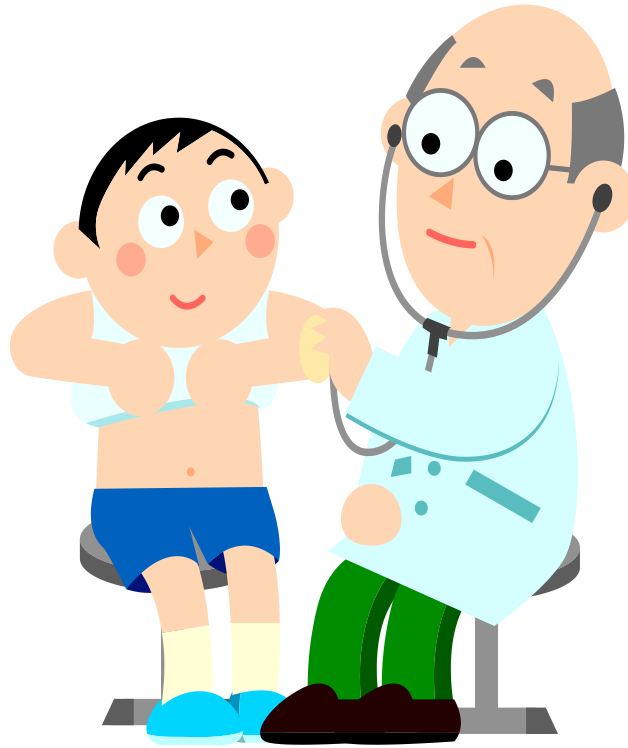


# Mead School District



## Pandemic Flu

### Emergency Preparations, Response, Recovery

May, 2009

## **Pandemic Flu Emergency Preparations, Response, Recovery**

### **What is the flu?**

Flu, also called influenza, is a contagious disease of the lungs and airways. Usually influenza viruses are spread in droplets of coughs and sneezes.

### **Flu Symptoms:**

Fever	Headache	Runny Nose
Body Aches	Cough	Stomach & Intestinal Discomfort
Extreme Tiredness	Sore Throat	

### **How does seasonal flu differ from Pandemic Flu?**

**SEASONAL FLU** is caused by influenza viruses that are similar to those already circulating among people. Signs and symptoms include fever, headache, tiredness, dry cough, sore throat, runny nose and muscle pain. Deaths can be caused by complications such as pneumonia. Healthy adults are usually not at risk of serious complications. The very young, the elderly, and those with certain underlying health conditions are at increased risk of serious complications. Every year worldwide, on average, there are an estimated 3 to 5 million severe cases of influenza and 250,000 to 500,000 deaths from flu.

**PANDEMIC FLU** is caused by a new influenza virus that people have not been exposed to before. It is likely to be more severe, affect more people and cause more deaths than seasonal flu because people will not have immunity. Signs and symptoms are similar to common flu but may be more severe and complications more serious. May include nausea, vomiting, diarrhea and rapid progression or shortness of breath. Healthy children and adults may be at increased risk of serious complications. The effects of a severe pandemic could be much more damaging than those of regular flu. It could lead to high levels of illness, death, social disruption and economic loss.

According to the Washington State Department of Health, an epidemic is an outbreak of a disease that occurs in one of several limited areas, like a city, state or country. Once the disease spreads beyond the borders of several countries and affects many countries across the globe, it is called a pandemic. In the 20<sup>th</sup> century, several pandemics of influenza occurred, the biggest one in 1918. During that pandemic, at least 500,000 Americans died and it has been estimated that there were as many as 10 million deaths worldwide.

In the case of a pandemic flu event, the district will follow **Infectious Disease Policy/Procedure 3414** and initiate the district planning, response and recovery procedures as outlined by the policy and procedure.

An infectious disease is caused by the presence of certain microorganisms in the body. Infectious diseases may or may not be communicable or in a contagious state.

The Mead School District Board of Directors authorizes the school principals to exclude a student who has been diagnosed by a physician or is suspected of having an infectious disease in accordance with the regulations within the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) Infectious Disease Control Guide for School Staff, current edition. The principal and/or school nurse shall report the presence of suspected case or cases of reportable communicable disease to the appropriate local health authority as required by the state Board of Health. Such information concerning a student's present and past health condition shall be treated as confidential. The principal shall cooperate with the local health officials in the investigation of the source of the disease.

WAC 246-101-420 outlines the responsibilities of schools in such situations. Schools shall:

1. *Notify the local health department of cases or suspected cases, or outbreaks and suspected outbreaks of disease that may be associated with the school.*
2. *Cooperate with the local health department in monitoring influenza.*
3. *Consult with a health care provider or the local health department for information about the control and prevention of infectious or communicable disease as necessary.*
4. *Cooperate with public health authorities in the investigation of cases and suspected cases, or outbreaks and suspected outbreaks of diseases that may be associated with the school.*
5. *Personnel in schools who know of a person with a notifiable condition shall release identifying information only to other individuals responsible for protecting the health and well-being of the public through control of disease.*
6. *Schools shall establish and implement policies and procedures to maintain confidentiality related to medical information in their possession.*

The length of absence from school for a student ill from a contagious disease is determined by the directions given in the OSPI Infectious Disease Control Guide for School Staff or from instructions provided by the attending physician, or instructions from the local health officer.

All absentee rates of ten (10) percent or greater will be reported to the Spokane Regional Health District.

Mead School District requires that parents or guardians shall complete a medical history information form upon enrollment and update the form as needed. The school nurse may use such reports to advise the parent of the need for further medical attention and to plan for potential health problems in school.

A school principal has the authority to send an ill child home with parent notification, without the concurrence of the local health officer, but if the disease is reportable, the local health officer must be notified. The local health officer is the primary resource in the identification and control of infectious disease in community and school.

The following planning committee assembled to review and develop mitigation and prevention plans, review and develop response plans, and review and develop recovery plans.

**Planning Committee and Critical Pandemic Incident Command Team:**

Superintendent	Tom Rockefeller
Executive Director	Ralph Thayer
Director of Special Ed	Marcia Young
School Nurse	Patti Buck
School Nurse	Vickie Taxter
Elementary Principal	Marilyn Brennan, MeadowRidge
Secondary Principal	Craig Busch, Mountainside Middle
Administrative Assistant	Kelly Patterson

## **MITIGATION AND PREVENTION:**

The planning committee reviewed the existing Infectious Diseases Policy/Procedure 3414 and determined that the policy would apply to a Pandemic event. Revisions and/or additions were not necessary.

To mitigate the effects of a Pandemic the following actions will be taken:

### Communications:

Different forms of communication will be used to keep staff, students and parents informed of announcements and plans from Spokane Regional Health District and plans for the district's response if the Pandemic should affect Mead School District.

The district has in place the following communication procedures:

### Public Notification:

District Web Page  
E-notify to district families  
Local radio and TV announcements for school closures  
School Newsletters  
Mead Matters, district newspaper sent to all residents.  
Local Newspaper

### Staff Notification:

District Web page  
District email  
District and individual school phone trees

The District will take proactive steps to educate staff and students regarding respiratory etiquette and "stop the spread of germs".

1. The District will take proactive steps to educate staff and students regarding respiratory etiquette and "stop the spread of germs."
  - \* Flyers "Preparing for Pandemic Influenza" distributed to all students and staff.
  - \* Posters illustrating the proper procedures for "covering your cough" posted at schools.
  - \* Ongoing staff orientation regarding healthy habits that include frequent and proper hand washing.

## PREPAREDNESS

It is anticipated that the Spokane Regional Health District will make the determination when to close schools and businesses. The district will support their decision making process by providing the same reporting of absences as stated in the Infectious Disease policy/procedure 3414. Pandemic flu updates will be distributed to the Superintendent, district lead nurse and Executive Staff.

Procedures for the schools up to the time of closure will include:

### District will be responsible for:

- Convene District Incident Command Team for Pandemic Flu.
- Distributing flyers and posters as reminders of healthy habits during the late fall and early winter months. Articles will continue in Mead Matters as well as information put on district and school websites. Schools will be required to post reminders in their newsletters.
- Following the Incident Command emergency chain of command to fill administrative positions vacated due to illness. For example, in an emergency, when the principal is gone, who is the Incident Commander?
- Sending out information to staff to review symptoms of flu and what to look for in order to identify ill students and staff.

### Building Administrators will be responsible for:

- Identifying a space in their building for housing ill students. Health rooms have limited space and need to be available for students who are on medication and for the basic first aid that is required. Ill students must be isolated to help prevent the spread of the flu.
- Communications will be sent via school newsletter, and/or website
- Stocking extra gloves, masks and respirators, if needed, along with appropriate cleaning supplies.
- Identifying staff members who, due to health conditions or pregnancy, will not be able to be present at school once the flu has been identified. Information will be shared with Human Resources to be considered along with the absences called in due to illness.
- Keeping staff emergency contact lists up-to-date. Identify a person that will check on staff members in the event of an illness.

Pandemic Flu Critical Incident Team will be responsible for:

- Reviewing and identifying resources available for grief services including the district MIST Team and the Spokane Regional Health District.
- Providing relevant training for all administrators.

School Nurses/Health Room Staff will instruct staff and students on reducing their risks by:

- Recommending a standard influenza vaccine.
- Washing hands frequently.
- Using proper respiratory hygiene.
- Wearing masks and gloves when providing care.
- Keeping work areas clean and sanitary.

**RESPONSE**

District Critical Incident Team will be responsible for:

- Providing information to parents on prevention procedures and providing information as to the school status—open or closed and if closed when re-opening.
- Conducting timely debriefings to identify lessons learned and make necessary changes to the response plan.

Building Administrators will be responsible for:

- Giving staff updates on the extent of infection at the school site and potential changes that may take place.

Nurses/Health Room Staff will be responsible for:

- Keeping students with influenza symptoms in a separate location away from other health room users.

- Calling parents or emergency contact immediately to come and pick up the student.
- Send home any student with influenza symptoms such as fever, headache, sore throat, body aches, cough, runny nose, stomach and intestinal discomfort and extreme tiredness. May consider having student wear a mask if recommended.
- Having ill students that have a fever over 100 degrees and are coughing wear masks until picked up.
- Cleaning area, bed and/or laundry that student used after each use as per current procedure.
- Keeping a record of students and staff exhibiting influenza symptoms that are sent home. Keeping track of phoned in absences that are for influenza like symptoms. (Influenza symptoms: fever, headache, sore throat, body aches, cough, runny nose, stomach and intestinal discomfort and extreme tiredness.)
- Reporting absences greater than 10% to Spokane Regional Health District as directed by the epidemiology department.

## **RECOVERY**

### District will be responsible for:

- Providing information on extent of pandemic flu in the community and activities that may assist students; signs and symptoms. Also announce counseling support services available to faculty and staff.
- Making educational materials available to families and staff on topics such as how to support your student with their recovery from pandemic flu, common symptoms and characteristics of loss and grief and constructive ways to cope with stress.
- Communicating with OSPI and other state agencies regarding funding issues and payroll capabilities.
- Urging staff to use the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) for assistance with coping with loss and stress.
- Modifying work roles and responsibilities or add volunteer or support staff as needed.
- Conducting debriefing meetings to document “lessons learned” and incorporate them into revisions and trainings.

Building Administrator will be responsible for:

- Requesting assistance for grief counseling if building requires.
- Monitoring the effects of cumulative stress on caregivers such as office staff, school nurses, and teachers, para-educators, school counselors and other crisis team members.
- Working with Human Services to provide support.

Critical Incident Team will be responsible for:

- Making educational materials available to families and staff on topics such as how to support your student with their recovery from pandemic flu, common symptoms of loss and grief, and constructive ways to cope with stress.
- Urging staff to use EAP for assistance with coping with loss and stress.
- Working with school nurses to identify students, families and staff who may need long-term physical and mental health support or intervention and develop school and community resources to provide these services.
- Follow up with student referrals made to community agencies.

School Nurses/ will be responsible for:

- Providing physical assessments or make appropriate community health referrals.
- Working with the Critical Incident Team to identify students, families and staff who may need physical or mental health support.
- Determine treatment/care for students (e.g., administration of meds, fluids, etc).