



PANDEMIC PLAN

March 16 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.

RESPIRATORY-LIKE ILLNESS (RLI) ASSESSMENT

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

- ✓ Acute onset of respiratory-like 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. Call Health Link 811.
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.
- ✓ Promote ‘elbow bumps’ in place of handshakes as informal greetings.
- ✓ Parents/guardians, staff, volunteers, and students should be provided with basic information on the recognition of Respiratory Like Illness (RLI). Parents/guardians, teachers and other staff should monitor the health of their children/students daily or more often for RLI. (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 RLI 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 hand hygiene, respiratory hygiene, and ‘do not visit if ill’ posters
<https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/info/Page11362.aspx>
- ✓ Acquire and maintain a suitable inventory of soap and hand sanitizer.
- ✓ 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.
- ✓ Black Gold School Division will review both its Domestic and International School Excursions.

PANDEMIC PHASE

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

- ✓ 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.
- ✓ Post hand hygiene, respiratory hygiene, and ‘do not visit if ill’ posters.
<https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/info/Page11362.aspx>
- ✓ Curtail lending of pens, pencils, and other hand held tools or disinfect such tools on a daily basis.
- ✓ Discourage everyone from sharing food, utensils, and water bottles.
- ✓ Encouraging ‘hello & a smile’ in place of ‘elbow’ bumps as informal greetings.
- ✓ Eliminate large congregations of students.
- ✓ Require students and staff to bring personal water bottles: fill at home or use the preferred ‘Bottle Filling Station’ type water fountain at the school. If using the older style ‘Push Button’ type water fountain, wash hands before pushing the button and filling the water bottle.

- ✓ Isolate students/staff who develop Respiratory Like Illness (RLI) during the school day and until they can be released to a parent/guardian.
- ✓ Students/staff with a confirmed case of COVID-19 must receive clearance from public health officials before returning to school.
- ✓ Alberta Health Services strongly urges anyone with Non-COVID-19 or unknown respiratory-like illness (fever, cough, fatigue, one or more sore throat, joint pain, muscle pain, or extreme exhaustion) should not return to school until 14 days after symptom onset. For a self-assessment, go to Alberta Health Services COVID-19 Self-Assessment Link at <https://myhealth.alberta.ca/Journey/COVID-19/Pages/COVID-Self-Assessment.aspx>
- ✓ Alberta Health Services advises against international travel.
- ✓ Anyone returning from outside of Canada must self-isolate for 14 days, even without symptoms; family members who were not outside of Canada may go to work/school. Should the self-isolating family member begin to show respiratory illness like symptoms, only then do other family members in the household self-isolate.
- ✓ If one has come into close contact with an individual who has tested positive for COVID-19, Alberta Health Services will contact him/her, identify him/her as a ‘close contact’ and direct him/her to self-isolate. Family members who are not identified as ‘close contacts’ may go to work/school. Should the ‘close contact’ family member begin to show respiratory illness like symptoms, only then do other family members in the household self-isolate.
- ✓ There is a zero-tolerance for anyone with respiratory-like illness symptoms attending/visiting our schools (Alberta Health Services).
- ✓ Custodial staff will 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 beginning of each class period, or as appropriate, teachers will be available to supervise students in clean wiping all personal work space contact surfaces - ie: desk top, chrome book, etc. Should a parent/student wish for this to happen, low-level disinfectant, non-hazardous products will be used.
- ✓ As per routine monitoring and surveillance in schools and child care settings, Black Gold School Division will notify Alberta Health Services of unusual situations, such as when absenteeism of students/children or staff is greater than would be expected, or if a student/child who is self-monitoring for symptoms of COVID-19 becomes symptomatic while at school/child care.
- ✓ Eliminate large congregations of students and staff.
- ✓ Ensure no more than 250 people are in the same room at any given time. For smaller gatherings, practice appropriate mitigation strategies.
- ✓ Postpone indefinitely sports tournaments, concerts, drama/music festivals, drama productions, family nights, ski nights, local field trips, open houses, whole school assemblies, school council meetings, and parent/teacher interviews.
- ✓ Discontinue and cancel the rental of Black Gold facilities to community groups.
- ✓ Treat everyone with respect, fairness, and compassion.
- ✓ Schools close at the discretion of Alberta’s Chief Medical Officer.

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/topics/Page16944.aspx>

<https://www.alberta.ca/assets/documents/covid19-alberta-guidance-for-schools-and-child-care-programs.pdf>