

PANDEMIC/EPIDEMIC EMERGENCIES

The Board recognizes that a pandemic/epidemic outbreak is a serious threat that stands to affect students, staff, and the community as a whole. With this consideration in mind, the Board establishes this policy in the event the town/municipality and/or school district is affected by a pandemic/epidemic outbreak. At all times the health, safety and welfare of the student shall be the first priority.

Planning and Coordination

The Superintendent shall designate one or more employees to serve as a liaison between the school district and local and state health officials. This designee is responsible for connecting with health officials to identify local hazards, determine what crisis plans exist in the school district and community, and to establish procedures to account for student well-being and safety during such a crisis. The designee shall work with local health officials to coordinate their pandemic/epidemic plans with that of the school district.

The principal and/or school nurse or other designee shall develop a curriculum component to health classes that is designed to teach students about preventing or limiting the spread of communicable diseases.

With fiscal concerns in mind, the district shall purchase and store supplies necessary for an epidemic/pandemic outbreak, including but not limited to disinfectant products, face masks, water, examination gloves, and other supplies as recommended by the school nurse.

The Superintendent shall develop procedures and plans for the transportation of students in the event of an evacuation. Such procedures shall include provisions for students who cannot be transported to home at the time of the evacuation.

Response

In the event anyone within the school is discovered or suspected to have a communicable disease that may result in an epidemic/pandemic, that person shall be immediately quarantined pending further medical examination. Local and state health officials shall be notified immediately.

In conjunction with local and state health officials, the superintendent shall ascertain whether an evacuation, lockdown or shelter-in-place needs to be established. As soon as such a decision has been made, the school district shall attempt to notify the parents of all students.

In the event of an evacuation, the Superintendent is charged with determining when the school shall re-open. In the event of a lockdown or shelter-in-place, the Superintendent shall notify all proper authorities and relief agencies seek their assistance for the duration of the lockdown or shelter-in-place.

Infection Control

Any student or staff member found to be infected with a communicable disease that bears risk of pandemic/epidemic will not be allowed to attend school until medical clearance is provided by that individual's primary care physician or other medical personnel indicating that that person does not bear the risk of transmitting the communicable disease.

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Students with excessive absences due to a communicable disease shall be given a reprieve from other board policies relative to excessive student absences. Efforts will be made by the staff to determine what, if any, school work the student can complete while absent.

Staff members who are forced to miss excessive days of work shall first use any leave entitled to them through the Family and Medical Leave Act and/or accrued sick leave. If a staff member has still not received medical clearance to resume his/her work duties, absences in excess of a staff member's allotted leave will not affect the employees right to continued employment

Continuance of Education

The Superintendent shall develop a plan of alternate means of educating students in the event of prolonged school closings and/or extended absences. Such a plan may include providing students with assignments via mail, local access cable television, or the school district's website.

The Superintendent is authorized to amend the traditional class schedule and schedule of days. Such a plan may include extending the school day, having school days held on Saturdays, the use of previously scheduled vacation days, and/or extend the school year beyond the previously established end of school year.

Reference: EBCF-R

Legal References:

Influenza Pandemic Public Health Preparedness and Response Plan, New Hampshire Department of Health & Human Services, Updated March 2, 2006.
www.dhs.nh.gov/DHHS/CDCS/Library/Policy-Guideline/dphs-influenza-plan.htm

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