



Pandemic Preparedness Guidelines

Administrative Procedure 8.095

Board Governance Policy Cross Reference: 1, 2, 3, 6, 7, 12, 13, 16, 17

Legal Reference: Pandemic Influenza: Preparedness Guidelines for Manitoba School Divisions and Schools (K-12), October 2007

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If schools and communities are advised of a pandemic, the School District of Mystery Lake, its staff and students will follow guidelines set out by Manitoba Health.

Guidelines set out in October 2007 are available on-line: Pandemic Influenza: Preparedness Guidelines for Manitoba School Divisions and Schools (K-12).

If a pandemic were to occur, Manitoba Health would provide schools with updates and direction. As more information becomes available about the characteristics of a particular virus causing an outbreak, protocols may change.

What is Pandemic Influenza?

Pandemic influenza is an epidemic that spreads throughout the world. Influenza A is the type of influenza virus involved in all known influenza pandemics. Influenza A viruses can undergo major changes or shifts in genetic makeup, producing a completely new strain for which most people have little or no specific immunity. As a result, large numbers of individuals become infested as it spreads. **For an influenza virus to be considered a pandemic**, it must be a new virus with the ability to spread efficiently among people, causing widespread illness and death.

How is Influenza Spread?

The influenza virus enters the body through the nose, eyes or throat. When people with influenza cough or sneeze, large droplets containing the virus are produced and can travel up to one meter in the air. Inhaling these droplets or having them come into contact with your mouth, eyes or nose can result in infection.

This can also occur by hand-to-hand contact with infected individuals or by touching surfaces or handling objects contaminated by infected individuals.

Infected persons can be contagious from the day before they develop symptoms and up to seven days afterwards. This timeframe may be longer for children. Not everyone who comes in contact with influenza virus will become ill. However, they may still spread it to others.

What Role Do Schools Play?

Measures to reduce personal exposure in school buildings will be balanced with the need to maintain normal routines and operations. The School District of Mystery Lake 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
- Promote personal hygiene practices by educating and reminding students and others of the importance of **preventive measures**.