

## **PANDEMIC RESPONSE**

### **Background**

Influenza pandemic is essentially an outbreak occurring over a large geographical area, often worldwide, affecting an exceptionally large proportion of the population with elevated mortality rates. Influenza pandemics have been recorded every 10 to 40 years for the last 400 years.

The district, in cooperation with the provincial government and the Vancouver Island Health Authority, supports efforts to minimize a pandemic and its disruption to the operational activities of the school district. In the event of a pandemic, the school's response will focus on allocating the available resources to achieve the maximum benefit and protection of students, staff, and facilities.

### **Procedures**

1. Under the direction of the superintendent of schools, the district will establish a pandemic planning committee. The committee will be responsible for providing direction and guidance to the Board of Education and district staff in the event of a pandemic.
2. The committee will develop and maintain a district pandemic response plan. During a pandemic, the roles of the members of the committee will shift from planning to emergency response, as identified in the pandemic phase section of the plan.
3. During a pandemic, the district will follow the advice and guidance of provincial and local public health officials who have the expertise to assess the level of health risk posed by a specific situation. The priority of the district during a pandemic is the health and safety of students and staff and its intent is to keep schools open as long as it is safe to do so. Non-essential services may be halted to focus on providing the most necessary services to our educational community.
4. The legal authority to close a school for public health reasons falls under the purview of the provincial health officer and the local medical health officer and the superintendent of schools will take direction regarding the closure of schools from them.
5. The superintendent of schools may decide to close schools on a day of instruction if the health or safety of students is at risk.
6. The pandemic planning committee will review the pandemic response plan as needed and will make the necessary amendments to the plan.

Reference: Sections 17, 20, 22, 65, 85 School Act  
British Columbia Pandemic Influenza Provincial Coordination Plan

Related Documents: SD72 Pandemic Response Plan (Available to District Employees Only)  
SD72 Emergency Preparedness Plan (Available to District Employees Only)