



OTTAWA CATHOLIC SCHOOL BOARD

INFLUENZA PANDEMIC PROTOCOL

THE PURPOSE OF THIS PROTOCOL IS TO PROVIDE ADDITIONAL GUIDANCE TO PRINCIPALS AND EXECUTIVE MANAGEMENT IN SITUATIONS WHERE PUBLIC HEALTH OFFICIALS HAVE DECLARED AN INFLUENZA PANDEMIC ALERT IN THE NATIONAL CAPITAL REGION.

PRINCIPALS ARE REQUESTED TO CONTINUE TO REFER TO THEIR SCHOOL CRISIS RESPONSE PLAN.

THIS PROTOCOL CONTAINS DETAILED APPLICATIONS FOR SPECIFIC SITUATIONS THAT MAY ARISE DURING A PANDEMIC ALERT IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE BOARD'S PANDEMIC AND EMERGENCY RESPONSE PLAN (CHAPTER 6) IN THE EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS MANUAL.

September 2009

ASSUMPTIONS

1. An Influenza Pandemic will cause simultaneous outbreaks of influenza in districts of Ottawa and throughout the National Capital Region.
2. There will be a large portion of the population unable to go to work or attend school.
3. There will be a substantial portion of the population in the affected areas that will require medical treatment and in some cases hospitalization.
4. Service and Transportation sectors will be overwhelmed leading to reduced capacity and availability.
5. Specific sectors of the population will be more vulnerable and require additional assistance.
6. Pandemic response will be an integrated action of organizational and health sector's Emergency Response planning coordinated by the Medical Officer of Health.

OPERATIONAL PRIORITIES DURING AN INFLUENZA PANDEMIC

The following priorities will be in place throughout an influenza Pandemic Alert period.

1. The Board will maintain basic educational services.
2. The Board will maintain regular school hours, school operation and student transportation services.
3. The school Crisis Response Plan and the Board's Emergency Preparedness protocols will remain in effect throughout the Pandemic Alert period.
4. The Board will initiate and maintain daily communication with co-terminus boards, public health officials and agencies.
5. The existing decision-making structure will remain in place.
6. The Emergency Response Team will meet as required and act in an advisory role to the Director of Education and/or designate(s).
7. If the Emergency Measures Act is initiated by Provincial and/or Federal authorities, the Board will operate in cooperation with designated command centres.

ROLE OF THE EMERGENCY RESPONSE TEAM

- (1) Provide advice and opinion to the Director of Education
- (2) Provide information and support for use by Superintendents, Principals, supervisors and external contractors
- (3) Provide current information for the Board web site
- (4) Meet with Public Health officials

ROLE OF THE DIRECTORATE

- (1) Schedule meetings and agendas and provide for recording of minutes

- (2) Provide current information to Trustees and CEC staff
- (3) Approve all external/media communications
- (4) Liaise with Medical Officer of Health and other Board Directors

ROLE OF SUPERINTENDENTS OF SCHOOLS

- (1) Provide updates and advice to Principals in their family of schools
- (2) Ensure the Principal, Vice-Principal, Teacher-in-Charge or a designate is in charge of an operating school at all times
- (3) Provide advice to Principals for letters to parents concerning Pandemic issues to parents or to the school community

Pandemic Periods and Phases

The World Health Organization (United Nations) uses an international classification for influenza pandemics. The classification is made up of 4 Periods and 6 Phases

Interpandemic Period	Phase 1	No new influenza subtypes have been detected in humans. If a new influenza is recognized in animals, the risk of human infection is considered to be low.
	Phase 2	No new influenza subtypes have been detected in humans. However, an animal influenza poses a substantial risk to humans
Pandemic Alert Period	Phase 3	Human infections by a new influenza virus subtype but no human-to-human spread except in rare instances
	Phase 4	Small clusters of a new influenza virus with limited human-to-human transmission but spread is localized, suggesting the virus is not well adapted to humans
	Phase 5	Larger clusters but human-to-human spread still localized, suggesting virus is becoming increasingly better adapted to humans, but may not be fully transmissible (substantial pandemic risk)
Pandemic Period	Phase 6	Increases and sustained transmission in general population
Postpandemic Period		Return to Interpandemic Period

EXPECTED PANDEMIC CRISIS EVENTS IN SCHOOLS DURING THE INFLUENZA PANDEMIC PERIOD (Phase 6)

INFORMATION FOR PRINCIPALS

There will be many unforeseen circumstances and contingencies during the Influenza Pandemic Period. It is not possible or advisable to prepare separate responses for isolated incidents. However, there are specific events that will directly impact on school operation during the influenza pandemic period. By taking a common approach we will be able to provide basic services and meet crisis events in an orderly and effective approach.

1. Vulnerable Populations (employees, students and volunteers)

There will be vulnerable populations in every school at high risk of severe illness or death during an influenza pandemic. The H1N1 strain has been shown to have serious health implications for persons with lung, heart and immune system illnesses. Diabetic persons may be at higher risk. Pregnant women are at higher risk. Some students with diagnosed serious illnesses may be more susceptible to complications from the virus that may be fatal.

Those persons that fall within the above description of vulnerable populations should be monitored closely. If the school has an influenza outbreak (over 10% of the population absent due to influenza) vulnerable employees and volunteers may be asked to work at alternate sites or complete alternate work at home if continued attendance at the school places them at risk.

2. School Relocation and/or Temporary Closure

The Pandemic and Emergency Response Plan (Chapter 6, Emergency Preparedness Manual) provides for the temporary re-location of students or school closure during an influenza pandemic outbreak.

The Crisis Response Plan is to be followed if this process is deemed necessary in cooperation with the Medical Officer of Health. This Plan outlines how any interruption of services is handled, including communication to parents. Schools will remain open for all normal activities (educational and community) unless the order to re-locate or close the school is directly related to an influenza pandemic and the Principal is directed to do so by the Superintendent of Schools when directed to do so by the Director of Education or designate.

3. Child Care Services, Continuing and Community Education and Community Use of Schools

Child Care Services will continue to operate in accordance to established schedules. If a Principal is given a school re-location or closure order by the Superintendent of Schools, the Principal or designate will advise the Supervisor of the Child Care. The Director of Education or designate will advise the Superintendent of Student Success (Elementary) or designate to advise the Manager of Child Care Services that a re-location or closure order is in effect. The decision to continue Child Care operations at that school (unless specifically all services provided at the school are requested to terminate by order of the Medical Officer of Health) will be determined in cooperation with the Superintendent Student Success (Elementary) and the Child Care Services Manager.

Continuing and Community Education classes will continue to provide services on their regular schedules during an influenza pandemic period (unless specifically all services provided at the school are requested to terminate by order of the Medical Officer of

Health). Evening and week-end classes will continue to operate in schools closed or re-located.

Community Use of School Facilities will continue to provide access on their regular schedules during an influenza pandemic period (unless specifically all services provided at the school are requested to terminate by order of the Medical Officer of Health).

4. Infection Control and Special Cleaning

Hand washing with soap and water using proper technique should be promoted. In some classrooms where there are vulnerable students alcohol-based hand sanitizers are provided. Individual use of alcohol-based hand sanitizers are encouraged.

Staff, students and volunteers who have flu-like symptoms should be encouraged to stay home until the contagious period is over (usually a week to 10 days) and if symptoms worsen to seek medical attention.

School Principals are asked to cooperate with Ottawa Public Health and to provide space in their schools for community influenza vaccination clinics on request. Board Policy provides for no-cost access to schools by Ottawa Public Health on request.

School Age Health Program nurses from Ottawa Public Health regularly plan visits schools to provide public health information. Principals are asked to allow access to staff and students on request. In a major change of hygiene practices, health professional are asking every person to cough or sneeze onto their lower arm and not their hands. Hand contact is the primary vector (infecting pathway) for distribution of germs (scratching, rubbing eyes, eating, touching multi-contact such points as door handles and stair railings).

Schools caretaking staff should be asked to wipe down common contact points (doors, railings, door handles and push bars) with disinfectant on a daily basis to reduce the likelihood of infection. For schools with increased levels of absenteeism related to influenza, the Principal may request a special cleaning service through the District Supervisor to wipe down and disinfect desktops and common contact surfaces.

5. Visitors to schools, Student Excursions, Field Trips and School Assemblies

Schools will continue to operate in accordance to established procedures for visitors, excursions and field trips during an influenza pandemic period. Principals may decide to cancel field trips and excursions if attendance of students with permission to take part in the activity is too low in the opinion of the Principal.

Visitors who appear ill from influenza should be asked to meet with the Principal in the Principal's office or other office space not normally used by students or staff. The

Principal should explain this is being done to control the spread of influenza and request the visitor to leave the school.

During a pandemic alert period and there are a substantial number of flu-like reports of absenteeism (10% or more) the Principal should not convene general school population gatherings (assemblies) unless in the Principal's opinion the assembly is important to proceed. At absentee levels above 15% for flu-like symptoms no general assemblies should take place until absenteeism for those with reported flu-like symptoms falls below 10% of the school student population.

6. School Bus, School Van and Taxi Transportation of Students

OSTA (Ottawa Student Transportation Authority) will continue to operate school bus, school van routes and taxi services in accordance with established schedules during a pandemic period. In the event that a scheduled school bus or school van route cannot operate as a result of absenteeism related to influenza. OSTA will advise the office of Director of Education and provide public information on the Internet and to local media of the cancellations in effect.

In the case of a school re-location or closure during a pandemic period, the Director of Education or designate will coordinate route changes with OSTA and OSTA will provide public information on the Internet and to local media of the route changes and/or cancellations.

7. Home Schooling and Home Instruction

Home Schooling and Home Instruction will continue to operate in accordance with established schedules and procedures during an influenza pandemic period.

If a student or a family member is ill with flu-like symptoms, Home Instruction teachers may decline further visits until the contagious period is over and illness has subsided. The Home Instruction teacher will provide notice to his/her supervisor of the temporary halt in service. The Home Instruction teacher will provide information (if appropriate) by email, fax or telephone.

8. Food Services and Cafeterias in High Schools

Cafeterias and food services in high schools will continue to operate in accordance with established schedules and practices during an influenza pandemic period. Food service workers will wear disposable gloves when serving hot food and preparing cold food (sandwiches, desserts, fruit and salads). Food service workers with flu-like symptoms should not work and should stay home until health has improved.

9. Student Work Assignments, Co-op Placements and Student Volunteer Work

Student work assignments, co-op placements and student volunteer work will continue in accordance with established schedules during an influenza pandemic period except for the following placements: Student assignments and placements at medical offices, clinics or hospitals will be withdrawn when a pandemic period alert is issued for the National Capital Region by the Medical Officer of Health. Placements at retirement centres, daycare centres and pre-school centres will be monitored by co-op teachers and consultants. On advice of the Medical Officer of Health and/or the Director of Education or designate, assigned students will be withdrawn as deemed appropriate.

Additional Internet Information Sites

www.ottawa.on/health (Ottawa Public Health)

www.gov.on.ca/health (Ontario Ministry of Health and Long Term Care)

www.emergencymanagementontario.ca (Emergency Management Organization)

www.champlainhin.on.ca (Ottawa area health network)

www.fightflu.ca (Health Canada)