

Wingham HB School

Pandemic Plan

Box 45 • Elm Creek, Manitoba • R0G 0N0

Wingham HB School Mission Statement:

We believe that education should be a community effort and reflect our values and beliefs. It should enable students to become contributing members in Hutterian communities as well as the larger society. Our school should be culturally accommodating and use students' background to reflect and solidify their Hutterian identity and belonging.

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Introduction:

Good health is essential to learning. Wingham HB School is committed to providing a safe and healthy environment in which students can learn. Bearing in mind that the school is a public place where illnesses or influenzas can spread easily, we recognize that it is our duty to try and minimize and slow the spread of a virus as much as possible. It is vital that students / staff are educated about influenzas and pandemics and that proper hygiene practices are taught and practiced both in and out of school.

Pandemics can affect the regular function of a school and this policy is designed to provide structure during times when influenzas or pandemics can alter the regular function of the school. We will continue our own services to the community as long as possible but will do so under advisement and direction of the provincial government.

It is important to recognize that this plan needs to adapt or evolve over time to meet the needs of the community. This policy has been developed with the input of the public health unit, school administration and community leaders.

The Goals and Objectives of the Pandemic Plan:

Goals of the Pandemic Plan:

- To minimize the impact of the pandemic on students and staff.
- To maintain services to students and families as long as it is safe to do so, or until directed otherwise.
- To respond to outside needs, if required, as determined by a central government authority or local government.

This pandemic plan should achieve the following outcomes:

- To ensure a safe environment for students and staff (before, during and following a pandemic).
- To remain operational and maintain instruction and services.
- To ensure essential services continue during a pandemic (ex: supervision, curricular requirements, building security).
- To communicate accurately and in a timely manner with management, staff, and students and families regarding operations before, during and after a pandemic period.
- To track and monitor the activities and additional costs of responding to the pandemic.

Wingham HB School Continuity Planning

Process:

Alternative Service Delivery:

When the school situation is such that normal instruction is no longer viable, alternative service delivery should be considered for the students that are well enough to attend school. Some events may have to be postponed or scaled back. A few strategies are:

- Combine more grades (since student absenteeism will likely reduce class sizes).
- Provide alternate activities that can be accommodated by fewer teaching staff.
- Instruction should continue for students who are home and well enough to do school work, including homework and/or virtual instruction on the Internet with phone contact.

Scale Back Services:

- Postpone or cancel classes or events when necessary. Close the school until services can resume at an acceptable level (as a last resort).

Administrative Activities:

- Cross-train staff on any specialized or technical activities.
- Prepare written instructions so that partially trained employees or volunteers can complete essential tasks (identified in the business continuity planning process).
- Document location of key information and means of access (ex: passwords, keys).
- Prepare to report excessive absenteeism to health officials for pandemic surveillance purposes.

Building Maintenance Activities:

- Ensure that heat or air conditioning is maintained so that a comfortable environment is maintained.
- Reasonable attempts need to be made to keep building is secure after school hours as required.
- Additional cleaning duties may be assumed during a pandemic or flu season. Washrooms and classrooms would need more thorough cleaning.

Student Absenteeism:

Depending on the age groups most affected by the specific pandemic influenza virus and how it spreads among the population, absenteeism rates may be the same, lower or higher among students than teachers. In addition, any individuals with decreased immune system functioning related to chronic health conditions may be at higher risk of infection. The parents of such students may choose to keep them at home. During periods of high absenteeism such as a pandemic, schools are expected to continue to offer instruction. Compulsory curricula should be taught to the extent possible, allowing students to progress academically.

Potential Closure:

When a significant number of students are exposed to illness and cannot attend school, the public health nurse will be contacted and the Regional Health Authority’s recommendation should be followed.

Wingham HB School will close when:

- Public health officials order the temporary closure of all public facilities where people congregate, including schools, in the early stages of a pandemic in an attempt to slow the spread and impact of the disease.
- Circumstances that cause a school to close temporarily as an incidental closure. This could be due to excessive employee absenteeism or a critical building system failure that results in the inability to maintain a safe environment for students.
- Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth, Public Health officials or other government authorities order a school closure.

Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth will continue to fund school divisions and independent schools during an emergency. However, funding will be contingent on a number of factors, including reasonable efforts to maintain contact with students, continue instruction and provide opportunities for student learning and progress.

Potential Additional Duties:

- It is possible that schools and school personal will be directed to provide facilities or personnel, or both, for emergency responses in the community. The authority for this could come from the regional health authority, or local, provincial or federal governments. It is expected that we do whatever we can to help in this situation.

- Wingham HB School should be receptive to assisting response plans if needed. This could include providing gymnasium use (such as for health clinics), or staff. It could also include provision of child care services beyond regular school hours or distribution of materials to students and families in the community.
- It is not assumed that school personal are expected to be the leaders in the additional tasks necessary but they should help where possible.

Infection Control:

Reducing the Potential Spread of Infection at School:

During a pandemic, it is important to minimize or slow the spread of influenza within our facilities. Public health officials recommend that those who are ill should stay at home until they are well. This advice will be especially important during a pandemic so coming to work while sick is discouraged.

Wingham HB School is committed to the following steps to reducing the potential spread of infection:

- Providing washroom facilities designed to reduce the spread of infection. (eg. blow driers)
- Reducing the number of visitors to the school.
- Reducing the number and duration of face-to-face meetings or number of persons in attendance.
- Considering postponing some events that are open to the public and/or parents, including travel.
- Increasing distance education and work-at-home options.
- Promoting personal hygiene like:
 - Educating and reminding students and others of the importance of preventive measures.
 - Ensuring supplies are available for students to wash their hands and teaching them how to wash their hands properly. Ensuring that washrooms are regularly inspected and cleaned.
 - Ensuring that younger children can easily reach faucets.
 - Ensuring routine cleaning is maintained, including high-traffic areas and items being touched frequently (ex: washroom faucets, computer keyboards and eating areas)
 - Ensuring that schools have sufficient cleaning supplies on hand to meet increased cleaning requirements.

Illness of Students and Staff while in School:

When students and staff are sick, they should immediately be removed from the classroom and be kept in separate rooms until they can be picked up by their parents. It is also important to keep sick children at least 1 meter apart if they are in the same room. This serves to minimize the likelihood of transmission between those with influenza and those ill due to other causes.

Employees that are ill must go home until they are well enough to return to the school.

Recovery Plan:

A pandemic may come in two or more waves and last up to two years. It will result in a variety of impacts to the school.

During the recovery stage of a pandemic, Wingham HB School is committed to:

- Ensuring continued communications with employees, parents and students regarding the return to normal operations.
- Rebuilding corporate knowledge of school and school division processes or system.
- Holding ceremonies to remember deceased employees or students.
- Implementing in-class programs for students to help them deal with stress and the impacts of the pandemic.
- Identifying resources for stress counseling for employees, students and their families.
- Recruiting and training replacement employees and temporarily or permanently reassigning employees to maintain operations.
- Compiling necessary information to participate in any financial recovery programs (if announced).

Communications Plan:

Wingham HB School will provide information to staff, parents and other agencies when required before and during a pandemic. The information should be clear, factual and should be done on a timely basis.

There are two objectives for communications:

- To keep management, staff and stakeholders aware of planning and the latest information on the pandemic.
- To control and co-ordinate internal and external communications to the school population and community.

Pre-Pandemic Communications:

Wingham HB School will provide information on the school's plans and preparedness for responding to a pandemic including:

- Any necessary training and written information on the roles that employees will have in implementing the plan (ex: educating students on ways of preventing infection), and
- Reliable sources where employees can find information on how to prepare themselves and their families for a pandemic and what to do if they become infected.
- Notifying parents about their expectations in the home during a pandemic.
- Communicate the measures you are taking to remain operational and to ensure a safe and healthy environment for employees and students.
- Tell how school closures or other changes will be communicated to students and parents.
- Relaying any public information received on the pandemic to the parents in a timely fashion.

Communications during a Pandemic:

During a pandemic, the flow of information must continue. Keep parents, staff and students up to date on the pandemic as this information becomes available. Communications should provide concise, factual information about:

- The impact of the pandemic on the school.
- What students / parents can expect from the school.
- What they can do to work with you.
- When suspended services or reduced services will be restored (be realistic and honest about limitations or delays in service).

Communications after a Pandemic:

After a pandemic, there will likely be considerable personal and family stress related to the many social, economic and psychological effects of the pandemic. The school can help students, their families and others in your community by identifying community resources to help people cope with loss and stress.

Training sessions prepare individuals and groups for their roles during a pandemic. It is likely that the government will offer training seminars to train staff how to deal with these issues. If training options are available, we should:

- Send participants on general emergency preparedness and response training or pandemic specific training offered by government or private sector organizations.
- Conducting employee training and awareness on the risk of and internal organizational response to a pandemic.
- Providing necessary job training to staff members who are expected to serve as backups to other key personnel.

Contacts:

The following is a list of contacts in the Manitoba government to support your pandemic planning and respond to any need for further direction during a pandemic.

Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth

Emergency Response Co-ordination

Director
Finance and Administration Branch
15 - 1577 Dublin Avenue
Winnipeg MB R3E 3J5
Phone: (204) 945-0668

Administration Issues Funding Issues

Director
Education Administration Services Branch Schools Finance Branch
1181 Portage Ave. 511 - 1181 Portage Ave.
Winnipeg MB R3G 0T3 Winnipeg MB R3G 0T3
(204) 945-8664 (204) 945-0515

Instruction, Curriculum and Assessment Issues

English - Director French - Director
Instruction, Curriculum and Assessment Curriculum Development/Implementation
W120 - 1970 Ness Ave. 309 - 1181 Portage Ave.
Winnipeg R3J 0Y9 Winnipeg R3G 0T3
Phone (204) 945-6017 Phone (204) 945-8797

Appropriate Education Issues

Director
Program and Student Services
206 - 1181 Portage Ave.
Winnipeg R3G 0T3
Phone (204) 945-7911
Regional

Manitoba Health

Health Service Delivery Pandemic Influenza

Director
Office of Disaster Management
Phone (204) 945-1444
Fax (204) 948-2531
Website www.gov.mb.ca/health/odm/index.html

Online Pandemic Information

The source for pandemic influenza information in Manitoba online is:
www.gov.mb.ca/influenza/pandemic

Public Health Pandemic Influenza Information

Critical Issues Co-coordinator
Office of the Chief Medical Officer of Health
Phone (204) 788-6666
Fax (204) 948-2204

Manitoba Intergovernmental Affairs and Trade Manitoba Emergency Measures Organization

1525 - 405 Broadway
Winnipeg, Manitoba
R3C 3L6
Phone: 945-3050

Julie Hesketh

Public Health Nurse
Carman, Manitoba
Phone: 745-2426
Fax 745-5572

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Pandemic Influenza Preparedness Guidelines for Manitoba School Divisions and Schools (K - 12)
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<http://www.pandemicflu.gov/plan/school/index.html> June 25, 2009

http://www.gov.mb.ca/health/documents/pandemic_school.pdf June 25, 2009