

NORTHWEST SCHOOL DIVISION INFLUENZA PROTOCOL

1.0 INTRODUCTION

“Between the extremes of panic and complacency lies the solid ground of vigilance.”(Dr. Margaret Chan, Director-General of the World Health Organization)

With the declaration of a global H1N1 Influenza A pandemic by the WHO the following protocol has been developed to prepare staff and students of the Northwest School Division to be in a state of preparedness should the outbreak reach our area. The following protocol is designed to enable the division to prudently prepare for and respond to the outbreak, and will enable us to serve our public in two ways— through education (of both students and parents) with the intention of mitigating the effects of the disease, and by thoughtful correct action in the event of our people being affected.

This document / policy may be modified in the future as more information becomes available from the Public Health Agency of Canada, The Ministry of Health for the Province of Saskatchewan, the Ministry of Education for the Province of Saskatchewan or as circumstances or needs warrant.

The Lambton College Pandemic Influenza Plan (December 18, 2008), and documents from the Saskatchewan Ministry of Health, the Public Health Agency of Canada, and the World Health Organization, were used as both source and reference material in the preparation of this document.

2.0 BACKGROUND

*Extracted from Sask. Ministry of Health document: **H1N1 INFLUENZA A INFORMATION FOR HEALTH CARE WORKERS***

What is H1N1 Influenza A?

H1N1 Influenza is a new virus first detected in April 2009. It is a mixture of swine/avian/human genetic sequences. As it is a new virus there is minimal immunity in individuals and populations. Thus the virus is able to spread quickly and cause illness in many people. In June the World Health Organization declared H1N1 Influenza a pandemic because of its geographic spread to over 120 countries. No increase in severity has been detected. H1N1 Influenza has spread rapidly in younger age groups, but severe illness is more common older adults and those with chronic diseases and smokers.

What are the symptoms?

Symptoms of H1N1 Influenza A are similar to the symptoms of regular seasonal influenza infection. These include fever cough, sore throat, wheezing, gastroenteritis, malaise and other flu like illness.

What are the characteristics of H1N1 Influenza?

Influenza like illness (ILI): acute onset of fever and cough and one or more of: sore throat, muscle aches, joint pain, or weakness. Vomiting/diarrhea may be present and fever may not be prominent

Transmission: *directly* from person to person through coughing or sneezing, and *indirect* from touching contaminated surfaces and objects and then touching the eyes/nose/mouth

Severity: ranges from mild to severe. Most H1N1 illness to date has been relatively mild. It appears to be more severe mainly in *vulnerable groups* such persons with underlying illnesses including chronic lung diseases, heart disease, diabetes, asthma, immune deficiency, and in the 2nd and 3rd trimester of pregnancy.

Contagious: transmission is most likely to occur during the first few days of obvious ILI illness. It is recommended that persons who are ill with ILI symptoms should stay home from work or school and limit contact with others and not return to routine activities outside the home until they are symptom free or for 7 days, whichever is shorter.

Extracted from documents of the W.H.O.

“Influenza pandemics are remarkable events because they spread throughout a world population that is either largely or entirely susceptible to infection. They tend to hit a given area in the epidemiological equivalent of a tidal wave.

In densely populated areas, we see a steep increase in the number of cases, with a sharp peak, followed by a steep decline. Once the virus has swept through a susceptible population, transmission may continue, but at a much lower intensity.

In more sparsely populated areas, the peak may be flatter. Aggressive control measures can also flatten the epidemiological peak somewhat, but only for a while.” (Dr. Margaret Chan)

Extracted from a meeting held by the Prairie North Health Region

Estimation of the Impact in Canada:

- In a moderately severe pandemic:
 - 20-30% will not be affected
 - the remaining 70% will become infected
 - half of the cases (35% of the population) will be relatively mild
 - half of the cases (35% of the population) will become clinically ill (unable to do work for at least a ½ day, i.e. bedridden)
 - of these last one half (17.5% of the population) will seek medical care, 1% will need hospitalization and .4% will die
- In a severe pandemic 10% will be hospitalized and 2% will die

Estimation of the Impact in Saskatchewan

- 1400 deaths
- 4500 hospitalizations
- 175000 outpatients

Estimation of the Impact In the Prairie North Health Region

- 36000 ill
- 18000 outpatients
- 460 hospitalized
- 145 deaths (a doubling of the normal death rate)

3.0 PROTOCOL OVERVIEW

The purpose of this document is to enable the Northwest School Division to cope with the impact of the influenza pandemic.

This protocol will have as its goals:

1. Reducing the spread of the virus within the schools and facilities of the Northwest School Division
2. Sustaining the ability of the school division to educate the students
3. Maintaining the administrative and systemic functions of the school division

This protocol will have as its components:

- 1) A set of responses tailored to the stages of a progressing pandemic
- 2) A list of responsibilities of officials in the event of a progressing pandemic
- 3) Some letters and information sheets for parents, staff and students

4.0 LEADERSHIP STRUCTURE

1. Influenza Outbreak Planning Committee:

Will consist of the Director of Education, the Superintendents of Human Resources and Curriculum and Instruction and Student Services, the Supervisors of Facilities and Transportation; a person designated by the committee to respond to requests from the public health officials of the Prairie North Health Region, the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Education, and... will:

- Oversee the creation and modification of the Influenza Protocol and issue all directives required for its implementation
- Collaborate and communicate with public health officials of the Prairie North Health Region, the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Education (Margaret Ball, Director of Facilities Emergency Planning Officer)
- Ensure that the required information, materials and methods required to mitigate the effects of the outbreak have been acquired, communicated and acted upon.
- Provide guidelines to maintain the administrative functions of the school division
- Provide the Principals and Supervisors of Facilities and Transportation with direction in the event that staff illness compromises the ability of the schools and facilities to function.

2. The Principals of the Schools of the Northwest School Division will:

- Collaborate and communicate with the Influenza Outbreak Planning Committee; and

the public health officials of the Prairie North Health Region, the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Education;

- Ensure that the required information, materials and methods required to mitigate the effects of the outbreak have been acquired, communicated and acted upon within their schools and local communities.

5.0 RESPONSES TO THE STAGES OF A PROGRESSING PANDEMIC

Stage 1: PREVENTION (*Pandemic declared, Cases within Sask. Reported but no cases within the schools or communities of the Northwest School Division*)

During this stage the focus will be on the education of both students and staff with regard to the nature of the disease and preventative hygiene measures.

Responses will involve:

- Ensuring adequate supplies of disinfectant hand soaps and disinfectant cleaning supplies are available for employees and students
- Ensuring that the following Sask. Health Documents:

Guidelines for School and Daycare Closures - H1N1 Flu Virus

H1N1 Influenza in Childcare Settings and Schools (updated May 22, 2009)

Influenza - Wash Your Hands

Influenza - Cover Your Cough

Poster- How to Fight the H1N1 Flu Virus

are discussed with all staff and students and materials posted where appropriate. These documents are available at: <http://www.health.gov.sk.ca/H1N1-flu-school-info>

- Encouraging employees and students to obtain the both the annual seasonal influenza vaccines and the H1N1 Influenza A vaccine.

Stage 2: PREPARATION (*Pandemic declared, Cases within the Prairie North Health Region reported but no cases within the schools*)

During this stage the focus will be on developing administrative guidelines for all steps and stages of the protocol.

Responses will involve:

- The Influenza Outbreak Planning Committee will oversee the development of guidelines for actions that will need to be taken at various stages of the flu pandemic (e.g. plan for absenteeism, plan for modifications to school organizational structures etc.) –

- The Influenza Outbreak Planning Committee will:

1. Develop policies and procedures to help contain the spread of the disease
2. Develop Influenza Attendance / Surveillance record sheets

- Principals and Staffs will:

1. Ensure that records will be kept of all reported flu and flu•like illness and absences due to it
2. Develop a system to ensure that persons who become ill can be appropriately cared for

and safely removed from the school

3. Educate both staff and students to practice correct hygiene and preventative measures
 4. Facilitate communication with parents to help them understand the disease, to help prepare them to deal with family illness, and to keep them apprised of the state of wellness within the school (excellent documents are available at: <http://www.health.gov.sk.ca/H1N1-flu-school-info>)

5. Consider alternative procedures to assure continuity of instruction e.g. distance learning methods (web-based assignments) in the event of a large rate of absenteeism

6. Develop and communicate Student Spacing protocols (social distancing) to all staff and students. [*Student spacing refers to distancing individuals and strategies to reduce the spread of the virus between people, a gap of 2 m is ideal.*]

Student spacing strategies may include:

Spacing students 1-2m apart, individually or in small groups as space permits

Avoiding and discouraging crowding in hallways, cafeterias, change rooms etc.

Cancelling school activities (e.g. dances, sports tournaments) that would result in students coming into frequent and close proximity with many other individuals

Cancelling the use of school facilities by outside user groups

Consider an open door policy to reduce hand contacts with doorknobs, handles and surfaces

Consider the use of a “sick line” 2 m away from persons (e.g. school secretaries) who are apt to frequently see and communicate with persons who are ill

7. Ensure that the emergency services contact list is correct and up to date

8. Examine the roles played by each member of staff to determine where designates need to be cross trained in order for the school to continue functioning

Stage 3: RESPONSE (*Pandemic declared, Cases within the Prairie North Health Region reported and cases within the schools*)

During this stage the focus will be on notification / communications and correct responses to the virus within the facilities affected.

It is important to be aware that the ability to detect the presence of the outbreak within a particular school will depend primarily upon data collection and record keeping. The symptoms of H1N1 are very similar to seasonal influenza, and also share the characteristics of many other common illnesses. Also, because the symptoms may not present in persons with the disease, or may only present very mildly, it may be very difficult to reach a correct and definite decision about whether or not the disease is present in a given school. This is problematic because parental communication (via letters) and other actions need to be taken at the early stages. The one characteristic that will be different from the way that schools typically experience illnesses over the course of a year is the rapid spread of H1N1 due to a relative lack of immune response capability. In other words you won't, in all likelihood, see a single obvious case. What you will probably see rather is a cluster of cases that share similar symptoms, with a sharp spiking fever and cough in common. Because of this keeping daily records that track symptoms and absences due to illness will make the pattern clearer and, hopefully, your decision easier.

Responses will involve:

- Placing posters at all entrances to instruct employees, and visitors not to enter the building if they have symptoms of influenza, and to instruct students who feel ill to report immediately to the office
- Ensuring that all affected staff and students are appropriately cared for and safely removed from the school
- Implementing student spacing and reducing person-to-person interactions
- Cleaning all shared work areas (such as tables, desks, door knobs, stair rails, etc) with a disinfectant at least daily
- The disinfection of areas used to house ill students daily as required
- Cleaning all shared phones frequently by the users. Telephones should not be shared whenever possible
- Cleaning all shared computer keyboards and mice at the end of each class. Shared computer keyboards and mice should be cleaned / disinfected between each use using recommended methods and cleaning materials and following the procedures recommended by I.T. personnel
- Where operationally possible, increase fresh air intake to the facilities to decrease spread of disease
- Ensuring that all essential educational services are maintained
- Implementing an open door policy: if door knobs/handles are an issue, then keep the doors open

6.0 RESPONSES OF OFFICIALS TO A PROGRESSING PANDEMIC

Stage 1: PREVENTION (*focus on the education of both students and staff with regard to the nature of the disease and preventative hygiene measures*)

Official	Area of Responsibility
Director	- Ensures that the process of education and planning begins
Supervisor of Facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Acquire and distribute adequate supplies of disinfectant hand soaps and disinfectant cleaning supplies to all schools and offices - Educate all custodians on the use of the above - Educate all custodians on safe working procedures
Principal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Review the following Sask. Health documents with all staff Guidelines for School and Daycare Closures - H1N1 Flu Virus H1N1 Influenza in Childcare Settings and Schools (updated May 22, 2009) Influenza - Wash Your Hands Influenza - Cover Your Cough Poster- How to Fight the H1N1 Flu Virus - Designate a single person on staff (Wellness Co-ordinator?) to ensure that the information above is communicated to all students - Ensure that the required supplies of disinfectant hand soaps and cleaning supplies have been received from the supervisor of facilities - Ensure that procedures for general cleaning have been discussed with the school custodian - Ensure that site-specific cleaning procedures (e.g. keyboards and phones) have been discussed with staff and students - Recommend influenza vaccinations to high-risk groups first, then to staff and students
Wellness Co-ordinator or Designate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Communicate all required information above to students - Reproduce and distribute signs and posters to all teachers - Post posters (flu symptoms and general hygiene methods) in school hallways and bulletin boards
Teacher	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Review hygiene / preventative measures with students on a regular basis e.g. wiping noses, tissue disposal, hand washing, respiratory hygiene etc. - Model appropriate hygiene / preventative strategies at all times - Post in-class posters on hand washing and respiratory hygiene - Post in-class posters to inform students of the signs and symptoms of H1N1 influenza

Administrative Assistant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Post vaccination clinic dates and places (when available) - Assist in the reproduction of posters and signs - Prepare letters home for distribution
I.T. Personnel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Instruct Custodians on the correct methods and materials for disinfecting computers and other I.T. equipment
Custodian	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ensure that adequate supplies of disinfectant hand soaps and disinfectant cleaning supplies have been received - Post posters on correct hand washing in all washrooms - Instruct staff and students on correct and safe use of disinfectants (phones computer equipment etc.)

Stage 2: PREPARATION (*focus on developing administrative guidelines for all steps and stages of the protocol*)

Official	Area of Responsibility
Director	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Review pandemic protocol - Identify essential administrative services - Designate a representative in the event that illness prevents him from carrying out responsibilities - Cross train designate for Director position - Advise all senior admin personnel to designate and cross train representatives in the event that illness prevents them from carrying out responsibilities - Communicate to staff and students when circumstances necessitate - Direct an admin assistant to create Influenza Attendance / Surveillance record sheets, and to report the results when required to Sask. Health and/ or the Dept of Education
Senior Administrative Personnel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Identify essential administrative services for which they are responsible - Designate a representative(s) in the event that illness prevents them from carrying out responsibilities - Cross train designates - Advise personnel responsible for essential services to do the same

Principal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Develop a system to ensure that persons who become ill can be appropriately cared for and safely removed from the school - Ensure that lines of communication are prepared and that all staff understand their roles and have cross-trained designates where req'd - Ensure that a system to monitor, record and report to central office all suspected influenza cases is in place - Ensure that when school groups travel that their destinations are disease free (e.g tournaments, festivals)
Principal and Teaching Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Prepare, in consultation with staff, alternative plans for the delivery of course content in the event that teaching staff become ill and are unable to attend class and no substitutes can be found - Prepare, in consultation with staff, alternative plans for the delivery of course content in the event that students become ill in such numbers that instruction becomes redundant - Prepare, in consultation with staff, alternative plans for the delivery of course content in the event that the school is closed - Prepare, in consultation with staff, plans for adequate social distancing within classrooms, hallways and points of constriction - Exercise vigilance and encourage all members of the schools to watch for potential sources of infection and report them immediately to the office
Administrative Assistant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ensure that Parent daytime contact lists are ready and up to date - Ensure that illness and attendance reporting forms are ready - Ensure that letters home are ready (Influenza overview, hygiene strategies, when to return to school etc. - Update lists of substitute teaching staff available for work

Stage 3: RESPONSE: *(focus will be on notification / communications and correct responses to the virus within the facilities affected)*

a) Outbreak reported in Prairie North Health Region, or health regions immediately adjacent to Prairie North	
Official	Area of Responsibility
Director	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ensure that School Division is ready for the outbreak
Senior Administration and Supervisors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ensure that their respective areas and departments are prepared for the outbreak - Notify the Principals to send out letters to parents

Principal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ensure that their school is prepared for the outbreak - Ensure that essential letters home to parents (Influenza overview, hygiene strategies, when to return to school etc.) are sent out - Ensure that a room is prepared for students who become sick whilst at school - Ensure that bus drivers have daytime contact lists for the parents
Wellness Co-coordinator or Designate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Post notices at all entrances to instruct a) all visitors with symptoms of influenza to not enter the building, and b) all students with symptoms of influenza to report immediately to the office

b) Cases of Influenza within the Offices, Schools and Communities of the Northwest School Division affecting less than 30% of the staff and students

Official	Area of Responsibility
Director and Superintendents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reassign staff as needed to maintain essential services - Consider the cancellation of non-essential services and/or school closures
Senior Administration and Supervisors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ensure that their respective areas and departments are responding correctly to the outbreak
Principal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ensure that all affected staff and students are appropriately cared for and safely removed from the school - Upon becoming aware that there are cases within the school: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) ensure that staff review all the hygiene /preventative strategies with students b) ensure that all disinfectant protocols are followed c) notify central Office that a case has occurred within the school d) notify parents that a case has occurred within the school and indicate where parents can find daily updates on the number of cases within the school (e.g. website) e) implement the social distancing protocols - Ensure that reporting procedures are being followed - Consider cancellation of school events that have the possibility of increased rates of transmission - Implement alternate plans developed for the delivery of course content as required

Teacher	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Review all the hygiene /preventative strategies with students - Ensure that all disinfectant protocols are followed within their areas of responsibility - Immediately escort any student that they feel may be ill to the office
Administrative Assistant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Monitor and record all absences due to illness - Report all cases of influenza-like illnesses to central office - Notify parents when their child becomes ill at school
Custodian	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Clean all shared work areas (such as tables, desks, door knobs, stair rails, etc) with a disinfectant at least daily - Where operationally possible, during the day increase fresh air intake to the facilities to decrease spread of disease - Ensure daily that cleaning supplies to disinfect telephones, keyboards and mice, and sports equipment are available in close proximity to same - Disinfecting the area used by ill students daily as required

c) Cases of Influenza within the Offices, Schools and Communities of the Northwest School Division affecting more than 30% of the staff and students

Official	Area of Responsibility
Director	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Inform personnel to prepare to close the affected school or facility
Superintendents Supervisors and Principals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Inform staff, students and families of closure and advise them to check the relevant website for the re-open date - Inform Ministry of Education and Sask. Health of the closure - Inform local media of closure
Custodian	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Clean/ Disinfect entire facility upon closure (areas prioritized – hard shared surfaces, washrooms, fountains, computer labs, library, telephones, change rooms) - Advise Principal when cleaning has been completed

d) Recovery	
Official	Area of Responsibility
Director and Superintendents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Contact Principal / Supervisor to discuss reopening of facility - Make the decision, inform the Dept. of Education, Sask. Health and the media
Principal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Call staff to inform them of re-opening - Post reopening date on the relevant website - Continue all of the above protocols until the school community is disease free
All Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Continue all of the above protocols until the school community is disease free