical Education/Health Education curriculum includes learning outcomes for healthy lifestyle practices, such as prevention of personal illness and disease in certain grades. Curriculum information can be found at www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/cur/physlth/index.html. This could be emphasized and adapted for all school-age populations.

2.4.2.8 Illness Among Staff and Students While at School

Influenza virus spreads easily, particularly among younger children.

MANAGING THE ISSUE

Ensure procedures and facilities are in place to separate ill children from healthy children until their parents can be contacted to take them home. Keep ill children in a separate room and keep them 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.

Establish policy to send ill employees home with advice to stay home until well enough to return.

Communicate Manitoba Health advice about return to school and work timelines to staff, students and parents.

2.4.3 Recovery Plans

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

- significant loss of instructional time and backlog of work postponed due to the pandemic;
- disruption of communication with students, families and others;
- psychological stress and low morale (knowing that 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; and
- permanent loss of employees and their corporate knowledge due to death or disability.

Pre-planning for recovery will help accelerate a return to normal and reduce stress and long term effects within the school(s). Plans should consider recovery both between pandemic waves and after the pandemic is completely over.

MANAGING THE ISSUE

Consider the following in your school's recovery plan:

- creating strategies for catching up on missed instructional time or backlogged work;
- ensuring continued communications with employees, parents and students regarding the return to normal operations;
- rebuilding corporate knowledge of school and school division processes or systems;
- holding ceremonies to remember deceased employees or students;
- implementing in-class programs for students to help them deal with stress and the impacts of the pandemic;
- identifying resources for stress counselling for employees, students and their families;
- recruiting and training replacement employees and temporarily or permanently reassigning employees to maintain operations; and

- compiling necessary information to participate in any financial recovery programs (if announced).

2.4.4 Communications Plan

School divisions and schools will need to collect, manage and disseminate information, both internally and to a variety of external audiences.

There are two objectives for communications:

- to keep management, staff and stakeholders aware of planning and the latest information on the pandemic, and
- to control and co-ordinate internal and external communications to the school population and community.

Planning Tip: Open, honest communication will foster better working relationships, co-ordination and co-operation and will help create confidence and alleviate fear, disruption and inconvenience.

MANAGING THE ISSUE

An effective response to a pandemic should include frequent, clear and effective communication with all the individuals and organizations that your school / school division interacts with regularly.

Communications should be concise, factual, understandable and culturally appropriate for your target audience.

People benefit from receiving information directly from an official source before hearing it informally in the community or second-hand from unofficial school sources. The school division or independent school

should designate an official spokesperson in the event of a pandemic.

Create a communications plan that considers the following communications needs and responsibilities during various phases of the pandemic:

2.4.4.1 Pre-Pandemic Communications

Monitor Information about Pandemic Influenza (School Division)

Keep abreast of the latest pandemic information from official public health sources by consulting your regional health authority and reviewing material on the Government of Manitoba and Manitoba Health websites.

Share Information with Employees (School and School Division)

Provide information on the school's plans and preparedness for responding to a pandemic including:

- any necessary training and written information on the roles that employees will have in implementing the plan (ex: educating students on ways of preventing infection), and
- reliable sources where employees can find information on how to prepare themselves and their families for a pandemic and what to do if they become infected.

Encourage staff to make healthy lifestyle choices and to get an annual flu shot, particularly if they fall within a high-risk group.

Share Information with Parents and Students (School)

Most people do not understand the basic concepts about pandemic influenza and what it may mean to their family or community. Provide guidance to parents and employees on how to obtain information on pandemic preparedness, including measures to protect themselves and their families during a pandemic, caring for ill persons at home, and recovery resources after the pandemic or between pandemic waves.

- Talk to parents about their expectations and needs during a pandemic.
- Communicate the measures you are taking to remain operational and to ensure a safe and healthy environment for employees and students.
- Tell how closures or other changes will be communicated to students and parents.

Share Information with other School Divisions or Schools (All)

Schools and school divisions could share their plans and preparedness activities with others in order to benefit all schools in the province.

2.4.4.2 Communications During a Pandemic

Continue to Monitor and Disseminate Information about the Pandemic (School Division)

Assumptions about the characteristics of the pandemic may change as new information about the virus becomes available.

Continue this activity from the pre-pandemic phase and use this information to make decisions and adjust plans as necessary and appropriate. Disseminate critical information to the school division and to your schools.

Continue to Share Information with Employees (School Division / School)

Continue to reinforce messaging from the pre-pandemic phase and keep employees apprised of changes to operations within the school and school division.

Continue to Share Information with Parents and Students (School)

Continue to share information with parents and students.

Reinforce messages from the pre-pandemic phase following the advice of the local government and public health officials.

Keep parents and students apprised of changes to school services. This messaging should provide concise, factual information about:

- the impact of the pandemic on the school / school division,
- what students / parents can expect from the school / school division

- what they can do to work with you, and
- when suspended services or reduced services will be restored (be realistic and honest about limitations or delays in service).

Share Information with the Community and Regional Health Authorities (School Division)

Communicate, as necessary, with the community and regional health authority regarding issues, needs identification and support that schools may be able to provide.

2.4.4.3 Communications After a Pandemic

After a pandemic, there will likely be considerable personal and family stress related to the many social, economic and psychological effects. Your school division/ school can help students, their families and others in your community by identifying community resources to help people cope with loss and stress.

3 PREPAREDNESS

Preparedness for a possible pandemic would follow many of the guidelines described in Section 2.4 on the business continuity planning process and in the accompanying materials on the Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth website at www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/policy/index.html

3.1 Maintain Your Plan

Update your contingency plan periodically to account for new information or practices related to influenza, to reflect the changes in your school division / school and its operations, and to keep contact and other information current. Assign responsibility for periodic review to maintain the plan's relevance, accuracy and functionality. Generally, a business continuity plan should be reviewed annually and when a new school or division administrator is assigned.

3.2 Training and Awareness

Training sessions raise awareness of the risk and start to prepare individuals and groups for their roles during a pandemic. Your school division/school could consider several options, including:

- sending participants on general emergency preparedness and response training or pandemic-specific training offered by government or private sector organizations;
- conducting employee training and awareness on the risk of and internal organizational response to a pandemic;
- providing necessary job training to staff members who are expected to serve as backups to other key personnel; and
- conducting table-top exercises among key personnel, followed by detailed debriefing to identify plan improvements.

3.3 Conclusion

Diligent planning will pay big dividends in the event of an influenza pandemic or other emergency by helping to minimize disruption and maintain levels of instruction for students.

Consider this an opportunity to increase your school division's/school's capacity for business continuity during other crises.

As a final note, consider sharing your pandemic planning and preparedness experience with other schools and school divisions, as well as organizations in your community. We all have different approaches to solving problems and sharing this information helps strengthen everyone's level of preparedness for a pandemic and other hazards.

A suggested checklist for pandemic planning activities is attached as Appendix H (see page 41).

APPENDIX A - Contacts

The following is a list of contacts in the Manitoba government to support your pandemic planning and respond to any need for further direction during a pandemic.

Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth

Emergency Response Co-ordination

Director
Finance and Administration Branch
15 - 1577 Dublin Avenue
Winnipeg MB R3E 3J5
Phone: (204) 945-0668

Administration Issues

Director
Education Administration Services Branch
1181 Portage Ave.
Winnipeg MB R3G 0T3
(204) 945-8664

Funding Issues

Director
Schools Finance Branch
511 - 1181 Portage Ave.
Winnipeg MB R3G 0T3
(204) 945-0515

Instruction, Curriculum and Assessment Issues

English - Director
Instruction, Curriculum and Assessment
W120 - 1970 Ness Ave.
Winnipeg R3J 0Y9
Phone (204) 945-6017

French - Director
Curriculum Development/Implementation
309 - 1181 Portage Ave.
Winnipeg R3G 0T3
Phone (204) 945-8797

Appropriate Education Issues

Director
Program and Student Services
206 - 1181 Portage Ave.
Winnipeg R3G 0T3
Phone (204) 945-7911

Regional Health Authorities of Manitoba

Contact information for the 11 regional health authorities of Manitoba is found at www.gov.mb.ca/health/rha/contact.html



Manitoba Health

Health Service Delivery

Pandemic Influenza

Director

Office of Disaster Management

Phone (204) 945-1444

Fax (204) 948-2531

Website www.gov.mb.ca/health/odm/index.html

Online Pandemic Information

The source for pandemic influenza information in Manitoba online is www.gov.mb.ca/influenza/pandemic.

Public Health

Pandemic Influenza Information

Critical Issues Co-ordinator

Office of the Chief Medical Officer of Health

Phone (204) 788-6666

Fax (204) 948-2204

Manitoba Intergovernmental Affairs and Trade

Manitoba Emergency Measures Organization

1525 - 405 Broadway

Winnipeg, Manitoba

R3C 3L6

Phone: 945-3050

Website www.manitobaemo.ca

Local Governments

Check with the local government authorities in your area to determine who is responsible for emergency coordination.

APPENDIX B - Further Information

GOVERNMENT OF MANITOBA

Manitoba Government

Information on Influenza - Websites

General influenza information: www.gov.mb.ca/influenza

Avian influenza preparedness strategy: www.gov.mb.ca/influenza/avian

Pandemic preparedness: www.gov.mb.ca/influenza/pandemic

Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth

Supplementary Information about Influenza Planning and Communication

www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/policy

GOVERNMENT OF CANADA

Public Health Agency of Canada

Influenza Information

Canadian Pandemic Influenza Plan: www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/cpip-pclcpi

Avian Influenza: www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/influenza/avian_e.html

WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION (WHO)

Influenza Information

www.who.int/csr/disease/avian_influenza/en

APPENDIX C - 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 per cent 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 together 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 millilitres 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.

APPENDIX D - 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 cause 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 to 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 and used 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 a vaccine.

What if I think I have the flu?

Most people with influenza recover without any serious problems. The disease can last for four to seven 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 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 specific treatment. Sick children should be kept home from school and daycare. At the time of a pandemic, Manitoba Health 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 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>

APPENDIX E - 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 Santé at 788-8200** (in Winnipeg) or toll-free **1-888-315-9257** (outside 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 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.

APPENDIX F - 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 type 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.

APPENDIX G - Compiling a Plan – Simplified Version

Once the necessary information is collected, compile it into a working plan. Remember to organize and standardize information so that it is as easy to use as possible. The following plan outline is a simpler alternative to completing the business continuity planning process.

Foreword	A brief statement by senior management demonstrating commitment to the plan.
Purpose	A broad statement to illustrate the general goals and objectives of the plan.
Activation	A description of who can activate the plan and the conditions that would constitute an emergency and require the plan to be activated.
Definitions	Include any definitions, technical terminology or acronyms that may not be readily understood or subject to misinterpretation.
Organizational Structure	Provide a chart showing the organizational and reporting structure to be used during a pandemic. Provide brief descriptions of the key individuals' roles within the structure, particularly if they differ considerably from their regular roles.
Contact Lists	A current phone list of all key personnel (and their alternates).
Departmental Plans	Include departmental plans for all school division business units and schools.
Date	The plan should be dated so that people know if they have the current version.
Record of Amendments	As the plan changes, maintain a list of all changes that have been made to the plan and when they were made.
Distribution List	Maintain a current list of all personnel who have copies of the plan.

APPENDIX H - Manitoba Health – School (K-12) Pandemic Influenza Planning Checklist

Completed	In Progress	Not Started	
1. Planning and Co-ordination:			
			Division Level:
			As part of the division’s emergency management plan, address pandemic influenza preparedness, involving all relevant stakeholders in the division in a pandemic preparedness committee (ex: lead local emergency response agency, division administrators, local public health representatives, school health and mental health professionals, teachers, director of building services and parent representatives). This committee is accountable for articulating strategic priorities and overseeing the development of the division’s operational pandemic plan.
			Work with regional health authorities (RHAs) and other community partners to establish organizational structures (ex: an Incident Management System) to execute the division’s pandemic plan. An IMS is a standardized organization structure that establishes a line of authority, common terminology and procedures to be followed in response to an incident. Ensure compatibility among the division, RHA and provincial education department IMS.
			Delineate accountability, responsibility and resources for key stakeholders engaged in planning and executing specific components of the operational plan. Ensure that the plan includes timelines, deliverables and performance measures.
			Work with your RHA(s) and education department to co-ordinate pandemic plans. Ensure that pandemic planning is co-ordinated with the community or local government pandemic plan as well.
			Test the linkages between the division’s Incident Management System and those of the education department and RHA.
			School Level:
			Work with your RHA to co-ordinate pandemic plans. Ensure that pandemic planning is co-ordinated with the community or local government pandemic plan as well.
			In the pandemic influenza plan, incorporate the requirements of students with special needs, those in special facilities and those who do not speak English as their first language.
			Participate in exercises of the community’s pandemic plan.



Completed	In Progress	Not Started	
			Plan with the RHA to address provision of psychosocial support services for the staff, students and their families during and after a pandemic.
			Develop mechanisms to communicate substantial increases in absenteeism among students to the RHA.
			Implement an exercise/drill to test your pandemic plan and review it at least annually.
			Share what you have learned from developing your preparedness and response plan with other schools within your community to improve community response efforts.
2. Continuity of Student Learning and Business Continuity:			
			Develop scenarios that describe the potential impact of a pandemic on student learning (ex: student and staff absences), school closings and extracurricular activities based on having various levels of illness among students and staff (school).
			Develop alternative procedures to assure continuity of instruction (ex: web-based distance instruction, telephone trees, mailed lessons and assignments, instruction via local radio or television stations) in the event of school closures (division and school in collaboration with Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth).
			Develop a continuity of operations plan for essential central office functions including payroll and ongoing communication with students and parents (division and school).

Completed	In Progress	Not Started	
3. Infection Control Policies and Procedures:			
			Work with the RHA to implement effective infection prevention policies and procedures that help limit the spread of influenza at schools (ex: promotion of hand hygiene, cough/sneeze etiquette). Make good hygiene a habit now in order to help protect children from many infectious diseases such as influenza (division).
			Provide sufficient and accessible infection prevention supplies, such as soap and water, paper towels, tissues and receptacles for their disposal. If soap and water are not available, alcohol-based hand rubs can be used (school).
			Establish policies and procedures for student and staff sick leave unique to a pandemic influenza (ex: non-punitive, liberal leave) (division).
			Establish policies for staff and students suspected to be ill or who become ill at school. Staff and students with known or suspected pandemic influenza should not remain at school and should return only after their symptoms resolve and they are physically ready to return to school. Specific and up-to-date information will be communicated by public health officials (Medical Officers of Health) at the time of a pandemic when the epidemiology is known (division).
			Communicate policy to students, parents and staff (school).
			Establish policies for transporting ill students (division).



Completed	In Progress	Not Started	
4. Communications Planning:			
			Assess readiness to meet communication needs in preparation for an influenza pandemic, including regular review, testing and updating of communication plans (division and school).
			Develop a dissemination plan for communication with staff, students and families, including spokespersons and links to other communication networks (division and school).
			Ensure language, culture and reading level appropriateness in communications by including community leaders representing different language and/or ethnic groups on the planning committee, asking for their participation both in document planning and the dissemination of public health messages within their communities (school).
			Develop and test platforms (ex: hotlines, telephone trees, dedicated websites and local radio or TV stations) for communicating pandemic status and actions to school division staff, students and families (division).
			Develop and maintain up-to-date communications contacts of key public health and education stakeholders (division and school).
			Test that information can be disseminated to all staff, students and families (division and school).
			Ensure the development of redundant communication systems/channels that allow for the expedited transmission of information (division and school).
			Advise staff, students and families where to find up-to-date, reliable pandemic information from provincial and local public health sources. (ex: www.gov.mb.ca/influenza/pandemic ; school's/division's website; Health Links-Info-Santé) (division and school).
			Disseminate information about your pandemic influenza preparedness and response plan (ex: continuity of instruction) (division and school).

Completed	In Progress	Not Started	
			Support the dissemination of information from public health sources on routine infection prevention and control (ex: hand hygiene, cough/sneeze etiquette), pandemic influenza facts (ex: signs and symptoms of influenza, modes of transmission), availability of vaccine, as well as personal and family prevention and response strategies (ex: guidance for the at-home care of ill students and family members) (school).
			Anticipate the potential fear and anxiety of staff, students and families as a result of rumors and misinformation and plan communications accordingly (school).

