



## PANDEMIC PREPAREDNESS GUIDELINES

**Date Adopted: September, 2009**

Acknowledgement: These guidelines were developed by adapting information from the Manitoba Health/Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth publication entitled Pandemic Influenza: Preparedness Guidelines for Manitoba School Divisions and Schools (K-12), October 2007 and the River East Transcona Pandemic Preparedness Guidelines, Hanover School Division Pandemic Diseases, Evergreen School Division Pandemic Preparedness Guidelines, and Portage La Prairie School Division Pandemic Planning Summary Document.

Pandemic Preparedness Guidelines are meant to be educational and provide SRSD with operational guidelines in the event of a pandemic.

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# 1. PANDEMIC MANAGEMENT

## *1.1 Guidelines/Procedures*

Pandemic diseases refer to diseases which combine high mortality and morbidity, global effect, and treatment difficulties related to countermeasure (usually vaccines) development and distribution.

A Pandemic Influenza is a pandemic disease that will require a significant planning effort by Seine River School Division. The overriding planning factor associated with a pandemic influenza is that the disease impacts individuals in every sector of society and across most age groups. This is complicated by difficulties in determining that a disease is pandemic in nature, and developing, producing and distributing a vaccine.

Pandemic diseases are planned for in three phases:

1. Pre-Pandemic (warning and preparation)
2. Pandemic (response)
3. Post-Pandemic (recovery)

Seine River School Division and all its schools will follow the guidelines established in the “Preparedness Guidelines for Manitoba School Divisions and Schools (K – 12)” document.

## *1.2 Purpose*

In response to the recent news and reports of a possible Pandemic Influenza occurrence, the Seine River School Division feels that it is important to advise parents that schools will continue to operate as normally as possible in order to lessen the potential disruption to society at large.

Planning for a pandemic situation will require flexibility and fluidity. The guidelines outlined in the SRSD Emergency Response Plan will assist the Division with dealing with the potential impact that a pandemic would have on our students, staff, and their communities.

Planning will be coordinated with the Manitoba Emergency Measures Organization (MEMO) and the local Regional Health Authorities. Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth will also play a role in terms of helping provide information and direction. SRSD will coordinate all information and direction that is provided by local and government authorities. Information will be provided to all schools and departments at all developmental stages of the pandemic.

Schools will not be automatically closed and will continue to operate as normally as possible while implementing effective health practices and providing information and support where possible to students, parents, and staff.

Manitoba Health, MEMO, and MECY have the authority to close schools. The decision to close schools will remain a local responsibility unless directed by the aforementioned authorities.

### ***1.3 Activation***

The SRSD Pandemic Plan will be activated in consultation with MECY – Education Administration Services Branch and the Local Regional Health Authority.

### ***1.4 Membership of Pandemic Planning Team***

- Superintendent
- Secretary-Treasurer
- Assistant Superintendent Student Services
- Maintenance Supervisor
- IT Manager
- Transportation Supervisor
- One Trustee
- One SRPA Member
- One MGEU Member
- One SRTA Member
- Assistant-Superintendent Curriculum and Instruction

Each school's Emergency Response Team will act as a school level pandemic planning team when necessary.

### ***1.5 Mandate of Pandemic Planning Team***

The Pandemic Planning Team (PPT) will meet as necessary upon declaration of a pandemic to fulfill the goals and objectives of the SRSD Pandemic Preparedness Guidelines.

#### Goals

1. To minimize the impact of the pandemic on students and staff.
2. To maintain services to students and families as long as it is safe to do so, or until directed otherwise.
3. To respond to outside needs, if required, as determined by a central government authority or local government.

#### Objectives

1. To ensure a safe environment for students and staff (before, during and after a pandemic).
2. To remain operational and maintain instruction and services.
3. To ensure essential services continue during a pandemic (ex: supervision, curricular requirements, building security).
4. To communicate accurately and in a timely manner with management, staff, and students and families regarding operations before, during and after a pandemic period.
5. To track and monitor the activities and additional costs of responding to the pandemic.

## **2. COMMUNICATIONS**

In the event of a pandemic all communications will come from the superintendents department.

- SRSD will designate an official Division spokesperson (Superintendent or designate) through which information from SRSD Pandemic Planning Committee / Superintendent's Department/Board of Trustees will be communicated

- Communications to SRSD employees, students, parents/guardians before and during a pandemic will be disseminated by the official spokesperson
- Pandemic information will be obtained by consulting the regional health authority and reviewing material on the Manitoba Government and Manitoba Health Websites

Communication mechanisms will include:

- SRSD website
- Written communications such as memos, letters, posters, etc.
- E-mail
- Telephone
- Radio and Television for public service announcements
- School Signs

### ***2.1 Sharing Pre-Pandemic Information with Employees***

Once a pandemic has been declared but not yet arrived in Manitoba (pre-pandemic stage), SRSD will review its Pandemic Preparedness Guidelines with its staff through orientation sessions.

SRSD will provide its employees with reliable sources where they can find information on how to prepare themselves and their families for a pandemic and what to do if they become infected.

Sources:

Manitoba Health: [www.gov.mb.ca/health/odm/index.html](http://www.gov.mb.ca/health/odm/index.html)

Government of Manitoba: [www.gov.mb.ca/influenza/pandemic](http://www.gov.mb.ca/influenza/pandemic)

Manitoba Education, Citizenship and youth: [www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/policy](http://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/policy)

Government of Canada: [www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/cpip-pclcpi](http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/cpip-pclcpi)

World Health Organization: [www.who.int/csr/disease/avian\\_influenza/en](http://www.who.int/csr/disease/avian_influenza/en)

### ***2.2 Sharing Pre-Pandemic Information with Parents and Students***

Using information provided by the Superintendent, SRSD schools will provide parents and students with reliable information on preparing themselves for a pandemic and what to do if they become infected.

Using the communication plan the division will:

- Communicate the measures they are taking to remain operational and to provide a safe and healthy environment for their employees and students,
- Explain how closures and other changes will be communicated

### ***2.3 Sharing Information with Employees During a Pandemic***

Using the communication plan the division will:

- Share critical information about the pandemic with its schools and worksites
- Keep employees informed of operational changes within the school and division

### ***2.4 Sharing Information with Parents and Students During a Pandemic***

Using information provided by the Superintendent, SRSD schools will:

- Reinforce messages from the pre-pandemic phase
- Keep parents and students informed of operational changes to school services

Public information sessions (e.g. with Public Health Nurses) will only be considered if approved by public health.

This messaging will provide concise, factual information regarding:

- The impact of the pandemic on schools/school division
- What students/parents can expect from their school
- What they can do to work with their school
- When reduced or suspended services will be restored

### ***2.5 Sharing Information with the Community and the Regional Health Authorities During a Pandemic***

SRSD will designate a contact who will communicate as necessary with the community and Regional Health Authority regarding issues, needs identification, and support that schools may be able to provide.

### ***2.6 Sharing Information with Employees, Parents/Guardians and Students After a Pandemic***

Following a pandemic, SRSD and its schools will:

- Continue to communicate with employees, parents and students regarding the return to normal operations
- Help students and their families by identifying community resources to help cope with loss and stress
- Communicate information regarding ceremonies schools may hold to remember deceased employees or students
- Consider in-class supports to help students deal with stress and the impact of the pandemic
- Communicate strategies for catching up on missed instructional time or backlogged work

## **3. OPERATIONAL IMPACT**

The SRSD recognizes that a Pandemic Influenza will have a tremendous impact on the operations of the School Division. Consequently, the Division has developed the following guidelines to prepare for the interruption of services:

### ***3.1 Students and Families – Academics***

1. The health and safety of SRSD students is paramount in the determination of academic concerns in the event of a pandemic.
2. Students will be educated, at an age-appropriate level, about flu prevention and symptoms before a pandemic, and will be encouraged to make appropriate personal health decisions during a pandemic.
3. During a pandemic, every effort will be made to continue to offer school services as normally as possible.

4. Schools will provide students and parents/guardians with timely communication regarding the school's plans and expectations for continued instruction.
5. Where possible, continuation of course work and assignments may be facilitated through independent course work and technology.
6. Decisions on day-to-day instructional matters will be the responsibility of the school principal and Superintendent.
7. Decisions to extend the term, revise exam schedules or alter academic schedule will be made by the board of trustees and Superintendent.
8. Decisions will be made at the school level regarding students who have missed or not completed work due to illness, class cancellations, or other reasons connected to the pandemic.
9. In the event of a school closure, students may be redeployed to other schools or locations in the division.
10. In the event of a school closure, schools will provide parents with as much lead time as possible, the reasons for the closure, and a realistic estimate of the duration of the closure.

### ***3.2 Students' Responsibilities***

1. Section 262 of The Public Schools Act (PSA) allows parents to keep children out of school if they are ill.
2. All students will be asked to remain away from school and not attend classes if they are showing flu symptoms. Parents and guardians will be asked to contact the school and inform the office of the reason for the student's absence.
3. If a closure of their school has been announced, students will be expected to:
  - a. Remain away from school during the closure
  - b. Monitor the SRSD website to determine the state of the alert at the school and establish when they can return. Emergency information will be posted online at [www.srsd.mb.ca](http://www.srsd.mb.ca) and made available via telephone at 878-4713.
  - c. Monitor television and radio for announcements concerning their school.
4. When a school re-opening has been announced, students will be expected to:
  - a. Report to class on the identified day
  - b. If unable to report to class because they are in quarantine, nursing an infected person, or are ill with the pandemic influenza, they will be asked to contact the school and inform the office of the reason for their absence.

### ***3.3 Student Illness While at School***

Schools will identify an area where children who may become ill at school can be accommodated until their parents can be contacted to take them home. Parents will also be contacted if their child displays symptoms of influenza.

Ill children will stay in a separate area and be kept a metre apart even if they are not displaying characteristic influenza symptoms. This serves to minimize the likelihood of transmission between those with influenza and those ill due to other causes.

School will communicate Manitoba Health advice on return-to-school timelines to students and parents.

### ***3.4 Potential Spread of Infection at School***

Measures to reduce personal exposure in school buildings will be balanced with the need to maintain normal routines, school operations and societal functioning. SRSD will:

- Establish a clear and well-communicated message that stresses the need for students and staff to stay home if they are displaying any flu-like symptoms
- Minimize social interaction by:
  - Limiting visitor access to the school
  - Limiting face-to-face meetings or number of persons in attendance
  - Considering postponing some events that are open to the public and/or parents, including travel for intramural activities
  - Increasing distance education and work-at-home options
- Promote personal hygiene practices by educating and reminding students and others of the importance of preventative measures

### ***3.5 Responsibilities to Employees***

- Initially, if the school division is shut down, regular employees who would be scheduled to work will continue to be paid. This decision will be reviewed as the duration of the shutdown is assessed
- Employees will be educated on flu symptoms and will be required to stay home if displaying symptoms of influenza
- In the event of a school closure, employees will be reassigned to other schools/facilities within the division. This decision will be reviewed as the duration of the school closure is being assessed
- Administration will work with the employees and their union/association representatives to develop an efficient and appropriate reassignment process
- Employees who are unable to attend work due to illness will be covered by the existing sick leave provisions in appropriate collective agreements or division policies and procedures
- Where appropriate, employees may be requested to work from home
- Maintenance of payroll, pension and benefits will be given priority. In instances where inaccurate disbursements are being made, the division will take corrective steps in the post-pandemic stage
- In the event of a divisional closure, employee income and benefit information will be available to the affected employees
- In the event of a divisional or school closure, SRSD may consider deferring staff leaves for non-health reasons; for example professional development, vacation or other reasons, if staff members are needed to cover for absent employees

### ***3.6 Employees***

Health experts estimate that 35 per cent of the population could become ill enough to miss at least half day of work.

During a pandemic, SRSD will implement measures to minimize or slow the spread of influenza within its facilities. Clear, well-communicated messages will stress that coming to work while sick is discouraged. Messages will also focus on compensation issues and

assurances a system is in place to cover the work of those who are ill.

SRSD will communicate Manitoba Health advice on return to school and work timelines to staff, students, and parents.

In the event of a school closure, employees will be reassigned to other schools/facilities within the division. This decision will be reviewed as the duration of the school closure is being assessed. Managers and Human Resources staff will work with employees and their union/association representatives to develop an efficient and appropriate reassignment process.

- Where appropriate, employees may be requested to work from home
- If a school or work site shutdown has been announced while the employees are at work, employees will be expected to: report to their supervisor/administrators prior to leaving the worksite, follow the directions from their supervisor/administrator, keep in contact with their supervisor/administrator by phone or email to determine the state of alert and establish when they are to return
- If they are unable to report, they are to contact their supervisor/administrator to indicate the reason (e.g. under quarantine, nursing an infected person, are ill with the pandemic influenza, etc...)

Once a school or work-site re-opening has been announced, employees will be expected to:

- Report to work on the identified day, unless they have been advised otherwise by their supervisor
- If they are unable to report, they are to contact their supervisor to indicate the reason

### ***3.7 Responsibilities Concerning Environmental Health and Safety***

- SRSD will continue, as far as reasonably practical, to provide a safe and healthy environment in which to carry on the Division's affairs during a pandemic
- The Division will rely on appropriate public health authorities to provide advice, guidance, and support to the division on safety, health and environmental matters as resources permit during a pandemic
- The Division will liaise with its schools and work sites regarding pandemic mitigation, preparedness, and response and recovery action
- The Division will respond to requests for assistance based on a prioritized risk assessment of the issue/hazards
- The Division will evaluate and promote measures that are proven and effective during a pandemic in protecting employees as endorsed by the public health authorities of Manitoba

## **4. RESPONSE PLAN FOR HUMAN RESOURCES**

### ***4.1 Response Plan for Administration***

SRSD may consider these strategies for addressing periods of high administration absenteeism:

- Document any administrative activities that might be added during a pandemic or might increase in terms of workload (i.e. contacting the parents of absent children, compiling and disseminating absentee information, etc.)
- Cross-train staff on any specialized or technical activities
- Prepare written instructions so that partially trained employees or volunteers can

- complete essential tasks
- Document location of key information and means of access (e.g. passwords, keys).
- Prepare to report excessive absenteeism to health officials for pandemic surveillance purposes. At a time of pandemic, Manitoba Health will provide absenteeism reporting guidelines

#### ***4.2 Response Plan for Teaching Activities***

The SRSD may consider these strategies for addressing periods of high teacher absenteeism:

- Draw from substitute pool
- Use administrative personnel, retired teachers, parents, volunteers or education students to assist teachers. Have criminal record checks done in advance
- Have some people licensed on temporary permits in advance of the pandemic. Complete criminal record checks in advance
- Where it is reasonably anticipated that the existing substitute pool will be depleted and no other qualified certified teachers are available, consider applying in advance to the Professional Certification and Student Records Unit of the Department for substitute teaching permits for persons who might potentially be called upon to temporarily replace ill staff

#### **Alternative Service Delivery**

- Combine similar grades, since student absenteeism will likely reduce class sizes
- Provide alternative activities that can be accommodated by less teaching staff
- Be prepared to temporarily combine schools
- Continue instruction for students who are home and well enough to do school work and/or virtual instruction on the internet with phone contact

#### **Scale Back Services**

- Postpone or cancel classes or events when necessary
- Close the school until service can resume at an acceptable level (as a last resort)

#### ***4.3 Response Plan for Student Services***

The SRSD Student Services Department may consider these strategies for addressing periods of high employee absenteeism:

- Prepare a list of interchangeable E.A.'s trained to administer specific special needs.
- Consult with the R.H.A. regarding URIS plans
- Inventory and request increases in any medical inventory necessary to address URIS plans
- Review current transportation plans for students with mobility problems. Liaise with Transportation Department and parents to address alternatives should qualified special needs bus drivers not be available
- Hold staff meetings with Clinicians and Resource Personnel to schedule training for E.A.'s regarding the schools most affected
- As soon as reasonably possible, provide a written summary to the Superintendent's Department as to the current status of planning for Student Services
- Advise appropriate personnel of any students restricted to their homes and make provisions for these personnel to deliver materials via the safest means possible
- Consider scaling back services where necessary and contact the appropriate individuals

to update them regarding service changes

## **5. INTERRUPTION OF SERVICES AND SUPPLIES**

### ***5.1 Information Technology***

In the event of a pandemic, the IT Department of SRSD will fulfill the following responsibilities:

- In the shutdown scenario, the IT server and infrastructure can normally run without on-site staff for two weeks. After that time, staff will come to perform maintenance functions
- Keep the web space, data network, e-mail and other systems running
- In administrative systems, what IT provides will be defined by the requirements from the Finance Department

### ***5.2 Building Maintenance***

In the event of a pandemic, the Maintenance Department of SRSD will fulfill the following responsibilities:

#### **Pre-Pandemic**

- Document and review building maintenance activities and prioritize maintenance functions by the length of recovery time (a day, a week, two weeks, a month)
- Identify essential services to be continued in the event of a closure (heat, security)
- Consider any changes to maintenance during a pandemic (e.g. increased cleaning)
- Cross-train maintenance staff with regard to any specialized or technical activities, including cross-training staff that normally perform other functions and work in other buildings
- Prepare written instructions so that untrained employees or volunteers can complete some essential tasks
- Document the locations of critical equipment, building systems (service panels) and means of accessing them(e.g. passwords, keys)

#### **During a Pandemic**

- Services will be maintained as long as possible provided there are adequate supplies and staffing levels. Cleaning of washrooms and public areas will be a priority
- The Maintenance Department will promote building hygiene by following the measures outlined in Appendix E: Building Hygiene
- SRSD will continue to rely on Manitoba Hydro and other major utility providers to provide service
- In the event of a shutdown, only essential services will be maintained. Minimal to no snow clearing, maintenance, etc. will be done. Buildings will be monitored
- Depending on the severity of the pandemic, SRSD will determine whether the daytime permit holders, such as childcare facilities or nursery schools, should be permitted to continue to operate
- SRSD will advise permit holders of school closure plans and clarify their responsibility for alternative relocation

### Schools Designated as Emergency Housing

- In some situations, schools are an emergency housing alternative for other organizations (e.g. for a senior citizen residence). If that is the case, the school will inform the other organization about the potential for school closure in a pandemic and clarify the communication plan in that event

### Animals in the School

- If there are animals in the school (e.g. classroom pets, lab animals), schools will make the same kinds of arrangements that occur during holiday breaks

## **5.3 Transportation**

In the event of a pandemic, the SRSD Transportation Department will make every effort to continue to provide bussing service to students.

Staffing guidelines outlined in the Human Resources section of this manual will apply to the Transportation Department.

Cleaning of buses will follow the guidelines outlined in the Maintenance section of this document.

## **5.4 Finance Department**

In the event of a pandemic, the Finance Department of SRSD may be faced with a variety of financial implications impacting schools. These could include:

- Incremental costs associated with preparing for, responding to and recovering from the emergency. This could include the cost of substitute staff, additional supplies, alternate instruction venues, counselling and communication associated with emergency responsibilities for the school population. If extended hours for child care centres located in the school are required, there may be additional overtime costs for custodians
- Extra costs associated with duties assigned for the broader community (if any)

The SRSD Finance Department will include emergency preparedness in its financial management processes. This will include:

- Budgeting processes
- Tracking preparations, response, and recovery activities and costs for:
  - Legal issues that may arise
  - Reimbursement of eligible costs under any announced disaster recovery programs
  - School insurance policies that may include business continuity insurance which normally covers temporary costs (e.g. temporary space) that arise from a disaster
  - The Division will plan to track incremental costs (the extra costs due to pandemic activities, less any savings from not having to provide some services). This will be useful for planning purposes in the future as well as in the event there is any level of compensation made available from the various levels of government

MECY will continue to fund school divisions during an emergency. However, funding will be contingent on a number of factors including reasonable efforts to maintain contacts with students, continue instruction and provide opportunity for student learning and progress

## **6. RECOVERY PLAN**

A pandemic may come in two or more waves and last up to two years. It will impact the Division in a variety of ways including:

- Significant loss of instructional time and backlog of work postponed due to the pandemic
- Disruption of communication with students, families and others
- Psychological stress and low morale. Individuals' coping abilities will be challenged by a variety of issues such as: death of colleagues, friends and loved ones, financial hardship associated with unemployment, incomplete schooling and other issues
- Additional costs to the schools
- Permanent loss of employees and their corporate knowledge due to death or disability

SRSD will consider the following as part of its schools' recovery plans:

- Strategies for catching up on missed instructional time or backlogged work
- Continued communications with employees, parents and students regarding their return to normal operations
- Implementing in-class supports for students and staff to help them deal with stress and the impact of the pandemic
- Identifying resources for stress counselling for employees, students, and families,
- Holding ceremonies to remember deceased employees or students
- Recruiting and training of replacement employees and the temporary or permanent reassignment of employees to maintain operations
- Rebuilding corporate knowledge of school and division processes or systems
- Compiling necessary information to participate in any financial recovery programs

## **7. REVIEW OF SRSD PANDEMIC PREPAREDNESS GUIDELINES**

These guidelines will be reviewed as necessary as required by MECY, Manitoba Health, or following subsequent Pandemics and the review of operational impacts.

## **APPENDIX A – IMPORTANT CONTACT INFORMATION**

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### **Manitoba Health**

#### **Health Service Delivery Pandemic Influenza**

Director Office of Disaster Management  
Phone.(204).945-1444 Fax.(204).948-2531  
Website.[www.gov.mb.ca/health/odm/index.html](http://www.gov.mb.ca/health/odm/index.html)

#### **Online Pandemic Information**

The source for pandemic influenza information in Manitoba online is..  
[www.gov.mb.ca/influenza/pandemic](http://www.gov.mb.ca/influenza/pandemic)

### **Public Health**

#### **Pandemic Influenza Information**

Critical Issues Co-ordinator  
Office of the Chief Medical Officer of Health  
Phone.(204).788-6666  
Fax.(204).948-2204

### **Manitoba Intergovernmental Affairs and Trade**

#### **Manitoba Emergency Measures Organization**

1525-405 Broadway,  
Winnipeg, Manitoba R3C 3L6  
Phone: 945-3050  
Website: [www.manitobaemo.ca](http://www.manitobaemo.ca)

#### **Regional Health Authority - Central Manitoba Inc.**

180 Centenaire Drive  
Southport MB R0H 1N0  
ph:(204) 428-2000 Toll-free: 1-800-742-6509  
Fax: (204) 428-2020  
Website: [www.rha-central.mb.ca](http://www.rha-central.mb.ca)

#### **South Eastman Health/Sante Sud-Est Inc.**

Box 470 ,La Broquerie MB R0A 0W0  
ph: (204) 424-5880 Toll-free: 1-866-716-5633  
Fax: (204) 424-5888  
Website: [www.sehealth.mb.ca](http://www.sehealth.mb.ca)

#### **Winnipeg Regional Health Authority**

650 Main Street  
Winnipeg MB R3B 1E2  
ph: (204) 926-7000  
Fax: (204) 926-7007  
Website: [www.wrha.mb.ca](http://www.wrha.mb.ca)

## APPENDIX B - HAND HYGIENE

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Hand washing/hand hygiene reduces the number of micro-organisms on the hands and is the most important practice to prevent the spread of infection.

### **When: Before:**

- Direct hands-on care of others
- Preparing, handling, serving or eating food
- Feeding others

### **After:**

- Contact with items known or considered to be contaminated
- Personal use of toilet, wiping nose or coughing

### **Products: Plain soap and water:**

- Recommended for routine hand washing

### **Alcohol-based hand rub:**

- Products containing a minimum of 60 percent alcohol are an alternative when plain soap and water are not available, except if hands are visibly soiled
- If hands are visibly soiled, heavy soiling should be removed before using alcohol-based hand rubs for maximum effectiveness

### **How to wash your hands:**

#### **Using plain soap and water:**

- Wet hands under warm running water. Use either liquid or bar soap
- Apply soap and distribute over hands
- Rub hands together vigorously for 10 to 15 seconds to create a good lather
- Using friction, cover all hand surfaces including wrists, fingernails, web spaces, thumbs and palms
- Rinse under warm running water
- Dry hands gently and thoroughly with a disposable towel
- Turn off faucet using a clean disposable towel

#### **Using an alcohol-based hand rub:**

- Apply two to three millilitres of the product to the palm of one hand
- Rub hands together covering all surfaces including, wrists, fingernails, web spaces, thumbs and palms
- The product generally dries within 15 to 20 seconds
- Ensure hands are completely dry before performing another task

*Note: Alcohol-based products are flammable*

## **APPENDIX C - WHAT CAN I DO TO PREVENT MYSELF FROM GETTING INFECTED WITH INFLUENZA DURING A PANDEMIC?**

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Public health officials expect that if a new type of influenza emerges and causes a pandemic, this virus will spread in a similar fashion to the influenza viruses that cause outbreaks each winter. Influenza is highly contagious so it spreads quickly in families and communities. There are, however, some steps you can take to reduce your risk of infection.

### **Improve your overall health**

In general, healthier people are better at fighting off disease. To stay healthy, you should eat healthy foods, get plenty of sleep, exercise and not smoke. Avoid heavy alcohol consumption and try to maintain a positive and balanced outlook.

### **Wash your hands often**

Washing hands is the most effective way of preventing the spread of disease. Get into the habit of washing your hands often with soap and warm water, scrubbing your wrists, palms, web spaces, thumbs, fingers and nails for 10 to 15 seconds. Rinse and dry with a clean towel. This should be done especially before meals, after using the toilet and after you cough, sneeze or blow your nose. Teach your children to do the same.

### **Avoid visiting people who have the flu if practical to do so**

This will help to prevent you from becoming infected. This advice must be balanced with the need to provide support and care to sick people. Caregivers looking after sick people should wear a mask when coming face-to-face with a coughing individual to minimize influenza transmission.

### **Avoid large crowds**

Remember that large crowds are ideal for the spread of influenza, so consider staying at home. Wearing masks to prevent transmission of influenza is not helpful when it is circulating in the community.

### **Don't share eating utensils or drinks**

If a family member is sick, keep their personal items (ex: towels and toothbrushes) separate from those of the rest of the family.

### **Get a vaccine when available**

Vaccination is the principal measure for preventing influenza and reducing the impact of epidemics. Various types of influenza vaccines have been available and used for more than 60 years.

### **Take antivirals if recommended by your doctor**

Antivirals are drugs used for the prevention and early treatment of influenza. If taken shortly after getting sick (within 48 hours), they can reduce influenza symptoms, shorten the length of the illness and potentially reduce any serious complications. Antivirals work by reducing the ability of the virus to reproduce; however, they do not provide immunity from the virus.

Antiviral drugs, given at the onset of the disease, may assist but are not likely to be available in sufficient quantities to treat the majority of the population. Planning for antiviral use during a pandemic is ongoing at the national level, however, it is most likely that antiviral drugs will be used at the beginning of a pandemic to treat people who become ill pending the development of a vaccine.

### **What if I think I have the flu?**

Most people with influenza recover without any serious problems. The disease can last for four to seven days and leave a cough and tiredness for several weeks. In general, there is no specific treatment for influenza. Antivirals may occasionally be prescribed by your doctor. Antibiotics are not effective against the influenza virus, although, they will be effective against complications caused by bacteria such as pneumonia. Avoid going to work or social gatherings if you are ill. Wear a mask if you need to visit your doctor. At the time of a pandemic, Manitoba Health will provide information on steps you can take to help care for yourself if you have influenza.

### **What if my child is sick?**

Like with adults, most children get better from influenza without any specific treatment. Sick children should be kept home from school and daycare. At the time of a pandemic, Manitoba Health will provide information on steps you can take to help care for your children if they have influenza.

### **DURING A PANDEMIC, IT WILL BE IMPORTANT TO:**

- Follow directions given by public health. These may change as more information becomes available about the characteristics of the particular virus causing the outbreak.
- Follow infection-control procedures if caring for a person with influenza.
- Providing care to an individual with an influenza-like illness will be common during a pandemic. The likelihood of transmitting the disease is reduced by following basic precautions.

Watch the Manitoba Health website for updates at [www.gov.mb.ca/health](http://www.gov.mb.ca/health)

See also Questions and Answers: *Public Health Measures, Vaccines and Antivirals during a pandemic*, online at <http://www.gov.mb.ca/influenza/pandemic>

## APPENDIX D -HOW CAN I CARE FOR MYSELF WHEN I HAVE THE FLU?

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- Stay home and rest
- Drink plenty of fluids
- Take medication for your symptoms
- NOTE: Do not give children or teenagers any products containing aspirin or ASA (acetylsalicylic acid) as it can cause a very serious illness called Reye's syndrome, which affects the nervous system and liver
- For a sore throat, gargle a glass of warm water mixed with a half-teaspoon of salt  
Throat lozenges are also effective for relieving a sore throat
- For a stuffy nose adults can take a decongestant, but consult with a health care professional such as a pharmacist, nurse or doctor Children can be given saline nose drops
- Wash your hands frequently
- Ask for help – you may need to ask for help at home until you are feeling better
- If you require further advice call **Health Links-Info Santé at 7 - 200** (in Winnipeg) or toll-free **1- -31 - 2 7** (outside Winnipeg) or a health care provider

### **Should I wear a mask?**

- Ill people or those caring for them may be advised to wear a surgical mask to reduce the spread of disease
- Wearing of masks by well people in the community is not recommended as a general measure This is because it is unlikely to be sustainable for the entire duration of a pandemic In addition, masks can provide false security and can lead to contamination unless properly handled

### **When should I see a doctor?**

If you or your child experiences any of the following:

- shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- chest pain or pressure
- coughing up dark-coloured or bloody sputum
- wheezing
- extreme ear pain
- fever for three or more days that is not going down or if you do not start feeling better in a few days
- you have started to feel better and suddenly feel much worse
- confusion, extreme drowsiness or difficulty waking up

## APPENDIX E - BUILDING HYGIENE

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The following steps are recommended to maximize hygiene in schools during a pandemic. They focus on reducing the spread of viral infection. Most of these activities are standard in schools and should be undertaken routinely. These activities will be equally important during a pandemic. Building hygiene should be addressed in school contingency plans, including supply and human resource management

### General

- Surfaces must not show any visible soil before they are sanitized
- Cleaning equipment should be maintained in a clean, dry state after use. Cloths, mop heads and other supplies should have single purpose use (floors or walls or furnishings only) and be changed when soiled after use
- Waste baskets for disposal of soiled tissues are needed throughout the school, close to the point of use

### Products for Cleaning and Sanitizing

- Cleaning with detergent and water is generally acceptable
- Commercial household products are acceptable to sanitize environmental surfaces when used according to manufacturer's instructions
- To prepare a non-commercial sanitizing solution, use unscented chlorine bleach: for wiping surfaces, etc, mix one tablespoon (15 millilitres) in four litres (3.5 quarts) of water
  - for immersing dishes, toys, dishcloths, etc, mix one tablespoon (15 millilitres) in four litres (3.5 quarts) of water
  - Mix fresh solutions daily
- Either liquid or bar soap can be used in washrooms. Liquid soap containers should not be "topped up"; instead, liquid soap should be supplied in disposable bags in wall containers by sinks or in small, non-refillable containers to avoid product contamination. Bar soap should be stored in racks which allow drainage of excess water (disease-producing organisms can survive in stagnant water).
- Disposable (paper) towels should be used in public washrooms. If possible, install dispensers that require no hand contact to remove a towel. Individual cloth towels should not be shared
- Provide a waste basket for towels used to open washroom doors upon exiting, or leave washroom doors open

### Cleaning Methods

- Cleaning should proceed from least to most soiled. Cleaning solutions should be changed when they appear dirty and/or after a spill cleanup
- Cleaning primarily involves horizontal surfaces (ex: desks, countertops, table tops, floors) and surfaces that are frequently handled (ex: door knobs, telephones, bathroom fixtures)

## **Cleaning Schedules**

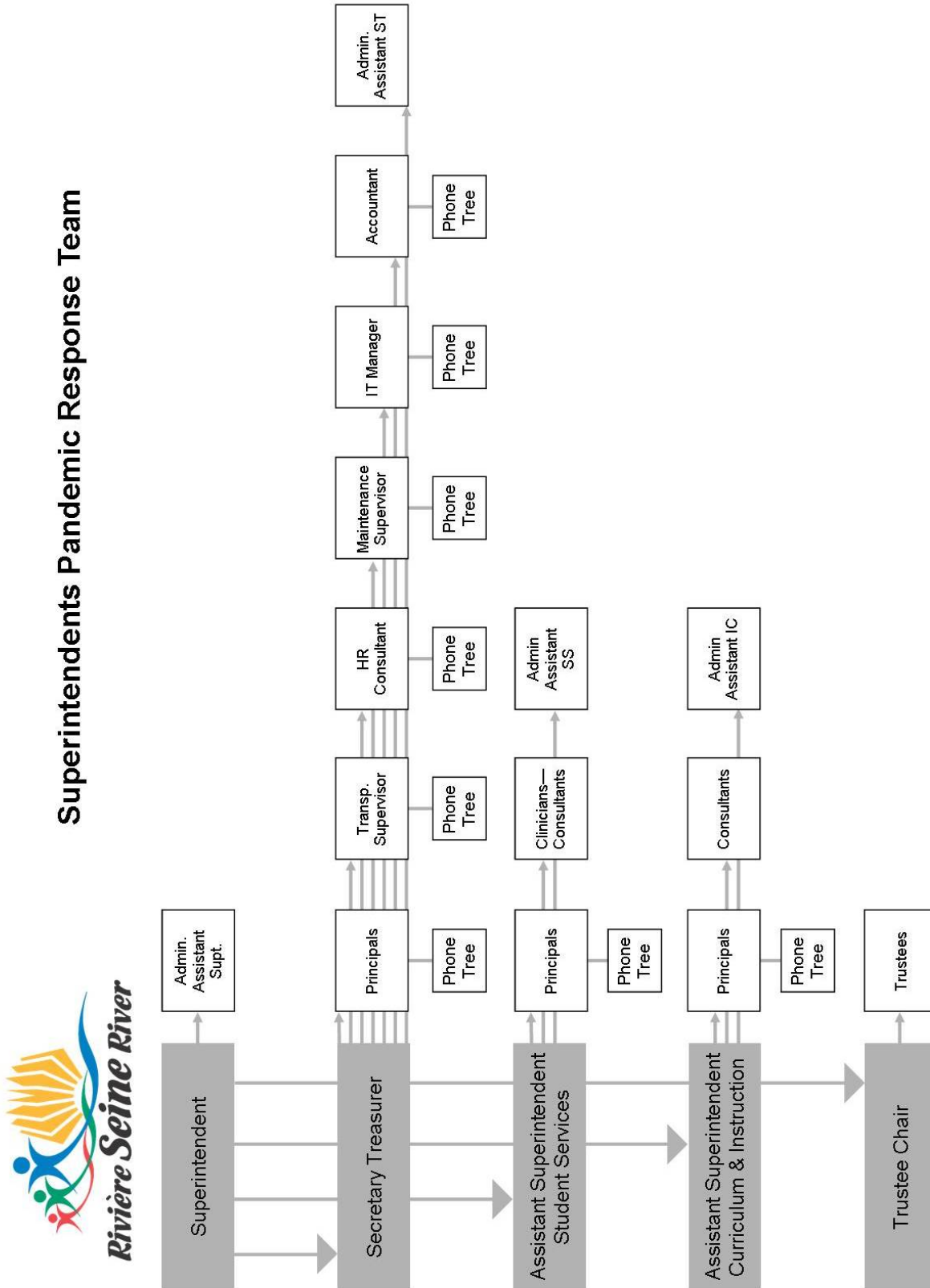
Cleaning schedules should be established according to the type of surface to be cleaned and the type of soiling that occurs. For example:

- spills – clean immediately
- surfaces used for food preparation or diapering – clean after each use
- kitchen, bathrooms, playroom – clean daily and as necessary
- offices, countertops, computer keyboards, phones, appliances – clean weekly and as necessary
- furniture, walls and carpets – follow a rotating schedule (monthly/yearly) and as necessary
- sports equipment such as balls for games – clean weekly
- reusable gloves – clean after each use

## **Adequate Supplies**

Schools should plan in advance for maintaining adequate resources for infection prevention and control in schools (soap, paper towels, alcohol-based hand rubs) as there may be an interruption of supply availability .

**APPENDIX F – SUPERINTENDENTS PANDEMIC RESPONSE TEAM**



The telephone tree will be activated in the event critical information must be relayed to all staff in the division quickly. Each person's telephone tree is a collection of contacts from the division and outside agencies.

## APPENDIX G – PANDEMIC PREPAREDNESS CHECKLIST FOR SCHOOLS

	Completed	In Progress	Not Started	Action By
<b>Preparedness</b>				
Identify team				
Review guidelines summary				
Review checklist				
Prepare and share school response (Designates, communication, timelines, Location)				
<b>Student Needs</b>				
Identify students with medical conditions				
Identify students with specific needs				
Identify students requiring medication				
Identify staff who administer medication				
Identify students who require transportation				
<b>Sick Room</b>				
Allocate space				
Equip space				
Identify supervisors				
<b>Response Plan for Teaching Activities</b>				
Identify replacement personnel				
Determine alternate service delivery				
<b>Essential Front Office Operations</b>				
Identify staff to maintain phone, staff/student attendance, financial business (e.g., purchase orders, cheque signing authority), other				

	Completed	In Progress	Not Started	Action By
<b>Socio-Emotional Health Support</b>				
Identify a team to deal with socio-emotional needs (e.g., anxiety, death)				
<b>Lunch Procedures</b>				
Identify a backup plan				
<b>School Phone Tree</b>				
Update and distribute phone tree				
Identify teacher in-charge				
Submit phone tree to superintendent				
<b>Education</b>				
Promote respiratory etiquette, stop spread of germs				
(Sneezing, washing, coughing				