

ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES

SUBJECT: Pandemic Influenza Protocol/Plan

Introduction

A pandemic is any infectious disease that spreads rapidly throughout the population. Experts cannot predict when the next pandemic might occur, but historically pandemics occur three to four times each century.

A flu pandemic occurs when a novel virus which is virulent and easily transmitted infects humans. The world typically experiences three pandemics per century. The 20th century saw the Spanish flu (1918), the Asian Flu (1957), the Hong Kong flu (1974) and severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) (2003).

A likely form of pandemic might be influenza—pandemic flu is a new highly infectious viral respiratory illness that occurs when a new strain of the influenza virus appears and spreads quickly around the world. Pandemic flu will spread more quickly than seasonal human flu because humans will have little or no immunity to this new virus. Experts say that up to 25-35 per cent of the population may get pandemic flu at some point.

The World Health Organization identifies the following pandemic cycles.

Period	Phase	Description
Interpandemic Period	<i>Phase 1</i>	No new influenza virus subtypes have been detected in humans. An influenza virus subtype that has caused human infection may be present in animals. If present in animals, the risk of human infection is considered to be low.
	<i>Phase 2</i>	No new influenza virus subtypes have been detected in humans. However, a circulating animal influenza virus subtype poses a substantial risk of human disease.
Pandemic Alert Period	<i>Phase 3</i>	Human infection(s) with a new subtype, but no human-to-human spread, or at most, rare instances of spread to a close contact.
	<i>Phase 4</i>	Small cluster(s) with limited human-to-human transmission but spread is highly localized, suggesting that the virus is not well adapted to humans.
	<i>Phase 5</i>	Large cluster(s) but human-to-human spread still localized, suggesting that the virus is becoming increasingly better adapted to humans, but may not yet be fully transmissible (substantial pandemic risk).
Pandemic Period	<i>Phase 6</i>	Increased and sustained transmission in general population.
Postpandemic Period		Return to interpandemic period.

The Lambton Kent District School Board's (LKDSB) protocol is designed to complement plans established by the World Health Organization, Health and Welfare Canada, the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care, Health Units of the Municipality of Chatham-Kent and County of Lambton. The Board should anticipate the following in its planning processes:

- a) The possibility that 40 - 60% of staff will be absent at some point during the course of the pandemic; and
- b) there will be two distinct waves of illness occurring three to nine months apart each lasting approximately 6 to 8 weeks.

The Lambton Kent District School Board's protocol identifies the Board's key issues, responsibilities, and obligations, and provides a general framework for coordinating resources, making decisions, and communicating with our many audiences. It is based on two overriding priorities:

- Reducing the risk of spreading of the influenza virus and protecting LKDSB students and staff from infection; and
- Maintaining regular school operations as possible, with a priority of ensuring safe learning and work environments in the event of an influenza pandemic.

The Lambton Kent District School Board coordinates planning internally and externally by:

- Working with the St. Clair Catholic District School Board and the Medical Officers of Health for Sarnia-Lambton and Chatham-Kent to coordinate interagency planning;
- Establishing a preparedness planning committee chaired by the Director of Education;
- Ensuring departments/locations have established pandemic plans, in alignment with the pandemic protocol;
- Meeting with all union and association groups to establish a consultative approach to pandemic planning.

Information

The health and safety of staff and students will be closely monitored. If health and safety becomes a concern, the Emergency Response Control Committee will consider recommending to the Director of Education the closure of specific sites. It is also possible that the Medical Officer of Health may make recommendations regarding the closure of individual schools, or all schools. It should be noted that while the schools are open during a declared pandemic, normal program expectations and service levels may not be met (e.g. special education).

Operations – Organizational Structure

In the event of the declaration of a pandemic, the Emergency Response Control Committee will be responsible for directing the system on a day-to-day basis. Membership on the Committee shall consist of the following, with designated replacements:

Director of Education
 Superintendent of Business
 Superintendent of Education – Human Resources
 Superintendent of Education responsible for Health and Safety
 Manager of Human Resources
 Executive Assistant and Communications Officer
 Public Relations Officer
 Health & Safety Officer
 Human Resources Officer
 System Coordinator of Safe Schools

Other individuals may be required to participate on an ongoing basis, as required.

Role of the Emergency Response Control Committee

1. To make a clear and complete assessment of situations that may arise.
2. To monitor and make recommendations on the overall operation of the system on a daily basis.
3. To determine the closing of any school(s) due to excessive absenteeism.
4. To act as an emergency resource for Board personnel.
5. To make recommendations regarding communications, including media releases.

Operational Mode

1. Principals and Managers will update electronically their respective Superintendents each morning by 9:50 a.m. on the status of their schools/departments.
2. The Emergency Response Control Committee shall meet each morning at 10:00 a.m. (or on an as-needed basis) to receive information updates on student and staff absenteeism, public information updates, facility services updates, local/national medial updates.
3. Requests by the media will be referred to and received by the Director of Education or designate. Schools will refer all media inquiries to the Public Relations Officer.
4. In the event of an emergency situation arising, the Emergency Response Control Committee shall make decisions regarding requests for assistance. The Director of Education or designate shall be consulted in all cases in which an emergency decision must be made and will liaise with the local Medical Officers of Health.

Emergency Procedures

If a pandemic is declared, it is the intention of the Lambton Kent District School Board to keep schools open wherever possible. However, disruptions in normal events and activities may occur. In certain cases, events/activities may be suspended. Under the direction of the Director of Education any of the following may occur:

- Access to Schools – Access to school buildings will be limited and controlled as needed.
- After Hours School Permits – The Director of Education and Superintendent of Business will consult with CLASS Shared School Services regarding decisions related to whether existing/new permits for school facility use will be cancelled/not issued.
- Alternative and Continuing Education – Programs will be cancelled.
- Assemblies – All special events, including student assemblies, will be cancelled.
- Board Meetings – Board meetings be held as scheduled and more frequently if necessary and may be held electronically.
- Cafeterias – Cafeterias in secondary schools will be closed.
- Centrally Assigned Teaching Staff – All centrally assigned teaching staff, including principals, coordinators, consultants and itinerant teachers, may be deployed to schools in the event a pandemic is declared.
- Closure – Building Services Staff will develop procedures for the orderly closure and reopening of schools and ancillary buildings. Building security measures will be considered.
- Community Schools – After hours activity/access to community schools will be cancelled.

- Courier Services – Will operate as usual.
- Custodial Services – A contingency plan will be developed which may include cleaning of facilities outside of school hours. Cross training of other job classifications to provide custodial services may be required.
- Daycares – Daycare centres will continue to operate, as long as the school building remains open.
- Essential Maintenance Services – Plant and Maintenance Staff will develop and implement contingency plans to ensure adequate resources to maintain schools in the event of a pandemic.
- Extracurricular Activities – All extracurricular activities will be cancelled.
- Field Trips/Excursions – All field trips/excursions will be cancelled.
- Food Programs – School based food programs will be cancelled. i.e. breakfast programs, hot lunch days, pizza days, etc.)
- Garbage Collection – The normal process for garbage collection will be maintained.
- Home Instruction – Home instruction will be cancelled.
- Information Technology Services – Information Technology Services staff will develop and implement contingency plans to ensure adequate resources for communication in the event of a pandemic.
- Instruction/Evaluation/Reporting – Where possible, the regular instructional program and those activities related to instruction, evaluation and reporting will continue.
- Maintenance – The accepted practice shall continue; i.e. emergency calls will be directed to Supervisors of Building Services with a follow-up to the Manager of Plant and Maintenance as soon as possible. Maintenance items, which are not of an emergency nature, should be communicated to the Supervisors of Building Services in the normal manner. Board staff and outside contractors will be used for all types of emergency maintenance and routine maintenance may be suspended.
- Meetings – Meetings that take administrators or staff out of school will be either cancelled or held by teleconference/Skype.
- Occasional Teachers – School principals will be permitted to engage occasional teachers that are from either the elementary or secondary occasional teacher list to ensure appropriate levels of coverage and supervision in schools.
- Physical Activity – Within schools, all activities which could potentially spread infection will cease, including extracurricular sports, events, drama, dance, band, etc.
- Professional Development Activities – All professional development activities and attendance at conferences will be cancelled.
- Reporting to Work - Where an employee has concerns about returning to work, the employee is expected to contact their immediate supervisor and express their concerns. The supervisor will attempt to resolve the concern. If the employee continues to have ongoing concerns it will be

deemed as the first stage of a potential work refusal, which is governed by the Ontario Occupational Health and Safety Act and will be treated as such.

- School Councils – Principals will have a plan for on-going communication with the Chair of their School Council. School council meetings at the school and district level will be cancelled.
- Screening – Teachers will screen students for possible exposure to flu. Site supervisors will screen staff for exposure. Students and staff who exhibit symptoms of flu will not be permitted to attend school, as directed by the Medical Officer of Health.
- Security of Facilities – While schools are open, security of facilities will continue in accordance with current procedures. In the event that schools are closed, additional security patrols will be scheduled for all affected buildings.
- Student Transportation – Subject to daily review. Wherever possible, buses maintain regular schedules while schools remain open.
- Supplies Orders – The normal process for order and delivery of supplies will be maintained,
- Tragic Emergency Response Team (TERT) – Supports where appropriate will be provided by the TERT members.
- Unions/Federations and Associations – The Board will solicit the input and cooperation of its union, federations and association groups.
- Volunteers – The present practice regarding volunteers in Lambton Kent schools be reviewed on a daily basis.

Strategic considerations

- The Lambton Kent District School Board must rely on the advice and direction of federal, provincial and local public health officials in the event of a pandemic. Decisions about closing schools for health reasons must be made by public health officials, not the Lambton Kent District School Board. Decisions regarding the closure of schools due to safety issues, such as insufficient staff, will be made by the Director of Education.
- It is important to note that the Lambton Kent District School Board spans multiple municipal jurisdictions throughout Chatham-Kent and Sarnia/Lambton, with separate, autonomous public health units. It will be especially important to coordinate with both Medical Officers of Health to ensure consistent messaging throughout both ends of the district.
- Parents/guardians should be directed to credible resources for factual health information. If parents/guardians have any questions about their child's health, they should be directed to the local public health unit or consult their health practitioner. Lambton Kent District School Board will inform parents/guardians, staff, students and community stakeholders with appropriate information as it becomes available.
- The Lambton Kent District School Board's top priority is maintaining safe and healthy schools and workplaces for students, staff and community members.

Communication Goal

The objective of a communications plan will be to ensure that stakeholders are confident that the Lambton Kent District School Board is prepared for a pandemic, that they know how to get information out and provide feedback. The Lambton Kent District School Board, through the Director of Education and Chair of the Board or designates, will make every attempt to keep all trustees, parents/guardians, students, employee groups, and the public informed with the most current and factual information available. The Director of Education and Chair of the Board are the spokespersons for the Board.

Stage 1: Pre-Pandemic - Human Infection Confirmed Elsewhere

Steps to be taken when a possible pandemic has been identified as a novel influenza virus begins to cause widespread illness somewhere in the world resulting in an influenza outbreak.

- A. Training and Prevention Orientation – Upon the declaration of an influenza outbreak, accurate, relevant and timely information is shared with and released to staff, students and parents.

Topics to be addressed may include:

- Personal preparedness
- Infection control practices to prevent influenza
- Disease information
- Pandemic Updates
- Available services and how to access them
- Vaccine availability

- B. Communication

The Public Health Agency of Canada and the Federal government will coordinate inter-provincial communications. Provincial health communications strategies will be aligned with the federal plan. Local communications will follow provincial direction. Messages will focus on the collaboration between all levels of government and the partnership of key community agencies and businesses. The messaging will also advise of local actions taken to address the pandemic influenza.

Stage 2: Pandemic - Human Infection Spread to Local Level

- A. Implementation of the Lambton Kent District School Board Plan

The Board's Emergency Response Control Committee begins meeting.

Emergency measures for school operations initiated.

On-going training and prevention protocols reinforced.

Screening and reporting measures initiated under the direction of the Medical Officers of Health.

- B. Communication

Regular reports from the Board's Emergency Response Control Committee will be issued.

On-going updates will be placed on Board's website.

Regular updates will be obtained from the local Health Units.

A link from the Public Health Unit websites will be added to the Board's website.

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Stage 3: Post-Pandemic - After the infection

A. Re-Opening of Schools

Plant and Maintenance staff inspect and ensure school buildings are fit for reopening.
Re-evaluate staffing needs and fill vacancies as needed.
Deploy Tragic Emergency Response Team as necessary.

B. Return to Normal Operations

The Board's Emergency Response Control Committee will meet on an as needed basis.
Director will liaise with the Ministry of Education representatives as required regarding possible alternations to the school year.

C. Continued Screening and Reporting

Continued liaison with the public Health units as necessary.

D. Financial Reconciliation

Ministry of Education
Coterminous Boards
Transportation
Vendors/Contracted Services

E. Evaluation and Reflection

Review and critique plan for effectiveness
Modify as required.

Implementation Date: December 2007

Reviewed: September 29, 2009

Revised: February 24, 2020

References: Emergency Management Act
Employment Standards Act, 2000
Bill 56 – Amendment of Emergency Management Act
Board Policy & Regulations Emergency Preparedness, P-AD-108
LKDSB Administrative Procedure – Health Related Emergency Procedures A-AD-108.3