



PANDEMIC FLU PREPARATION

The Board of Trustees believes that prevention, preparation, and communication are the best tools to combat possible influenza pandemics. Therefore the board directs the Executive Director to take the following steps, and others deemed necessary within state statute and health regulations, to minimize disruption to student learning and maintain student health.

Prevention

School staff shall take the following recommended steps recommended by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) at all times and not only during a flu pandemic to help keep our students and staff from getting sick with flu.

- A. **Staff shall educate and encourage students to cover their mouth and nose with a tissue** when they cough or sneeze. They shall provide them with easy access to tissues and remind them to cover coughs or sneezes using their elbow instead of their hand when a tissue is not available.
- B. **Staff shall remind students to practice good hand hygiene** and provide the time and supplies (easy access to running water and soap or alcohol-based hand cleaners) for them to wash their hands as often as necessary.
- C. **Staff shall be good role models** by practicing good hand hygiene and covering their mouth and nose when coughing or sneezing.
- D. **Staff shall keep an eye out for sick students and send them to the school health office for further evaluation.** Sick people shall stay at home until at least 24 hours after they no longer have a fever or signs of a fever (without the use of fever-reducing medicine).
- E. **Staff shall clean surfaces and items** that are more likely to have frequent hand contact such as desks, door knobs, keyboards, or pens, with cleaning agents that are usually used in these areas.
- F. **Staff shall be advised to stay home when sick with fever.** They shall stay at home until at least 24 hours after fever or signs of a fever (without the use of fever-reducing medicine) have subsided.
- G. **Staff members that are pregnant, have asthma, diabetes, or other conditions that put them at higher risk for complications from the flu,** shall **speak with a doctor as soon as possible** upon developing symptoms of flu-like illness. People at high risk of flu complications who develop flu can benefit from early treatment with antiviral medicines.
- H. **Staff with children** shall plan ahead for childcare for up to 5 days if their child gets sick or their school closes.

Preparation

The Executive Director shall prepare and disseminate contingency plans for possible flu-related scenarios, including the following:

- A. **Scenario 1: There is a notable increase in students out with flu.**

1. Teachers shall find ways to increase social distances (the space between people) in their classroom. Examples include:
 - Moving desks farther apart
 - Dividing classes into smaller groups such as tables
 - Rotating teachers between classrooms instead of students
 - Modifying activities such as lunch that bring students together from multiple classrooms
2. The school may consider suspending activities such as afterschool program or field trips.

B. Scenario 2: Individual students have extended absences (may be 5 days or more).

1. Teachers shall develop plans with parents on how work can get home during absence (email, relatives, friends, etc).
2. Teachers shall regularly set aside work that students can do that practices existing skills, since teaching new skills shall be difficult.
3. Teachers shall identify students where technology can support continuity of instruction at home (take a survey and find out who has web-access, email, etc.) Teaching over the phone is an option too.

C. Scenario 3: Extensive staff absence (30%/8 teachers or more and no substitutes available).

1. The school shall first use existing instructional staff to substitute for absent teachers.
2. But if 30% or more teachers are absent, this shall not be sufficient, so teachers shall be prepared to teach with reduced or eliminated preparation time
 - Teachers shall have extra activities, including copied materials, ready-to-go.
3. In case of absence, all teachers shall prepare crystal clear, step-by-step plans for at least 5 days. If absence is longer, they shall need to send more plans in. Plans shall include all copies pre-made.
4. Unless staff members exhibit fever, they may still be asked to come in.

D. Scenario 4: Extensive staff and/or student absence warrants school dismissal or school closure.

1. The decision to dismiss students shall be made by the Executive Director working closely with their local and state public health and government officials to make sound decisions, based on local conditions. However, NJDOE has made clear that such measures are only for extreme conditions.
2. UHCS shall most likely use school dismissal vs. school closure. A school closure means closing the school and sending all the students and staff home. In a school dismissal, the school stays open for staff while the children stay home. Keeping school facilities open allows teachers to develop and deliver lessons and materials and other staff to continue to provide important services.
3. While there is no set criteria, the decision shall consider
 - the number and severity of cases in an outbreak (looking at national, regional, and local data),
 - the risks of flu spread and benefits of dismissal
 - the problems that school dismissal can cause for families and communities, and
 - different types of dismissal (*selective* for most at risk students, *reactive* when infection becomes extensive, and *preemptive* when prompted by health officials).

4. Unlike a snow day, there will likely be a few days notice before school closes.
5. Teachers shall start making packets now so students continue practicing even at home.
6. The length of time school will be dismissed shall vary depending on how severe the flu is and how many people are sick. When the decision is made to dismiss students, CDC recommends doing so for 5-7 calendar days.

3. Communication

UHCS shall inform parents and community members of risks and plans regarding H1N1 through the following:

- **Hygiene Week:** In late September, the school shall observe hygiene week and promulgate to students and staff key messages around and washing and respiratory etiquette. Information on vaccination shall also be distributed.
- **Peace and Safety Night:** When parents gather in October for Peace and Safety Night, H1N1 shall be addressed again, with emphasis on prevention and what to do if children get sick.
- **Weekly Green Folder Communications:** Flyers shall be sent home as necessary.
- **Parent Announcement Board:** Information shall be posted as it becomes available.
- **State of the School Address:** Updated information shall be given on the status of H1N1.

Board Approval Date: 1/19/2010