

## **Deerfield Community School District**

### **Pandemic Influenza Response Plan**

#### **Purpose of Plan**

Have a planned response in the event there is a pandemic influenza outbreak.

#### **Rationale**

The Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, Wisconsin Department of Health and Family Services, and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention are urging local school districts to develop a local plan. This plan will be shared with the Public Health-Madison Dane County (PHMDC) for integration into the County response plan.

#### **Background**

The World Health Organization states that an influenza pandemic occurs when a new influenza virus appears against which the human population has little or no immunity. The result could be a worldwide epidemic with significant illness and death. With the appearance of the new avian influenza virus and the significant global travel in the world, the potential for an influenza pandemic is very real.

Influenza is a highly contagious viral respiratory illness that annually is responsible for 200,000 hospitalizations and 36,000 deaths in the United States. During a pandemic, these numbers will increase dramatically.

Schools tend to be affected more than other settings because their occupants, primarily children, easily transmit illnesses to one another as a result of their close proximity and their inefficiency at containing the droplets created by their cough or sneeze. High susceptibility of students and staff to exposure to a mutated virus as a result of proximity and a longer duration of an outbreak due to a lack of immunity and vaccines could result in lengthy and widespread absenteeism. In a worse case scenario, a pandemic influenza outbreak could force schools to close.

The actual impact will be dependent on the type of influenza virus that is identified and how effectively it is spread from person-to-person. An entirely new influenza strain that is easily spread from person-to-person could cause significant illness in the community, state, and nation. This could have a significant effect on the local economy and disruption to society and schools.

#### **Goal of the Plan**

The intent of this plan is to:

- Initiate practices that will help minimize or reduce the spread of the influenza virus
- Plan out a response to help effectively manage an influenza pandemic
- Sustain educational functions and district operations during an influenza pandemic
- Coordinate efforts with the Dane County response to pandemic influenza.

### **Authority/Communication**

- Level 1- Prevention/Mitigation: No change in district actions related to the management of district buildings. Communication of prevention messages may be building specific or district wide.
- Level 2 – Preparedness: Superintendent shall decide on establishing a command center in the district to centralize planning and communication efforts. Contact will be made with PHMDC to coordinate planning actions and communication messages.
- Level 3 – Response: The school district will collaborate with PHMDC to assure consistent messages are being provided to the public. A centralized command center in the district will be in operation during this time to assure uniform implementation of the district response plan and that accurate and timely communication is provided to staff, students, and parents.
- Level 4 – Recovery: Superintendent or his/her designee will collaborate with the PHMDC in determining when the county moves into the recovery phase. The district will follow the county plans in determining what actions will be necessary to restore the learning environment in each school. Centralized communication will continue to be used for sharing messages to staff, parents, and students.

### **Communication Channels**

- Students/Parents: The school district will use the following forms of media to provide official communication to students/parents
  1. Parent Mailings/Take Home Letters
  2. District web site
  3. Independent Newspaper
  4. Local cable channel for district communication-WDEE
  5. Madison area TV/radio stations
- District Employees: Official district communication with employees will occur through:
  1. District emails
  2. Memos/letters from district administration or building principal
  3. District web site
  4. Employee telephone tree at schools
- Administrators: Official district communication with district administrators will occur through:
  1. Direct telephone call to emergency phone number
  2. District e-mails
  3. District web site

## Response Plan

### Level 1: Mitigation/Prevention

Definition: No new influenza virus in the world that is easily spread from person –to-person.  
Federal pandemic phase = 0

### Actions

1. Disseminate annual messages about preventive hygiene, including effective hand washing, covering mouth and nose with cough/sneeze. Use posters, school newsletters, employee bulletins, district e-mails, district website to communicate messages.
2. Annually remind parents of the symptoms of flu and encourage them not to send students to school who are experiencing these symptoms. Provide education information to students and families.
3. Annually remind district employees of the symptoms of flu and encourage them to stay home from work if they are experiencing these symptoms. Provide education information to staff.
4. Encourage all employees and students to receive the flu shot each school year.
5. Maintain weekly surveillance of student and staff illnesses with both schools in the district.
6. Initiate follow up investigation on cause of student illness if any of the schools has more than 10% of the student population ill for two or more consecutive days.
7. District will use appropriate communication channels to inform parents of any outbreak related to the absence rate, risks and precautions, actions taken by the district, and requested action from parents.
8. School nurse will monitor seasonal and pandemic flu information from the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) website on a regular basis. Significant changes will be communicated to the Superintendent
9. District will conduct training so staff is aware of actions to take during flu pandemic.
10. Formulate a plan to continue school operations and instruction with a 30% reduction in workforce. Include adequate coverage for important administrative functions.
11. Meet with union representatives to discuss collective bargaining agreements related to sick leave options, alternative work schedules, alternative assignments.
12. Consider developing criteria that will be utilized to cancel sporting events or other large group gatherings if necessary.
13. Food Service will have a plan to maintain the district hot lunch program to all schools if a school that prepares hot lunch meals for another school is closed due to pandemic flu.

## Level 2: Preparedness

Definition: Clusters of human-to-human transmission with a new influenza virus subtype.

Federal pandemic phase = 2. Prepare for potential pandemic.

### Actions

1. Stock appropriate sanitation supplies such as soap, alcohol gel sanitizer (main office health rooms), tissues, face masks.
2. All students reporting to school health rooms with the following flu-like symptoms: fever, cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, and muscle aches will be provided with a face mask to wear until an adult comes to pick up the student from school or the student leaves school.
3. Staff will use a district approved disinfecting agent to disinfect health room cots, counters, and other shared surfaces after contact with a student or staff person who exhibits symptoms suggestive of influenza.
4. During the flu season, staff will be encouraged to disinfect desktops, telephone hand-piece, computer keyboards, and doorknobs on a daily basis using a district approved disinfecting agent.
5. School nurse will monitor CDC website and State Department of Health and Family Services website regularly for information on the influenza.
6. Consider alternative school calendars and alternative methods of instruction to insure continuity of instruction.
7. Maintain surveillance activities for student and staff absences. Communicate significant findings to the Superintendent weekly.
8. Consider altering telephone response for attendance lines at schools to include a request for parents to provide the symptoms their student is experiencing or reason for absence.
9. Review communication strategies the district will use with parents and staff.
10. Existing state and district attendance policies will be followed unless otherwise directed by state or district authority.

### Level 3: Response

Definition: First human case reported in North America. Federal Pandemic Phase = 4.

#### Actions

1. Communicate with parents and staff that the school district has moved to level 3 actions in response to a human case of pandemic influenza in North America. Identify what actions will be taken at school as a result of this designation. Communicate that closing of schools will be done in consultation with public health officials as a last resort. This intervention choice is only effective if students stay at home during school closure as directed.
2. School nurse will monitor CDC, State Department of Health and Family Services and PHMDC websites on pandemic flu and communicate significant updates or changes to the Superintendent.
3. Prioritize district functions:
  - a. Suspension of unnecessary travel and activities (field trips, extracurricular activities, sporting events). Consideration will be given to the suspension of classes for the district's more vulnerable population that includes Early Childhood and the medically fragile students.
  - b. School closures: District will follow directive from PHMDC when to close schools and when it is OK to resume school functions. Superintendent may close schools sooner than directed by PHMDC.
  - c. Continuity in instruction: Alternate methods of instruction will be provided depending on staffing and resources available during the pandemic. Alternate methods may include web-based broadcasts/lessons, cable television (WDEE), mailed lessons and assignments.
  - d. Ensure business continuity of essential functions (payroll, communication). Some functions may be performed by staff at home.
4. All students reporting to the health room with flu-like symptoms will be provided with a mask to wear while in school. Parents will be contacted so students can be picked up from school.
5. The building principal or his/her designee will direct employees who are at school with flu-like symptoms to leave school. Employees may return based on criteria provided by the county health department.
6. Implement emergency communication plan using Incident Weather plan.
7. Coordinate efforts with PHMDC on getting information to employees and the community on recognizing the symptoms of influenza; caring for an ill person at home; when, where, and how to seek medical care; resources for supportive services.
8. Work with PHMDC staff to utilize district buildings for pandemic control measures.

#### Level 4: Recovery

Definition: Restoring school learning environment. Federal Pandemic Phase #6.

1. District will follow PHMDC guidelines for readmittance of students and staff back into school. The district reserves the right to request a physician's note for readmittance into school/work.
2. Continue surveillance of absentee and illness rates of students and staff.
3. Follow recommendations from PHMDC with disinfecting the school environment before staff or students return to school.
4. Work with PHMDC to utilize district buildings for mass immunization clinics or dispensing medications.
5. Communicate with parents/staff the return to regular school routine, actions taken to make the school environment safe, changes in any district procedures.
6. Evaluate impact of pandemic flu outbreak and actions that need to be added/changed to improve future responses.
7. Monitor CDC and State Department of Health and Family Services pandemic flu website for any changes or updates. Communicate these changes and updates to the Superintendent.
8. Plan for possible second wave of the pandemic flu with ordering of materials.
9. Continue to communicate with parents and staff, not to return to school until criteria from the county health department are met.
10. Communicate with parents, students, and staff actions they can take to reduce the risk of spreading flu.
11. The pandemic may cause great stress and loss for many people. The district will provide information on counseling resources for students/families and staff following the pandemic.