



## Pandemic Response

### **Administrative Procedure 8.36**

**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

---

**Date Adopted:** May 2009

**Date Amended:** May 2018, September 2020, October 2021

---

Evergreen School Division, its staff and students will follow guidelines set out by Manitoba Health and Manitoba Education regarding pandemic response.

As information becomes available about the characteristics of a particular virus causing an outbreak, protocols may change and the Division will respond accordingly.

#### **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 infected 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 Divisions play in a pandemic?

1. The Division will follow
  - All public health orders (PHO). PHO have the force of law.
  - The mandates set by Manitoba Education
2. Measures to reduce personal exposure in school buildings will be balanced with the need to maintain normal routines and operations.
3. In addition implementing the direction of public health, Evergreen School Division will:
  - a) 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
  - b) enhance cleaning / sanitizing, particularly on high touch surfaces.
  - c) minimize social interaction by
    - o limiting visitor access to the school
    - o offering virtual opportunities for meetings/gatherings
    - o limiting in person meetings / gathering sizes
    - o postponing events that are open to the public
  - d) increase physical distancing
    - a. managing the flow of students
    - b. arranging seating to meet distancing recommendations
  - e) promote and encourage preventive measures including
    - a. handwashing/sanitizing and respiratory etiquette
    - b. vaccination
4. The Division will communicate with staff and parents/caregivers via email and by sharing updates to the pandemic plan on the website. Occasionally, when social media is an appropriate format for short and/or urgent messages, the Division will also leverage social media to communicate information.