

School District #81 Fort Nelson

# **Pandemic (H1N1) Response Plan**

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October 2009

References: School District No. 73 (Kamloops/Thompson) Pandemic Response Plan  
Pandemic Response Framework and Pandemic Planning Guidelines for School Districts, August 2009  
Ministry of Education

## **Pandemic (H1N1) Planning Committee/Emergency Response Team**

A committee was formed to plan for effective precautions, educational and business planning.

### **Members of the Committee:**

Diana Samchuck, Superintendent of Schools  
Margaret-Anne Hall, Secretary-Treasurer, Occupational Health and Safety  
Ray Irwin, Director of Instruction  
Patti Burt, District Vice-Principal, Technology and Distance Education  
Scott Stephenson, Principal Rep.  
Karen Prouse, Administrative Assistant  
Darryl Low, Maintenance Supervisor  
Yvette Taylor, FNDTA Rep.  
Kathleen Ganson, BCGEU Rep.  
Kim Tofte, FNDTA Rep. and Occupational Health and Safety  
Nicole Lougheed, Fort Nelson Health Unit  
Pepita Bolton-Riley, Fort Nelson Health Unit

## **H1N1**

*Symptoms of H1N1 or the swine flu virus are similar to seasonal flu. These could include: fever, cough, sore throat, body aches, headache, chills, fatigue, vomiting and diarrhea.*

*The virus is contagious for 24 hours before symptoms begin and for about 7 days after symptoms begin.*

*More information is available at HealthLink BC at 8-1-1 and at <http://www.gov.bc.ca/h1n1>*

## **Plan Overview**

### **Organization of the Plan**

This plan is organized into three pandemic phases.

1. Pre-pandemic Phase
2. Pandemic Phase
3. Post-pandemic Phase

Each period in the Pandemic Response Plan address the following five components:

1. Planning and Coordination
2. Continuity of Student Learning and Core Operations
3. Infection Control
4. Communication Planning
5. Education of Staff/Student/Families

## Pre-pandemic Phase

### Task list

- Provide H1N1 information to schools for parent newsletters on first week of school.
- Update District website with link to H1N1 government website and information for Parents, Students and Schools.
- Put H1N1Facts in local newspaper.
- Discuss value of Alcohol-gel handwash with Public Health.
- Provide Alcohol-gel handwash (60% alcohol) for school entrances, computer labs, offices.
- Promote proper handwashing with soap and water for staff and students; coughing and sneezing into tissue or crook of arm. Websites sent to schools:  
<http://www.bccdc.ca/prevention/HandHygiene/default.html>  
<http://www.worksafebcmedia.com/media/fss/hand/player/handwashing.html>  
<http://www.health.state.mn.us/handhygiene/curricula/curriculum.html#young>  
<http://www.henrythehand.com/pages/content/index.html>  
<http://www.cdc.gov/germstopper/materials.htm>
- Ensure that all elementary and Strong Start classrooms are modeling proper hand washing with students. Principals report to Superintendent.
- send letter home with elementary students and put on website – if child is sick, please keep them home; ensure emergency numbers are updated.
- Ensure schools and district emergency communication trees are accurate; copies to district office.
- Provide Lysol wipes for all schools: Kleenex for high school.
- Contact Public Health for participation in planning.
- Establish Pandemic Planning Meeting/Emergency Response Team to identify what has been done; who else needs to be involved; other information needed.
- model correct desk/table top/ edge cleaning/light switches/ doorknobs/bannisters and cleaning expectations to janitorial staff
- Model proper computer/keyboard cleaning for janitorial and maintenance staff.
- discuss bus cleaning with bus contractor
- develop medical room cleaning protocol and review with principals, secretaries and maintenance staff
- Provide disposable masks and gloves to schools and maintenance for medical room protocol
- letter to staff on staying home if sick and on protecting staff and student confidentiality.
- Plan for continuation of educational services in case of school closures; training provided to high school staff for lessons to be available on webpage.
- Plan for continuation of Payroll services.

## **Pandemic Phase**

### **Task List**

- **Advise the Public Health nurse when 10% of school population is away ill.**

As in the past 10 years the regular Public Health Flu Protocol will be followed by schools. The school secretaries contact Public Health if 10% or more students are absent from school with flu-like symptoms. This information often comes from the school's Safe Arrival program. Public Health contacts parents, takes a swab from the child and test results are then sent for examination and determination of H1N1.

- If school trips are planned, determine how children will be isolated and sent home should they become ill with flu like symptoms.
- School trips and school evening user groups may be cancelled.
- Depending on staffing or student shortages, classes may need to be combined and/or non enrolling staff/ administration may be assigned to classrooms; non-emergency leaves may be cancelled.
- Bus routes may need to be combined due to driver and /or student shortages.
- Evaluate student learning continuity; adjust as needed.
- Continue cleaning and hygiene practices and procedures.
- Ensure schools have adequate supply of hand soap, alcohol-based gel, Kleenex, paper towels.
- Advise staff and students that are sick with flu like symptoms to remain at home.
- Monitor classes with fragile special needs students. They may need to be advised to stay home due to health/safety concerns related to student/staff shortages.
- Separate ill students in sick room until they can be sent home.
- Follow sick room protocol.
- If school is open, provide information in school newsletters/district website.
- If decision to close school occurs after school hours use critical response communication tree to inform staff.
- Schools may be closed. Communication Plan (Pandemic Protocol item 4 ) followed to inform public.

## **Post-Pandemic Period**

### **Task List**

- Re-opening of schools – use critical response communication tree to inform staff.
- Depending on staffing or student shortages, classes may need to be combined and/or non enrolling staff/ administration may be assigned to classrooms; non-emergency leaves may be cancelled.
- Bus routes may need to be combined due to driver and /or student shortages.

- Follow Communication Plan (Pandemic Protocol item 4) to communicate with public for school openings and bussing resumption.
  - Continue with cleaning and hygiene practices and procedures.
  - Ensure schools have adequate supply of hand soap, alcohol-based gel, Kleenex, paper towels.
  - Advise staff and students that are sick with flu like symptoms to remain at home.
  - Monitor classes with fragile special needs students. They may need to be advised to stay home due to health/safety concerns related to student/staff shortages.
  - Advise the Public Health nurse when 10% of school population is away ill.
  - Separate ill students in sick room until they can be sent home.
  - Follow sick room protocol.
  - Use school newsletter/district website to provide information to students and families.
- Prepare for Critical Incident Response ( Protocol #26) if there have been deaths among students and staff.
- Keep staff informed.

## **APPENDIX A**

### **Pandemic Protocol**

**What:** Schools and District Facilities may be closed during a pandemic in an effort to limit the spread of the virus.

**When:** Closure of a school or facility will only occur on the direction of the Superintendent of Schools or her designate.

**The Centre for Disease Control determines that a student or staff member has tested positive for virus responsible for pandemic.**

#### **Procedures:**

1. The Centre for Disease Control (CDC) determines the test results. If positive, the CDC informs: Provincial Health Officer and Regional Health Officer  
  
Superintendent of Schools  
  
Ministry of Education
2. The Superintendent of Schools, in consultation with the Regional Health Officer and the Ministry of Education, will determine whether the schools will be closed. The Ministry of Education has provided districts in British Columbia with criteria to make this determination.
3. The principal, under advisement of the Superintendent or her designate, will direct the requirements of a school closure.
4. During a pandemic, the school district will communicate with the schools and community through the School District Website, local radio, CBC, weather network, school and school district answering machines. All information and details released to the media will come through a single spokesperson; the Superintendent of Schools or her designate.
5. If students are to be sent home, parents/guardians will be notified by the school or the district by phone. The supervising adults should release the students as described below.. Students/parents/ guardians should continue to check the district website, local radio etc. for ongoing information regarding the situation.

#### **For Elementary Students**

1. Determine that the method each student will use to get home is safe and reliable (school bus, walking short distances, pick up by parent).
2. For students taking a bus, go with them to the pick up area to ensure the bus is available as planned.
3. If students are being picked up by parents, keep them with you until the parent arrives.
4. Account for all children, keeping a record of how and when they left school.

**For Secondary Students**

1. Determine that students can get home safely by bus, car or foot.
  2. For students taking a bus or being picked up by parents, provide a supervised area where they can wait.
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## **APPENDIX B**

### **Sick Room Protocol**

#### **Maintenance Department Responsibilities**

Appropriate precautions must be taken by maintenance staff when they are handling an individual's vomit. The following represents necessary actions:

- disposable gloves and a mask are to be put on prior to entering contaminated area
- the vomit is to be double bagged and disposed of in the outside garbage container
- on carpeted areas "powder dam" may be used
- affected area is to be disinfected with an appropriate solution such as "pinosan" or "vanguard"
- mop is to be disinfected with "pinosan" or "vanguard"

#### **Students Displaying Flu Like Symptoms**

When students display flu like symptoms they must be directed to the office.

Office staff that monitor sick students should put on disposable gloves and a mask when working with sick students. The sick room should be made available if the student wishes to lay down.

Parent/guardian must be contacted immediately to retrieve the student from the school.

Once the infected student has vacated the sickroom/office area maintenance personnel must disinfect the area with an appropriate disinfectant such as "pinosan" or "vanguard".

Mops and cloths used in disinfecting the area must be disinfected with "pinosan" or "vanguard".

## **APPENDIX C**

## School Closures

Schools can act as amplification points for pandemics – in particular, influenza – and children and youth are thought to play a significant role in introducing and transmitting a virus within their households. There is limiting and conflicting evidence about the effectiveness of school closures in preventing transmission and in reducing serious outcomes of influenza. Furthermore, closing schools in isolation of other social distancing measures (i.e. people staying home when ill, staggered work hours, telecommuting, closing theatres and churches, discouraging mass gatherings) may not have the desired effect in preventing community transmission.

The legal authority to close a school for public health reasons falls under the purview of the local Medical Health Officer (Dr. Charl Badenhorst) and the Provincial Health Officer.

- The *School Act* requires health authorities to designate a school medical officer (Dr. Charl Badenhorst is S.D. #81 Fort Nelson's) for each school district in order to liaise between the health authority and the school district.
- The Medical Officer can require a Board of Education to close a school if there is a health risk to students.
- The Medical Health Officer must consult with the Board of Education and the Provincial Health Officer prior to making his advice public.
- The *Public Health Act* also provides powers for the Provincial Health Officer and Medical Health Officers which may be used in the event of a serious pandemic to order closure of schools and other public places.
- A Board of Education has the authority to close a school on a required day of instruction if it believes the health or safety of students is endangered.