



PANDEMIC PLAN

February 2020

BACKGROUND

Seasonal Influenza versus Pandemic Influenza

Seasonal influenza virus strains constantly change and continually circulate in every part of the world, normally appearing in fall and winter in Alberta. The viruses cause respiratory illness and are contagious. While all age groups may be affected and most people recover from influenza, young children, those with certain chronic diseases such as heart disease, and those older than 65 are at higher risk for complications and death.

Pandemic influenza occurs when a novel influenza to which most humans have little or no immunity, acquires the ability to cause sustained human-to-human transmission that leads to a rapid worldwide spread. The novel virus may arise through genetic reassortment (animal and human influenza genes mix together) or genetic mutation (when genes in an animal virus change, allowing the virus to easily infect humans). When exposed to the new virus, most people become ill, as they have no immunity. If the new virus causes severe disease, it can lead to significant numbers of hospitalizations and deaths as well as social and economic disruption.

INFLUENZA-LIKE ILLNESS (ILI) ASSESSMENT

An individual is considered compromised when s/he displays the following symptoms:

- ✓ Acute onset of respiratory illness
- ✓ Fever (>38C), except with elderly people who may be ill without a fever
- ✓ Cough
- ✓ One or more of sore throat, joint pain, muscle pain, or extreme exhaustion

PREVENTATIVE MEASURES

Our focus is on prevention and there are six key factors to consider.

Following are the six key factors:

1. If ill, stay home from work, school and avoid public places. Seek medical attention if symptoms progress.
2. One of the best ways to prevent influenza is to get the influenza vaccine every year.
3. Hands should be cleaned before preparing food, eating, touching one's face and after coughing or sneezing, using the toilet and after handling soiled material.
4. Wash your hands with soap and water, or use an alcohol-based hand rub.
5. Cough or sneeze into your sleeve rather than your hand.
6. Do not touch your eyes, nose, or mouth after shaking hands or touching hard surfaces like counters and door handles or other surfaces that may contain influenza and other viruses.

PROCEDURES

PRE-PANDEMIC PHASE

- ✓ The Superintendent of Schools or designate will communicate with School Principals/Division Leadership Team initiating the Pre-Pandemic Phase.
- ✓ Continue with the six (6) prevention key factors.
- ✓ Parents/guardians, staff, volunteers, and students should be provided with basic information on the recognition of Influenza Like Illness (ILI). Parents/guardians, teachers and other staff should monitor the health of their children/students daily or more often for ILI. (Acute onset of respiratory illness, Fever (>38C), except with elderly people who may be ill without a fever, Cough, One or more of sore throat, joint pain, muscle pain, or extreme exhaustion)
- ✓ Under the direction of the Principal/Division Leadership Team, staff will peruse the three (3) Hour Zero Pandemic Training Modules.
- ✓ School staff should be prepared to quickly isolate students/staff who become ill with ILI at school in a room separated from others with adequate supervision until they can go home. Avoid transmission by practicing excellent hand and respiratory etiquette, and maintaining 2 meters distance from the ill individual as much as possible.
- ✓ Prepare posters regarding hand washing.
- ✓ Acquire and maintain a suitable inventory of soap, antimicrobial soap, and alcohol-based hand rub.
- ✓ Acquire and maintain a suitable inventory of low-level disinfectant cleaning supplies.
- ✓ In-service custodial staff regarding the proper usage of low-level disinfectant cleaning supplies.
- ✓ Keep common surfaces disinfected.
- ✓ Make any modifications necessary to shut off drinking fountains.

PANDEMIC PHASE

In the event of a pandemic, the response of School Jurisdictions will be guided by information from Alberta Health Services.

- ✓ The Superintendent of Schools or designate will communicate with School Principals/Division Leadership Team initiating the Pandemic Phase.
- ✓ Continue with the six (6) prevention key factors.
- ✓ Place the appropriate hand washing materials in washrooms and alcohol based hand rub in all classrooms
- ✓ Shut off the drinking fountains.
- ✓ Post hand-washing posters.
- ✓ Curtail lending of pens, pencils, and other hand held tools or disinfect such tools on a daily basis.
- ✓ Isolate all individuals who develop Influenza Like Illness (ILI) during the school day and until they can be released to a parent.
- ✓ Individual's ill with ILI should stay at home until they are free of symptoms and feeling well and are able to fully participate in all normal school activities.
- ✓ Use low-level disinfectants on all contact surfaces (floors, handrails, walls, counters, computer keyboards, doorknobs, locker doors, window latches, ledges, desks, sinks, toilets, urinals, etc.). At the end of each school day, teachers will supervise students in disinfecting all contact surfaces in the classroom.

- ✓ Schools track daily attendance by absence type and report to the Superintendent (or designate) both the percentage of staff and the percentage of students absent with Influenza Like Illness. Schools may also be required to report the same information to Alberta Health Services.
- ✓ Schools close, at the discretion of the Superintendent or by order of Alberta Health.

POST-PANDEMIC PHASE

- ✓ Revert to preventative measures.

SERVICE LEVELS

As long as schools are open, they will continue with their primary purpose. Additional work force resources will be provided through our existing substitute services. Local reactive school closures may occur in consultation with Alberta Health Services.

Division Office services (Accounting, Payroll, Personnel, Maintenance) will be completed on a priority basis. School custodial services will focus on disinfection. Maintenance and Custodial personnel may be redirected from other areas to maintain disinfection standards as long as schools are open.

RESOURCES

Black Gold's Hour-Zero School Emergency Program includes three (3) Pandemic Training Modules: Pandemic Awareness, Pandemic for Admins, and Pandemic for Teachers. Log into Hour Zero, click on "Training" in the left column, in the course list drop down menu select "all". The Pandemic Modules are listed in the middle of the list.

- Pandemic Awareness: Flu Facts, Dealing with Pandemics, Slow the Spread
- Pandemic for Admins: Pandemic Primer, What to Expect, What Schools can do, Strategies
- Pandemic for Teachers: Pandemic Primer, Classroom Tips, What to Expect from Students, Classroom Resources

Alberta Health Services has a variety of excellent information and quality posters suitable for printing and posting, in PDF format, for covering your cough/washing your hands and Alert to Visitors poster in the section titled "Signs" available on its website:

<https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/info/Page10531.aspx>