

Northwest School Division Develops influenza Protocol September 16, 2009

The Northwest School Division has developed and released an influenza protocol to assist the employees of the division to meet the challenges of dealing with the H1N1 influenza pandemic.

“It enables us to prudently prepare for and respond to the outbreak,” said Director Glen Winkler. “We want to avoid being complacent about it, just as we also want to avoid over-reacting to the threat.”

The three main goals of the protocol are to reduce the spread of the virus within the schools and offices of the division, to sustain the ability of the school division to continue to deliver a quality education to its students, and to maintain its administrative functions.

In order to achieve these goals the plan involves three stages: prevention, preparation and response, each of which is tied to what is happening in the district with regard to the progression of the epidemic.

Throughout the prevention stage the focus will be on educating the staffs and students on the nature of the disease, on correct respiratory practices, and on preventative hygiene measures.

The preparation stage consists in the schools, officials and administration making certain that plans and materials are in place to deal with the effects of the pandemic.

During the response stage (in which cases are present within the schools) staff will concentrate on helping stricken children and on responding correctly to the spread of the illness, to elevated rates of absenteeism, and to the problems of ensuring that the schools are disinfected regularly and correctly.

“We are now in the first stage,” said Winkler, “and principals are currently holding meetings with their staffs to discuss the protocol and begin the process of educating students.”

Parents who are interested in accessing and reading the Northwest School Division’s Influenza Protocol can find it, along with helpful documents on the nature of the disease and on how to correctly care for children ill with influenza, on the division’s website at <http://www.nwsd.ca/>.

At this point neither the Public Health Agency of Canada nor Saskatchewan Health are recommending school closures as a method of dealing with the spread of the outbreak.