

An optional and revised policy to consider on this issue.

Instruction

Emergencies and Disaster Preparedness

Pandemic/Epidemic Emergencies

The Board of Education (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 threatened by a pandemic/epidemic outbreak. At all times the health, safety and welfare of the students shall be of foremost concern along with the health, safety and welfare of the District employees and mindful of the overall health and welfare of the community.

Planning and Coordination

The Superintendent shall designate the head School Nurse or other appropriate staff members who in conjunction with the School Medical Advisor, shall serve as a liaison between the school district and local and state health officials. This designee and the School Medical Advisor are jointly 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 and shall keep the Superintendent advised when the risk of a pandemic or an epidemic of a serious illness has materially increased.

The Principals 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.

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 and/or School Medical Advisor and the Connecticut Department of Public Health.

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, as recommended by state and national protocols. Local and state health officials shall be notified immediately.

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

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Emergencies and Disaster Preparedness

Pandemic/Epidemic Emergencies (continued)

In the event of an evacuation (school closing), the Superintendent is charged with determining when District schools shall re-open. In the event of a lockdown or shelter-in-place, the Superintendent shall notify all proper authorities and relief agencies to 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.

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 be managed through existing contract provisions and will not affect the employee's 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, but are not limited to, providing students with assignments via mail or by email, local access cable television, or the school district's website.

The Superintendent, in consultation with the Board of Education, may amend the traditional class schedule and schedule of days. Such a distance learning plan may include extending the school day, having school days held on Saturdays if Connecticut statute changes, the use of previously scheduled vacation days, and/or extend the school year beyond the previously established end of school year, within applicable statutory requirements.

(cf. 5141.22 – Communicable/Infectious Diseases)

(cf. 5141.6 – Crisis Management Plan)

(cf. 6114 – Emergencies and Disaster Preparedness)

(cf. 6114.6 – Emergency Closings)

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Pandemic/Epidemic Emergencies

Legal Reference: Connecticut General Statutes

10-154a Professional communications between teacher or nurse and student.

10-207 Duties of medical advisors.

10-209 Records not to be public.

10-210 Notice of disease to be given parent or guardian.

10-221 Boards of education to prescribe rules.

19a-221 Quarantine of certain persons.

52-557b Immunity from liability for emergency medical assistance, first aid or medication by injection. School personnel not required to administer or render.

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974, (FERPA), 20 U.S.C. 1232g, 45 C.F.R. 99.

Policy adopted:

cps 1/07
rev 12/09
rev 2/20
rev 6/20

Basic Components of Pandemic Planning

Every district should have an Emergency Management Plan that:

- ❖ Addresses all four phases of emergency management planning (Mitigation and Prevention, Preparedness, Response and Recovery.)
- ❖ Is flexible enough to address multiple hazards (be “all hazards plans.”)
- ❖ Is practiced on a regular basis.
- ❖ Is developed in an interactive, cross-cutting manner, in collaboration with community partners and stakeholders.
- ❖ Is based upon sound data and information.
- ❖ Includes provisions for being continually reviewed and updated regularly.
- ❖ Is coordinated with community pandemic influenza planning efforts, as well as state policy and planning efforts.

Pandemic Plan

This plan is built upon components in existing emergency management plans and could contain elements unique to an influenza pandemic.

Communication Plan

- ❖ Identify audiences and key messages (students, parents, staff, etc.)
- ❖ Focus on clear, accurate, consistent, and timely communications.
- ❖ Identify trusted spokesperson (also, identify who will be lead for health matters.)
- ❖ Identify trusted media partners.
- ❖ Establish redundant communications methods identified in advance (primary, secondary and tertiary methods identified and all parties are familiar with them.)

Plan for continuity of learning or instruction

- ❖ Consider alternate learning strategies
- ❖ Consider potential restructuring of school calendar.

Identify stakeholders and partners. Identify a contact within the local public health department and collaborate with that entity to create complementary plans, coordinate with other partners, and communicate consistently with the public.

Identify and coordinate with other key stakeholders such as law enforcement, school security personnel, local emergency management office, businesses, community and faith-based organizations.

Basic Components of Pandemic Planning (continued)

Review and refine policies and authorities

Review school district's or school's Continuity of Operation's Plan (COOP) and Business Continuity Plans (BCP), which outline procedures for continued function during an extended emergency.

Consider:

- ❖ Essential functions, goods, and services that must be maintained under a variety of conditions;
- ❖ Essential tasks that can be performed from other locations such as home, as well as technology support necessary to implement such measures;
- ❖ Essential people and material support;
- ❖ Delegations of authority, and
- ❖ Personnel/Human Resources policies (leave, disability, payroll, potential high absenteeism).

Identify legal authorities for school closures, limitations on responsibilities and functions (such as school lunch provision), and school's potential responsibilities and liabilities.

Review and refine supply policies and contracts including potentially ordering and warehousing items such as tissues, soap, or hand sanitizer.

Initiate or expand prevention and education efforts

- ❖ Conduct preventative hand-washing and cough/sneezing etiquette campaigns.
- ❖ Encourage staff, faculty, and students to stay home when ill.
- ❖ Provide information to parents, staff and students about elements of pandemic plan.

Create and implement a surveillance system in partnership with state and/or local health departments to identify and track student absences due to illness, which would allow the rapid detection of unusual changes or trends in student health.

Develop an Incident Command System (ICS) specific to a pandemic, that identifies roles and responsibilities of educators, law enforcement, and health officials in advance of an incident.

Consider and plan with community partners to address issues specific to your school environment, such as:

- ❖ Students with special needs, including those who are in special education, receiving supplement services at school. English Language Learners, or have special health care needs;
- ❖ Working with Child Nutrition Directors to help families identify sources for feeding programs for students who receive meals at school in the event of long-term school closures;

Basic Components of Pandemic Planning (continued)

- ❖ Potential social services needed during and after pandemic has ended
- ❖ Possible alternative uses of school buildings during a pandemic (such as for mass immunizations or hospitals);
- ❖ Potential uses of school buses during pandemic and if/how this affects contracts;
- ❖ Current alternative uses for schools and determine necessary policies/procedures under school closures;
- ❖ Capacity to address requirements for cleaning the building if it was used for community health needs or if there were sick students;
- ❖ Fiscal, academic, emotional and physical recovery issues, including;
 - Return to learning;
 - Ability of students, family, and staff to access available mental health supports, particularly during a crisis if schools are cancelled;
 - Bereavement needs; and
 - Availability of mental health service providers, including community and faith-based organizations.

An administrative regulation to consider.

Instruction

Pandemic/Epidemic Emergencies

Introduction to Administrative Procedures for Pandemic Flu

A pandemic is a global disease outbreak. A pandemic occurs when a new virus emerges for which people have little or no immunity. The disease spreads easily person-to-person, causes various levels of illness, and can sweep across the country and around the world in a very short time. Although pandemic events are extremely rare, the global mobility of our population and that of other countries raises the possibility of such an event and the school district must plan accordingly.

In consultation with the Connecticut Department of Public Health (DPH), Health District officials and other medical advisors and area school administrators, the following administrative guidelines have been developed. These guidelines need to be reviewed regularly and modified as necessary as additional knowledge and understanding of a pandemic event is expanded.

To locate the appropriate contact for the district's local health department or health district, contact:

<https://portal.ct.gov/dph/Local-Health-Admin/LHA/Local-Health-Administration---Site-Map>.

The purpose of these administrative guidelines is to establish clear information and procedures that should be the core of a coordinated plan in order to plan for, respond to, mitigate, and recover from a possible pandemic event.

Exposure to a Pandemic–Causing Virus

The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) has stated that the coronavirus is most often spread when an infected person comes into close contact with another person, usually through coughing or sneezing of the infected person. It is also believed the coronavirus can be spread from an infected person not showing symptoms. CDC believes symptoms may appear from 2 to 14 days after exposure to the virus. Flu-like symptoms such as cough, fever and difficulty breathing are indicators of exposure. Such symptoms can range from mild to very severe. Therefore, the best prevention, because a vaccine is not available, is to minimize the chances for exposure.

Preventative Measures for Schools to Protect Students and Staff

The DPH recommends schools consider the following to prevent the spread of influenza and other respiratory viruses:

1. Adhere to existing school health protocols for any staff/student(s) presenting as ill or any staff/student(s) who may have been exposed to a contagious disease. Follow established exclusion recommendations for acute respiratory illness (patients should be fever free for 24 hours without fever reducing medications before returning to school.)
2. Wash hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol.

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Preventative Measures for Schools to Protect Students and Staff (continued)

3. Provide adequate soap, paper towels and other cleaning supplies in bathrooms and other wash areas.
4. Avoid close contact with people who are sick and encourage families to keep ill students at home.
5. Remind students to cover their mouths and nose with a tissue or sleeve (not hands) when coughing or sneezing.
6. Have custodial staff clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces according to product directions and their facility's policy.
7. Strongly promote the annual flu shot for all students and staff.
8. Check the CDC website to determine whether students/staff should be permitted to travel on field trips to countries with a high incidence reported of a coronavirus outbreak.

The school district must stay informed, listen to public health messages and implement good public health practices to prevent the spread of respiratory viruses. The local health department should be contacted regarding questions about individuals who have recently traveled to countries with a high incidence of respiratory illnesses.

School District Emergency Response

In the event of a declared pandemic, a **four level system** shall be used with guidelines to provide interventions and activities in which the district shall engage. These activities involve areas such as communication with parents and students, field trips and other school activities, school closings or modified school schedules, school access and instructional issues. Although it is important that staff be trained in and employ these procedures, it must also be understood that the administration may need to make changes on a case by case basis as new information or events rapidly evolve.

It is important that all plans be coordinated and aligned as much as possible with neighboring school districts, appropriate emergency medical services, public health, mental health, law enforcement, fire department and emergency management representatives.

In terms of the difficult decision to close schools, two main reasons exist for this action:

1. In the event where an increase in school absenteeism is noted between either or both students and staff, reporting to the School Medical Advisor and the local health department shall be communicated by the school nurse on a regularly scheduled basis.
 - a. Such communication will be made by the school nurse when observed illnesses or absences for respiratory, gastrointestinal or vaccine preventable illnesses are deemed to be excessive.

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Pandemic/Epidemic Emergencies

School District Emergency Response (continued)

- b. Reporting shall include influenza-like illness with symptoms of fever greater than 100 degrees F, AND sore throat or cough to the local health department and School Medical Advisor weekly during an outbreak.
 - c. Depending on illness or exposure, social distancing measures may be instituted including school closures.
2. There could be levels of absenteeism among staff and/or students that make it difficult to achieve the education mission of the school. The decision to close on this basis is an individual district decision made in conjunction with the Board of Education, the School Medical Advisor and the local health department. District schools may be closed if absenteeism is in the range of 30% to 40%.
3. Schools could close specifically to slow the spread of influenza. Close contact among many persons in schools make them a center for respiratory disease transmission. If school closing for this purpose is to be effective, it should be done early in an epidemic before absenteeism rates climb very high and in concert with other schools and agencies and upon the advice of the Connecticut Department of Education and/or the Connecticut Department of Public Health.
4. In addition, to be effective, students and staff must stay apart from each other when they are not in school. A decision for school closing for this reason is usually made under advice or command from state agencies or the local health department. The length of school closing shall be made under guidance from these agencies and can vary from several days to several weeks. Superintendents in the neighboring districts will work together to make decisions on how each school's closing impacts the other schools, in terms of transportation, child care, instruction, and family issues.

As new issues develop, the **incident coordination system** would be implemented and would involve the **Four Response Levels** contained within the District's crisis management plan. Districts will rely heavily on the advice of the local health district which, in turn, would be in communication with the State Department of Health. In addition, as stated previously, every effort would be made to closely coordinate and align these interventions with the neighboring school districts and communication among the Superintendents would be frequent and ongoing.

Regulation approved:

cps 12/09
rev 2/20

Pandemic/Epidemic Emergencies

Administrative Procedures

For the School District, the following individuals would be involved (with back up staff as appropriate):

Incident Coordinator:	Superintendent
Building Operations:	Principals Nurses Other Staff Members
Planning/Information:	Health Director, Local Health District Officials, Designated Office Staff
Logistics:	Principals, Lead Teachers, Department Heads, Administrative Clerical Staff
Finance/Administration:	School Business Affairs Coordinator

Other Important Contacts:

Commissioner, Dept. of Public Health State Police, _____ Police Department	_____, M.D. (telephone number) Chief _____
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Area Health District:

Director

District School Nursing Staff:

Lead School Nurse

School Medical Advisor:

Communications

Media communication would normally be handled through the Superintendent's office. The District would communicate to the public via its website, through press releases, written notices/factsheets, and the School Notification System.

Surveillance Protocols

During a pandemic, the Connecticut Department of Public Health will be monitoring hospital admissions, emergency department visits, deaths and, potentially, school and workplace absenteeism. The District will monitor student and staff absenteeism through its attendance module and report to the _____ Area Health District and the State, as appropriate.

In addition, when directed by the administration, the school secretaries will initiate procedures for screening calls to the school related to student absences (see form A). Based on the results of these questions, the information may be forwarded to the Lead School Nurse for additional questioning. Once initiated, this information will be collected daily and copies sent to the Superintendent.

Pandemic/Epidemic Emergencies

Administrative Procedures

PANDEMIC INFLUENZA RESPONSE LEVELS (FOUR):

LEVEL 1

LOW RISK – SITUATION:

First pandemic flu case reported in country. No reported cases in local community. School community (employees, students, parents) are encouraged to take temperature regularly as recommended by the school nurse. If temperature is 100°F or 37.7°C or greater, please stay home.

School hours will remain on regular schedule.

Communication: (All pandemic information from W.H.O., CDC/State/Superintendent only). Preventative information will be shared with parents and the school community through the website, fact sheets, newsletters, and the telephone alert system.

School Access: Access to school grounds per normal school policy.

Educational Delivery: Regular school programming. Daily homework provided by teachers for any student who stays at home and is healthy enough.

Co-curricular Program: All regularly scheduled activities allowed.

Community Gatherings/Events/Field Trips/Travel: Field trips allowed, as per normal school policy. (restrict field trips to countries with identified outbreak of coronavirus)

Personnel: Normal working conditions. All school employees returning from affected areas have their health monitored for 14 days.

Emergency Care: Contact physician if temperature is over 100°F or 37.7°C. Nurses implement steps to minimize potential influenza outbreak through education/information such as encouragement of handwashing. Nurse staff also stockpile personal protective supplies as appropriate, (e.g., masks, gloves, alcohol, hygienic soap, etc.)

School Provided Transportation: All bus routes run as usual.

School Operations/Cafeteria: Normal cleaning and maintenance. Continual disinfecting by cleaning personnel. Review food handling procedures with staff.

Pandemic/Epidemic Emergencies

Administrative Procedures

LEVEL 2

MODERATE RISK – SITUATION:

First pandemic flu/respiratory illness case reported in town, increasing number of cases reported in country. School community members (employees, students, parents) are strongly encouraged to take temperature daily. If temperature is 100°F or 37.7°C or greater, students or staff will be asked to stay home.

School hours will remain on regular schedule.

Communication: (All pandemic information from W.H.O., CDC/State/Superintendent only)

Periodic updates will be made by the Superintendent to the community on status of pandemic flu/respiratory illness in country and impact on school program. In-class instruction to insure students understand protocol and proper hygiene.

Communication with parents will encourage those that have students with a fever of 100°F or 37.7°C or greater to remain home until cleared by their physician or as per protocol from the local Health District officials, Department of Public Health or CDC.

Data Collection procedures by secretaries and nurses should be initiated at this level.

School Access: Visitors are welcome by appointment only. School community members with temperature over 100°F or 37.7°C, report to school health office. Any student or staff member with a cough (but no temperature) may be required to wear a medical mask. Nursing staff will assess this on a case by case basis.

Educational Delivery: Regular school program. Daily homework will be provided by email to students ill at home for more than 3 consecutive days and well enough to complete the work.

Co-curricular Program: All scheduled co-curricular programs allowed.

Community Gatherings/Events/Field Trips/Travel: All events will be reviewed. Events may be cancelled for risk exposure on a case by case basis.

Personnel: Normal working conditions. Staff are advised to stay home if symptomatic.

Emergency Care: School Nurse in concert with Area Health District will determine whether individual who has recovered from flu can return to school. If temperature is over 100°F or 37.7°C, individual must go home ASAP.

School Provided Transportation: All bus routes run as usual. Bus access may be denied for those with temperature over 100°F or 37.7°C.

School Operations/Cafeteria: All Food Service workers must wear gloves. Continual disinfecting throughout the day. Full disinfection every three days.

Pandemic/Epidemic Emergencies

Administrative Procedures

LEVEL 3

MEDIUM RISK – SITUATION:

Increased spread of pandemic flu/respiratory illness in town with transfers in public places. School community (employees, students, parents) are strongly encouraged to take temperature daily. If temperature is 100°F or 37.7°C or greater, students or staff MUST stay at home.

Communication:

(All pandemic information from W.H.O., CDC/State/Superintendent only) Regular updates to faculty and community by Superintendent through the School Notification System.

STRICT CARE TAKEN TO MAINTAIN CONFIDENTIALITY PROTOCOLS.

Daily classroom instruction to explain situation and to emphasize proper hygiene.

School Access: Visitors must report to nurse to assess temperature. Anyone with temperature 100°F or 37.7°C or greater will not be admitted.

Educational Delivery: School hours will remain on regular schedule but after school programming/activities will be canceled on a case by case basis in consultation with medical and health department officials. Work will be provided to students ill at home for more than 3 consecutive days via email. Instruction to parents via email for students to access lessons and assignment via computer.

Teachers healthy enough to do so will maintain weekly contact with students via email for academic reflection.

Co-curricular Program: Co-curricular programs are suspended on a case by case basis. Large gatherings are discouraged and may be canceled by the administration as necessary and in consultation with the health officials.

Community Gatherings/Events/Field Trips/Travel: All special events, field trips, travel, etc., discontinued on a case-by-case basis. Large faculty or staff gatherings discontinued without permission of administration. Field trips discontinued unless special permission provided by administration. Students and parents are advised to not congregate in large groups in outside community activities.

Personnel: All faculty and staff report to work after assessing temperature at home. Incident Command Team meets to determine how best to continue school operation.

Emergency Care: School Nurse determines if individual who has recovered from flu/respiratory illness can return to school. If temperature is 100°F or 37.7°C or greater, individual must go home.

Pandemic/Epidemic Emergencies

Administrative Procedures

School Provided Transportation: All bus routes run as usual. Bus access may be denied for those with temperature over 100°F or 37.7°C. Bus service may be discontinued at this level.

School Operations/Cafeteria: Some form of Food Services in place for staff and students who are attending school. Continual disinfecting throughout the day.

LEVEL 4

HIGH RISK – SITUATION:

Spread of pandemic flu/respiratory illness within the school community. Government directs the schools to close OR Superintendent closes school due to level of absenteeism and interruption of instruction.

Communication: (All pandemic information from W.H.O., CDC/State/Superintendent only) Daily updates by Superintendent through the School Messenger System.

Further communication via website.

School Access: No classes held on campus. School facility closed to all but essential personnel for indeterminate period of time. School quarantine, no visitors.

Educational Delivery: Students may access lessons and assignments via computer. Teachers healthy enough to do so will maintain weekly contact with students via email for academic reflection.

Co-curricular Program: School facility closed.

Community Gatherings/Events/Field Trips/Travel: School facility closed.

Personnel: Administration reviews process of school closure and academic support.

Emergency Care: School facility closed. Use hospitals for pandemic flu prevention and containment. Prepare for possible use of schools for vaccination procedures.

School Provided Transportation: School facility closed.

School Operations/Cafeteria: School facility closed. Necessary cleaning and maintenance.

POST PANDEMIC FLU EVENT PLAN:

- Determine criteria and timing for re-opening of school(s),
- Determine impact on school calendar and need for possible changes,
- Determine impact on student instruction and need for additional or compensatory instruction,
- Determine what steps necessary to ensure staff are in place and prepared for the return of students,
- Determine what kinds of mental health support may be necessary for students and staff.

Public Health Instructions During a Pandemic Flu

Throughout a pandemic flu, people may be asked or required to do things to help hold back the spread of the disease in our community.

Here are some examples of what public health officials may ask people to do:

STAY HOME

People who are sick should stay home. Children should not go to school if they are sick. Staying home will be absolutely necessary during a pandemic flu to limit the spread of the disease.

AVOID LARGE GROUPS

People – even those who are well – should stay away from gatherings of people such as sporting events, movies and festivals. During a pandemic flu these kinds of events could be cancelled because large gatherings of people help spread the flu virus.

Isolation and quarantine are public health actions used to contain the spread of a contagious disease. If asked, it will be important to follow isolation and/or quarantine instructions.

ISOLATION

Isolation is for people who are already ill. When someone is isolated, they are separated from people who are healthy. Having the sick person isolated (separated from others) can help to slow or stop the spread of disease. People who are isolated can be cared for in their homes, in hospitals, or other healthcare facilities. Isolation is usually voluntary, but local, state and federal government have the power to require the isolation of sick people to protect the public.

QUARANTINE

Quarantine is for people who have been exposed to the disease but are not sick. When someone is placed in quarantine, they are also separated from others. Even though the person is not sick at the moment, they were exposed to the disease and may still become infectious and then spread the disease to others. Quarantine can help to slow or stop this from happening. States generally have the power to enforce quarantines within their borders.

FACT SHEET: Stopping Germs at Home, Work and School

How Germs Spread: The main way that illnesses like colds and flu are spread is from person to person in respiratory droplets of coughs and sneezes. This is called "droplet spread." This can happen when droplets from a cough or sneeze of an infected person move through the air and are deposited on the mouth or nose of people nearby. Sometimes germs also can be spread when a person touches respiratory droplets from another person on a surface like a desk and then touches his or her own eyes, mouth or nose before washing their hands. We know that some viruses and bacteria can live 2 hours or longer on surfaces like cafeteria tables, doorknobs, and desks.

How to Stop the Spread of Germs: In a nutshell: take care to:

- Cover your mouth and nose.
- Clean your hands often.
- Remind your children to practice healthy habits, too.

Cover your mouth and nose when coughing or sneezing: Cough or sneeze into a tissue and then throw it away. Cover your cough or sneeze if you do not have a tissue. Then, clean your hands, and do so every time you cough or sneeze.

The "Happy Birthday" song helps keep your hands clean? Not exactly. Yet it is recommended that when you wash your hands – with soap and warm water – that you wash for 15 to 20 seconds. That's about the same time it takes to sing the "Happy Birthday" song twice!

Alcohol-based hand wipes and gel sanitizers work too: When soap and water are not available, alcohol-based disposable hand wipes or gel sanitizers may be used. You can find them in most supermarkets and drugstores. If using gel, rub your hands until the gel is dry. The gel doesn't need water to work; the alcohol in it kills the germs on your hands.

Germs and Children: Remind children to practice healthy habits too, because germs spread, especially at school.

The flu has caused high rates of absenteeism among students and staff in our country's 119,000 schools. Influenza is not the only respiratory infection of concern in schools – nearly 22 million school days are lost each year to the common cold alone. However, when children practice healthy habits, they miss fewer days of school.

More Facts, Figures, and How-Tos: CDC and its partner agencies and organizations offer a great deal of information about handwashing and other things you can do to stop the germs that cause flu, the common cold, and other illnesses.

_____**PUBLIC SCHOOLS**
_____, **Connecticut**

ILLNESS REPORT

Date: _____

Student Name: _____ Grade: _____

Secretaries: Please ask the following questions when a parent/guardian calls into the school stating that their student will not be attending on a regularly-scheduled school day **DUE TO ILLNESS ONLY**. Please fill in and check the appropriate answers. Thank you.

1. Is your student ill? YES NO
Describe Symptoms:

2. Do they have a fever? YES NO
How high? _____

3) Contact Name _____

4) Telephone Number: _____

The Health Office Nurses may call you back to obtain more details. This is a precautionary measure our school is taking due to potential contagious diseases. Thank you.

(Please submit this form to the Health Office and include the daily absence list.)

PUBLIC SCHOOLS
_____, Connecticut

HEALTH OFFICE FOLLOW-UP REPORT

Date: _____ Time: _____

Contact Person: _____

Fever: YES NO Temperature: _____

Date of Onset: _____

Cough: YES NO

Vomiting/Diarrhea: YES NO

Sore Throat: YES NO

Body Aches/Chills: YES NO

Seen by MD or MD appointment: _____ Date: _____

Instructions to the Parent/Guardian by school nurse after gathering above information:

- 1) **If your child has both:** Fever (>100°F or 37.7°C) **and** a sore throat or cough, then you must keep your child home until they are fever free for 24 hours without medication. Your child may have the flu. Other symptoms can include runny nose, body aches, vomiting, and diarrhea.
- 2) **But if your child has:** Fever alone, **OR** vomiting or diarrhea, **OR** sore throat or new cough with no fever, then you must keep your child home until symptoms are gone for 24 hours.
- 3) Please remember to call into school every day your child will be absent. The local district will be monitoring for influenza-like illness in the school. This our effort to assure you that we have the health and safety of your children as our number one priority. Thank you for helping us to keep the school environment as healthy as possible for all students and staff.
- 4) Guidance on how long to keep a child with influenza-like symptoms home is subject to change. Our information is obtained from the Connecticut Flu Watch website <http://www.ct.gov/ctfluwatch>

Health Office Nurses: You may have to use the back of this form to follow-up with this child's daily absences and progress concerning health issues. Please remember to document date, time, contact person and pertinent information such as symptoms, underlying chronic diseases, and other family members who may become ill. All information is confidential according to CT State Laws and the Department Health and Education.

**IMMEDIATE
DISPOSITION** _____

SAMPLE PARENT LETTER #1: Prevention Letter

Use this letter to help prepare parents for pandemic flu – before there are verified pandemic coronavirus cases in the U.S.

Dear Parents,

This letter will help your family prepare for a flu pandemic that could make many people sick.

It is important to know that at this time, there is no pandemic flu of any kind in the United States.

Public health officials are worried the flu/respiratory illness virus may change so that it can infect people and spread easily from person-to-person. This would cause a worldwide flu outbreak, called a pandemic.

Public health officials want people to protect themselves against pandemic coronavirus. Here are some ways to protect your family:

- Keep children who are sick at home. Don't send them to school.
- Teach your children to wash hands a lot with soap and water for 20 seconds. Be sure to set a good example by doing this yourself.
- Teach your children to cover coughs and sneezes with tissues or by coughing into the inside of the elbow. Be sure to set a good example by doing this yourself.
- Teach your children to stay at least three feet away from people who are sick.
- People who are sick should stay home from work or school and avoid other people until they are better.

Enclosed with this letter is a checklist to help families get ready for a pandemic flu outbreak. This information can also help your family get ready for any kind of emergency.

If you have questions, please contact your School Nurse or healthcare provider. You can call the school (INSERT NUMBER)

You can get more information from _____:

The federal government website with information on planning for individuals and families:
<http://www.pandemicflu.gov>

American Red Cross
<http://www.redcross.org>

SAMPLE PARENT LETTER #2 FIRST CORONAVIRUS CASE: Use this letter to help prepare parents for pandemic flu after first coronavirus case is found in United States.

Dear Parents:

As expected, the coronavirus is now in the United States. It is important to know that, at this time, there are known human cases of coronavirus in the United States.

Health officials are worried that the coronavirus may change so that people can get sick from it. If that happened, it could spread from person-to-person. This would cause a worldwide respiratory illness outbreak, called a pandemic.

So even though there is no pandemic now, we want to remind you about some ways to protect your family from getting sick:

- Keep children who are sick at home. Don't send them to school.
- Teach your children to wash hands a lot with soap and water for 20 seconds. Be sure to set a good example by doing this yourself.
- Teach your children to cover coughs and sneezes with tissues or by coughing into the inside of the elbow. Be sure to set a good example by doing this yourself.
- Teach your children to stay at least three feet away from people who are sick.
- People who are sick should stay home from work or school and avoid other people until they are better.

Enclosed with this letter is a checklist to help families get ready for a pandemic respiratory outbreak. This information can also help your family get ready for any kind of emergency.

If you have questions, please contact your School Nurse or healthcare provider. You can call the school (INSERT NUMBER).

You can get more information from _____:

Visit online at _____ or call _____

The federal government website with information on planning for individuals and families:
<http://www..cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>

SAMPLE LETTER TO PARENTS: Initial Pandemic Outbreak #3: Use this letter to let parents know schools are open.

Dear Parents:

This letter will give you information about a respiratory illness outbreak in our area. Every year, some people get sick with the flu during the fall and winter months. This year, there is a new virus that is making many people in our community sick. So many people are sick locally and in the United States that health officials call it a “pandemic flu”.

A lot of students and teachers in our school are sick with respiratory illness. We hope they will all get better quickly.

At this time, the county/state health department tells us that students who are not ill can safely come to school. The schools will remain open. We will keep you updated with any important information.

To keep the coronavirus from spreading to more people, we ask you to keep sick children home. Any children who are sick in school will be sent home.

Public health officials want you to protect yourself and your family against pandemic coronavirus. Here are some ways to stop the spread of germs and sickness:

- Keep children who are sick at home. Don’t send them to school.
- Teach your children to wash hands a lot with soap and water for 20 seconds. Be sure to set a good example by doing this yourself.
- Teach your children to cover coughs and sneezes with tissues or by coughing into the inside of the elbow. Be sure to set a good example by doing this yourself.
- Teach your children to stay away at least three feet away from people who are sick.
- People who are sick should stay home from work or school and stay away from other people until they are better.
- Stay away from shopping malls, movie theaters or other places where there are large groups of people.

We are also giving you some tips about how to care for your family if they are ill.

If you have questions, please contact your School Nurse or healthcare provider. You can call the school hotline (INSERT NUMBER). You can get more information from _____ . If the pandemic flu continues to spread and more students become ill, schools may close for days or weeks. The purpose of closing schools will be to keep children from getting sick. If schools are closed, children should stay at home. Begin planning now for childcare in your home. Recommendations may change during the course of a pandemic flu outbreak.

SAMPLE LETTER TO PARENTS #4 Expanded Outbreak: Use this letter to let parents know schools are open and urge ill children to stay home.

Dear Parents:

We wrote to you recently to tell you about a pandemic flu outbreak in our community. Here is some new information.

There are now even more students in our school who are ill with this coronavirus. Still the county/state health department tells us that students who are not ill can continue to attend school. The schools will remain open. We will keep you updated with any important information.

To keep the flu from spreading to more people, we ask you to keep sick children home. Any children who are sick in school will be sent home.

Public health officials want you to protect yourself and your family against pandemic flu. Here are some ways to stop the spread of germs and sickness and take care of your family:

- ✓ Keep children who are sick at home. Don't send them to school.
- ✓ If some of the people in your home are sick with the flu, keep them away from the people who are not sick.
- ✓ If some of the people in your home are sick with the flu and you cannot see a health provider, some things you can do to help them are:
 - Have them drink a lot of liquid (juice, water).
 - Keep the ill person as comfortable as possible. Rest is important.
 - For fever, sore throat and muscle aches, in adults, use ibuprofen (Motrin) or acetaminophen (Tylenol). Do not use aspirin with children or teenagers; it can cause Reye's syndrome, a life-threatening illness.
 - Keep tissues and a trash bag within reach of the sick person.
 - Be sure everyone in your home washes their hands frequently.
 - Contact a healthcare provider for further advice. If the ill person is having difficulty breathing or is getting worse, contact the healthcare provider right away.

Call the school hotline (INSERT NUMBER) or _____.

If the pandemic coronavirus continues to spread and more students become ill, schools may close for days or weeks. The purpose of closing schools will be to keep children from getting sick. If schools are closed, children should stay at home. Begin planning now for childcare in your home.

SAMPLE LETER TO PARENTS School Closure #5: Use this letter to inform parents schools are closed.

Dear Parents:

The Superintendent of Schools, upon consultation with appropriate District/State health officials, has ordered all schools in the District to close. This order is because of the pandemic coronavirus situation in our community/area. All schools are immediately closed until further notice and children should stay home. *(or specify which schools and for how long)*

Schools may be closed for days or even weeks to reduce contact among children and stop the spread of the flu. We know that many students and their families are very sick. We know this is a hard time for our community and our hearts go out to those who are ill.

Because the coronavirus is easily spread from person-to-person, it is not safe for large groups of people to gather. During this time, both children and adults should stay away from other people and groups as much as possible. They should not gather in other locations such as shopping malls, movie theaters or community centers.

We know that it may be hard to get a doctor's appointment, go to a clinic or even be seen in a hospital emergency room. Here are some tips for helping those who are sick with the flu:

- Have them drink a lot of liquid. (juice, water)
- Keep the sick person as comfortable as possible. Rest is important.
- For fever, sore throat and muscle aches, use ibuprofen (Motrin) or acetaminophen (Tylenol). Do not use aspirin with children or teenagers; it can cause Reye's syndrome, a life- threatening illness.
- Keep tissues and a trash bag within reach of the sick person.
- Be sure everyone in your home washes their hands frequently.
- Keep the people who are sick with the flu away from the people who are not sick.

For more information, call your healthcare provider or _____.

We will contact you as soon as we have information about when school will reopen.

SAMPLE LETER TO PARENTS School Re-Opens #6: Use this letter to inform parents schools are re-opened.

Dear Parents:

Local/State health officials have declared the pandemic coronavirus is under control. Our school will open again on _____. At this time, students may safely return to class.

Even though school is opening, there are still some people who are sick from the coronavirus. Health officials say that pandemic flu outbreaks sometimes happen in waves. This means more people could become sick soon again. If more people get sick, schools may need to close again.

We will continue to give you any important information.

Because the flu can still be spread from person-to-person, please keep children who are sick at home. Don't send them to school.

We are looking forward to seeing your children again.

Tips for Parents on Coping with Pandemic Coronavirus

Plan for an extended stay at home during a pandemic.

- Ask your employer about how business will continue during a pandemic.
- Ask your employer if you can work from home during a pandemic.
- Plan for a possible reduction or loss of income, if you are unable to work or your place of employment is closed.
- Check with your employer or union about leave policies.
- Plan home learning activities and exercises. Have materials, such as books, on hand.
- Plan recreational activities that your children can do at home.

Items to have on hand for an extended stay at home:

Examples: Non-perishable foods, health and emergency supplies

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ready to eat canned meats, fruits, vegetables, soups • Protein or fruit bars • Dry cereal or granola • Peanut butter and jelly • Dried fruit, nuts, trail mix • Crackers • Canned juices • Bottled water • Fluids with electrolytes, such as Pedialyte® • Canned or jarred baby food • Baby formula 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Soap and water or alcohol based hand wash • Medicines for fever, such as acetaminophen (Tylenol) or ibuprofen (Motrin) • Thermometer • Vitamins • Prescribed medical supplies such as, glucose and blood pressure monitoring • Flashlight with extra batteries • Portable radio with extra batteries • Manual can opener • Pet food • Garbage bags • Tissues, toilet paper, disposable diapers
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If someone in your home develops flu/respiratory illness symptoms (fever, cough, muscle aches):

- Encourage plenty of fluids to drink.
- Keep the ill person as comfortable as possible. Rest is important.
- For adults with fever, sore throat and muscle aches, use ibuprofen (Motrin) or acetaminophen (Tylenol).
- Do not use aspirin in children or teenagers; it can cause Reye’s syndrome, a life threatening illness.
- Sponging with tepid (wrist-temperature) water lowers fever only during the period of sponging. Do not sponge with alcohol.
- Keep tissues and a trash bag for their disposal within reach of the patient.
- All members of the household should wash their hands frequently.
- Keep other family members and visitors away from the person who is ill.
- Contact a healthcare provider for further advice. If the ill person is having difficulty breathing or is getting worse, contact the healthcare provider right away.

For more information, call your healthcare provider or visit the Connecticut Department of Public Health website at <https://portal.ct.gov/DPH/Public-Health-Preparedness/Main-Page/2019-Novel-Coronavirus>

SAMPLE KEY MESSAGES FOR SCHOOL OFFICIALS – AN OUTBREAK

- We know this is an anxious time for our community and our hearts go out to those who are ill. We are working closely with local health officials to deal with the situation and will keep parents updated with any important information.
- At this time, under the guidance of the county health department, we believe students can safely attend classes and schools will remain open. Our thoughts are with all of our families and children who are affected.
- If pandemic coronavirus continues to spread and more students become ill, health officials may need to close schools for an extended period of time (for example, up to 6 weeks).
- The purpose of closing schools will be to decrease contact among children in order to decrease their risk of getting sick and to limit the spread of infection. If schools are closed, children should stay at home.
- We urge parents to plan now for the possibility of schools closing. Arrange day care, and home schooling.
- Parents can help protect their children and prevent the spread of pandemic flu as they would colds and other flu by taking the following precautions:
 - Teach your children to wash hands frequently with soap and water for 20 seconds. Be sure to set a good example by doing this yourself.
 - Teach your children to cover coughs and sneezes with tissues or by coughing into the inside of the elbow.
 - Teach your children to stay away from people who are sick and stay home from work or school if you are sick.
- Recommendations may change during the course of a pandemic. We will make public announcements through the media and parents can call the school district's hotline at (INSERT HOTLINE).
- For more information on the pandemic and prevention, visit _____ or call the Health Emergency Information Line: _____.