

192 PANDEMIC DISEASE OUTBREAKS PROTOCOL

Background

The Division, in cooperation with the provincial government and Alberta Health Services, supports efforts to minimize a pandemic and its disruption to the operational activities of the Division. Administrators and staff are expected to ensure the most effective and efficient use of resources for the maximum benefit and protection of students, staff and facilities.

Procedures

1. In the event that Alberta Health Services identifies evidence of a significant pandemic outbreak in the region, the Superintendent has the authority to make final decisions regarding crisis response, as guided by the Occupational Health and Safety Manual. When a state of emergency is declared by a Ministry of the Alberta Government, the particular Ministry will have such authority.
2. In accordance with directives emanating from federal and provincial authorities and the consequent circumstances that may prevail, **the Superintendent may temporarily suspend the Division's current practices, procedures and operating guidelines.**
3. The Superintendent or designate shall serve as the contact for questions related to communicable disease outbreaks as determined by the Medical Officer of Health.
 - a. Teachers shall report any possible cases related to the pandemic, concerns or questions to their principals, and principals shall report any possible cases, concerns or questions to the Superintendent and will notify Health-Link at (811).

Health Link staff will notify the Medical Officer of Health for the area.

MOH can be contacted at: 403-264-5615 or MOH.Calgary@ahs.ca

4. The Superintendent or designate shall monitor changing updates about pandemic disease outbreaks. Information is available from a number of sources, including the websites listed below. In addition, the Alberta Health Services contact person will provide current information.

<https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/> (Alberta Health Services)

<http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca> (Health Canada)

<http://www.who.int> (World Health Organization)

5. Information to parents/guardians and staff
 - a. Parents/guardians and staff shall be provided with relevant and appropriate information regarding any pandemics. Parents/guardians shall be notified as to further sites for accessing information.

6. Travel
 - a. Non-essential school sponsored/related student travel will be cancelled to affected areas, as determined by and at the discretion of the Superintendent. "Essential travel" is that which is absolutely necessary and required.
 - b. Before any field trips are approved and on an ongoing basis prior to departures, a review of the status of the outbreak in the area will be completed. At minimum, the information provided by Alberta Health Services, the World Health Organization, Health Canada and Government of Canada travel advisories will be reviewed.
 - c. Students and/or staff planning travel to a country whereby they might be exposed to the pandemic outbreak will be encouraged to consult an Alberta Health Services International Travel Clinic (or another such facility) in advance of their trip regarding immunization and other protective measures to use to protect them against the outbreak.
 - d. Staff are strongly encouraged to advise principals in advance of travel to a hot zone, as defined by Alberta Health Services, Government of Canada or the World Health Organization. Principals will advise the Superintendent of the staff member's travel plans. All staff are advised to attend to Government of Canada travel advisories and to avoid travel to hot zone areas.
 - e. If staff, students or families return from travel to a "hot zone" as per 6d, or are showing symptoms of the pandemic, they must contact their school principal before returning to school. Staff or students, depending upon current local or provincial health directives, may be advised that they cannot return to school at this time. Individuals may be required to call 811 to obtain medical recommendations regarding the most appropriate actions to take.

7. If staff, students, or families are showing symptoms or they become aware that they have come into contact with an affected individual, they must follow local or provincial health directives.

8. If a student or staff member contracts the pandemic disease, they must follow local or provincial health directives.

9. Staff employment and/or pay may be impacted, on a case by case basis, depending on the circumstances of individual situations.

10. Principals shall inform the Superintendent of any visitors, exchange students or international students prior to their arrival from any destinations. All incoming visits are to be cleared through the Superintendent.
11. The Superintendent will determine when a school closure is necessary to maintain student and staff safety in consultation with the local/regional/provincial Medical Officer of Health, if possible. Staff will be required, unless otherwise directed by the superintendent, to support student learning during times of school closures due to pandemics. This support may be through technology platforms and or instructional packages.
12. Students and staff are encouraged to wash their hands often and thoroughly with soap and warm water. Hand washing is the single most important method for preventing infection. Schools will implement disinfection programs and the distribution of hygiene supplies such as hand sanitizers as per Alberta Health Services recommendations.
13. During times of a pandemic Joint Use Agreements and community facility use may be suspended to protect the health and safety of students, staff and community members.

References

Disaster Services Act
Emergency Medical Aid Act
Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act
Fire Prevention Act
Occupational Health and Safety Act
Occupational Health and Safety Regulation
Occupational Health and Safety Code
<https://education.alberta.ca/media/1477307/pandemicplanningguide.pdf>

History

Developed: June 2020