

<p>U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION</p> <p>PERSONNEL MANUAL INSTRUCTION</p>	<p>PMI: <u>610-2</u></p> <p>DATE: <u>March 14, 2007</u></p> <p>APPROVED: <u>Colleen S. Lanza</u> (<i>Acting</i>) Director, Human Resources Services</p>
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Subject: DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION PANDEMIC FLU POLICY

TABLE OF CONTENTS

I. AUTHORITY 2

II. POLICY 2

III. APPLICABILITY 2

IV. RESPONSIBILITIES 2

V. SOCIAL DISTANCING TIPS..... 3

VI. ED POLICIES TEMPORARILY SUSPENDED DURING DECLARED
EMERGENCY 4

VII. ESSENTIAL PERSONNEL 4

VIII. COMMUNICATIONS DURING AN EMERGENCY 5

IX. AGENCY REPORTS 6

X. EMPLOYEE BENEFITS..... 6

APPENDIX A: OPM GUIDANCE ON PANDEMIC FLU 7

I. AUTHORITY

- National Strategy for Pandemic Influenza Implementation Plan, May 2006;
<http://www.whitehouse.gov/infocus/pandemicflu/>
- Federal Agency Managers Guidance for Human Capital Management Policy for a Pandemic Influenza (Office of Personnel Management (OPM)), July 2006.

II. POLICY

It is the policy of the Department of Education (ED) to have a pandemic flu plan in place in the event of a pandemic flu or other similar emergency (resulting from man-made or natural disasters), affecting all or part of the Department and its' employees.

III. APPLICABILITY

In the event of a pandemic flu or other similar emergency, this policy will apply to all ED employees, both at Headquarters and at all regional offices. Depending on the scope of the emergency, not all someED offices/locations maynot be affected by the emergency at the same time, in which case the unaffected offices/locations and therefore, will be expected to operate in accordance with regular ED policies and procedures.

Appendix A contains OPM's guidance on pandemic flu, which will supercede ED policies and procedures (See Section VI (A) below) i
in the event that a pandemic flu or other similar emergency is declared. This OPM guidance provides many links to web sites that contain very specific information on areas of personnel which may be affected.

IV. RESPONSIBILITIES

- A. The **Secretary of Education**, or designated official, or other official as deemed appropriate by OPM, will declare that the agency is operating under an emergency situation, and this policy will be activated. The policy will remain in effect until the emergency has been declared to be over by the Secretary or other appropriate official.
- B. **Assistant Secretaries with the assistance of Executive Officers** (EOs) of the Department's Principal Offices (POs) will work with Human Resources Services (HRS) staff to minimize the impact of the emergency situation and to coordinate any actions that may be needed to ensure continuation of the essential functions of the Department.
- C. **Supervisors** will coordinate with their EOs to maintain essential functions in ED, and will monitor their respective staffs for signs of any contagious illness. Supervisors may encourage staff to work alternate work

schedules, telework, etc., so as to minimize the impact of the emergency. During a declared emergency, supervisors are strongly encouraged to utilize the social distancing tips shown in Section V below with their staff members, in an attempt to minimize the impact and spread of the pandemic flu or other similar emergency.

- D. **Employees** will be expected to follow the guidance provided by their supervisors regarding the scope of the emergency, and the impact on the work environment. Employees are reminded that they need to advise their supervisors of any changes in their work status as soon as possible. When an unscheduled absence occurs, a non-bargaining unit employee is to officially request leave by notifying his/her supervisor **within the first hour after being scheduled to report for duty**; if the employee is unable to provide notice within this time frame, such notice must be provided as soon as possible thereafter, with justification concerning the employee's inability to contact the supervisor within the prescribed time frame. Bargaining unit employees should follow the procedures contained in Article 39, *Leave Policy*, of the Collective Bargaining Agreement (http://connected.ed.gov/doc_img/article39.doc). Employees will also be expected to stay away from the worksite when they are physically ill, or may be sent home if they report to work when they are sick.

V. SOCIAL DISTANCING TIPS

During a declared emergency, ED employees of all levels will be strongly advised to practice the social distancing techniques shown below, which would help prevent the spread of the pandemic flu among the staff.

- Avoid shaking hands or hugging.
- Do not congregate in break rooms or other areas where people socialize.
- Avoid meeting face-to-face by using telephone, video conferencing, and the Internet to conduct business as much as possible. If a face-to-face meeting is required, you should minimize meeting time, choose large conference rooms, and sit at least 3 or 4 feet away from others if possible.
- Avoid all unnecessary travel and cancel or postpone nonessential meetings, gatherings, workshops and training sessions.
- Split teams into different work locations to build back-up capabilities and avoid cross-infection.
- Avoid public transportation, by driving a car or come and go early or late to avoid rush hour crowding on public transportation.
- Use staggered lunchtimes to minimize numbers of employees in lunchrooms. Encourage employees to bring their lunch and eat at their desks or away from others, and to avoid eating in the cafeteria, lunchrooms, and crowded restaurants.

VI. ED POLICIES TEMPORARILY SUSPENDED DURING DECLARED EMERGENCY

- A. Once an emergency situation has been officially announced, and the policy set forth in this Personnel Manual Instruction (PMI) has been activated in accordance with Sections II and IV.A, above, the following some of ED's regular PMIs will be temporarily suspended for the length of the emergency situation, and ED will operate under applicable OPM regulations and guidance. If the emergency is of a limited scope, affecting only certain ED location(s), those locations not affected by the emergency will be expected to operate in accordance with regular ED policies and procedures.
- B. In the event of a pandemic flu, or other similar emergency, the following ED policies will be temporarily suspended, and ED will operate under current OPM regulations and guidance, in the areas of leave (annual, sick, LWOP, etc.), pay, and hiring.
- PMI 550-3, Premium Pay
 - PMI 610-3, Alternate Work Schedules for Non-Bargaining Unit Employees
 - PMI 630-1, Absence and Leave Administration – General Provisions
 - PMI 630-2, Annual Leave
 - PMI 630-3, Sick Leave
 - PMI 630-7, Excused Absence
 - PMI 630-8, Non-Pay: Absence without Leave (AWOL) and Leave without Pay (LWOP)
 - PMI 630-10, Voluntary Leave Transfer Program Administrative Procedures
- B. If the emergency is of a limited scope, affecting only certain ED location(s), those locations not affected by the emergency will be expected to operate in accordance with regular ED policies and procedures.

Note: PMI 368-1, Flexiplace Program, will continue to be in effect during a declared emergency, and should be consulted for any issues relating to telework/flexiplace that arise as the result of the , as impacted by pandemic flu (or other emergency situations).

VII. ESSENTIAL PERSONNEL

- A. In the event of a flu pandemic or other similar emergency, ED may activate its Continuity of Operations (COOP) and Business Continuity Plans (BCP) within the affected locations of the Department. If activated, each PO affected by the emergency will operate under its approved BCP.

- B. If the Secretary or other designated official activates ED's COOP Plan because an emergency has occurred during regular business hours, the Assistant Secretary for Management will ensure that COOP team members are notified/alerted. ED's COOP Coordinator shall initiate COOP response team notification procedures, to include notifying Executive Officers and supervisors, who, in turn, will notify their respective employees (either at work or at home). Specific COOP/BCP responsibilities will be carried out in accordance with applicable agency emergency plans, such as Administrative Communications System (ACS) OM: 5-102, Continuity of Operations (COOP) Program, dated August 1, 2005.
- C. If the Secretary or other designated official activates ED's COOP Plan because an emergency has occurred during non-business hours, the procedures outlined in Part B above will apply, except that essential employees, and supervisors, will also provide information to their respective staffs on future communications concerning work activities and general welfare issues.
- D. Essential employees will ensure that the overall functions of their offices will continue in the event of the pandemic flu or other similar emergency.
- E. Employees who are not designated as essential will be expected and required to abide by the instructions provided to them by their supervisors. Depending on the scope of the emergency, employees may be required to work from home or at an alternate location, or may be placed on sick or annual leave in accordance with OPM's Pandemic Flu Plan (see Appendix A to this policy).
- F. In the event of a declared emergency, HRS will be responsible for providing payroll services and processing personnel actions, including handling death cases and health benefits actions.

VIII. COMMUNICATIONS DURING AN EMERGENCY

- A. During a declared emergency, the Department will activate and maintain a toll-free telephone number for ED employees to call to report on their location and status; the phone number is 1-866-426-6533 (1-866-I-AM-OK-ED), and for persons with disabilities, the telephone number is 1-888-338-8965 (1-888-ED-TTY-OK).
- B. (1-866-I-AM-OK-ED)
ED will provide information to the local news media (radio and television networks), and will post information on its intranet, for employees to obtain information concerning work activities and general employee welfare issues. Employees working from home, or alternate worksites,

who have access to a computer, will be able to read and send e-mail by following the steps below:

- From your browser window, go to <http://email.ed.gov>.
- When the security certificate window comes up, select “Yes.” (If you get a message saying you are about to view pages over a secure connection, select “OK.”)
- In the “Log On” field, type in your regular ED Login ID (first name.last name).
- Then select "Click Here" from the text directly below your username, or just hit the “Enter” key on the keyboard.
- In the pop-up window, enter your network ID and password.
- Select OK to log in.

VIII.IX. AGENCY REPORTS

HRS will monitor the impact of a pandemic flu, or other similar emergency, on the ED workforce by requesting periodic reports to track the number of employees on sick leave and any employee deaths. HRS will also coordinate with the servicing Payroll Office, as needed, on any issues related to paying employees and reporting employees’ illnesses and deaths.

X. EMPLOYEE BENEFITS

Benefits for Federal employees and their eligible family members remain unchanged during a declared emergency, such as a pandemic flu or similar emergency. If an employee needs assistance with his/her benefits during an emergency situation, the employee should contact the HRS Employee Relations team for assistance.

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(www.opm.gov/pandemic)

