



Pandemic Plan

Emergency Response Manual

Revised: March 16, 2020

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FORWORD AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

FORWARD AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The four local school boards recognize the severity of a pandemic and, alongside unions, federations and the Sudbury Student Services Consortium, developed a Pandemic Plan in consultation with Public Health Sudbury & Districts.

INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

The goal of pandemic preparedness and response at the school board level is to prevent and minimize serious illness and disruption among schools.

Experts agree that future pandemics are inevitable, however, the timing cannot be predicted. With the potential for minimal warning, contingency planning is essential to minimize the devastating effects of a pandemic.

The Pandemic Plan will be reviewed on an annual and/or needs basis. This will be done in consultation with Public Health Sudbury & Districts to update and/or respond to unforeseen circumstances.

BACKGROUND

BACKGROUND

An influenza pandemic occurs with the appearance of a new influenza virus for which there is little or no immunity. This results in several simultaneous worldwide epidemics with a high numbers of cases and deaths.

With an increase in global transport, communications, urbanization and overcrowded conditions, epidemics due to a new influenza virus are likely to develop rapidly on a global scale.

Influenza A and B, two of the three types of influenza viruses, are the strains associated with annual influenza outbreaks and epidemics. These epidemics are caused by changes in the virus that allow them to bypass immunity based on past experiences with the viruses, or in response to vaccinations.

Only the Influenza A virus can cause pandemics. When a major change in the virus surface proteins occurs, it becomes a new virus that no one is immune to. A pandemic can occur when the virus spreads from person to person.

Global pandemics have been reported since the middle ages, well-documented pandemics such as H1N1 and the Spanish Flu in 1918, H2N2 - the Asian Flu - in 1957, and H3N2 - the Hong Kong Flu - in 1968.

Coronavirus (COVID-19)

A novel coronavirus (COVID-19) was identified as the cause of a pneumonia outbreak in Wuhan (Hubei province), China on December 31, 2019. On March 12, 2020, the Ministry of Education ordered that schools in Ontario be closed to contain the spread.

Symptoms of Illness and Reporting Requirements

Seasonal influenza and the pandemic H1N1 Flu virus result in similar symptoms, including sudden fever, cough, sore throat, fatigue, and muscle or joint aches. With children under the age of five, vomiting and diarrhea are common, although fever may not be prominent.

The most common symptoms of COVID-19 are fever, tiredness and dry cough. Some patients may experience aches and pains, nasal congestion, runny nose, sore throat or diarrhea. These symptoms are usually mild and begin gradually. Some people become infected but do not develop symptoms and do not feel “unwell”.

Approximately 80 per cent of people recover from the disease without requiring special treatment. One out of every six people who contract COVID-19 becomes seriously ill and develops difficulty breathing.

Older people, and those with underlying medical problems such as high blood pressure, heart problems or diabetes, are more likely to develop serious illness. Those with fever, cough and difficulty breathing should seek medical attention.

During a pandemic, schools will be asked to participate in enhanced surveillance by reporting absenteeism to Public Health Sudbury & Districts. In Rainbow Schools, the data will be collected centrally and forwarded to Public Health on a daily basis. Federations and unions will be advised that this process has begun.

LEGISLATION

LEGISLATION

Under the Occupational Health and Safety Act, R.S.O. 1990 – Section 25 (2) h), an employer shall take every precaution reasonable in the circumstances for the protection of a worker.

Under the Health Protection and Promotion Act, R.S.O. 1990 - Chapter H.7, Section 28, the Principal of a school who is of the opinion that a pupil in the school has or may have a communicable disease shall, as soon as possible after forming the opinion, report thereon to the Medical Officer of Health of the health unit in which the school is located.

Under the Emergency Management Act, R.S.O. 1990 – Chapter E.9, Section 2.1 (1), every municipality shall develop and implement an emergency management program and the council of the municipality shall by by-law adopt the emergency management program. 2002, c.14, s. 4.

PREVENTATIVE

PREVENTATIVE (*Protective strategies*)

A. Surveillance

1. Supervision of Students, Staff, Contract Workers (Bus Drivers)

- Absenteeism records (reporting) as per requirements from the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care
- Calls from Public Health (monitoring)

Communication and surveillance are vital to any pandemic response.

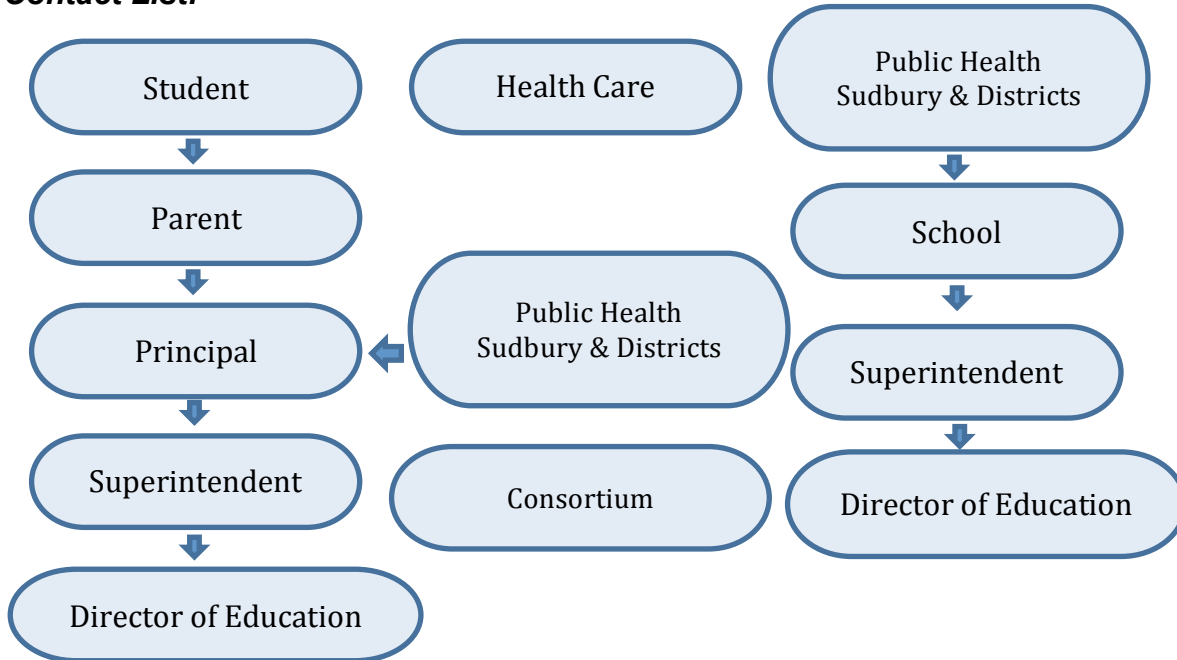
- Ensure school boards who share activities advise Principals to maintain communication with other Principals

B. Communication

The Public Health Agency of Canada and the federal government will co-ordinate interprovincial communications. Provincial health communications strategies will align with the federal plan, while local communications will follow provincial direction.

Training for Principals, Superintendents and Managers will be provided. The “train the trainer” model will be used to ensure all staff are aware of the plan.

1. Contact List:



2. Education/Training

- Create generic memos, presentations and announcements for management, employees and parents (Appendix A Package).
- The Communications Advisor will communicate with Public Health to determine the best infection control and environmental cleaning practices supported by educational materials. The Manager of Facilities and the Local CUPE President will ensure that the custodial staff is trained accordingly.
- All Rainbow District School Board Managers must ensure their team is aware of all procedures in the event of an emergency and high absenteeism i.e. a back-up plan.
- Add a link to Public Health on the Rainbow District School Board website.
- Continue to provide space for vaccination clinics.

3. Information

Ensure all students, parents/guardians, staff and volunteers receive relevant documentation about hand-washing, vaccination clinics and other relevant information.

C. Emergency measures

1. Custodial Practices

Depending on the microbe, studies have shown that pathogens can survive, and can infect a person, for more than 24 hours after being deposited on a surface.

- Regular thorough cleaning and disinfecting of high-touch surfaces is vital i.e. door knobs, telephone handles, educational manipulatives, etc.
- Several chemical disinfectants, including chlorine, hydrogen peroxide, iodophors (iodine-based antiseptics), quaternary ammonium and alcohols, are effective against some bacteria and some viruses if they are used in proper concentration for a sufficient length of time. Several types of wipes are available for disinfecting nonporous surfaces. All disinfectants, with the exception of bleach and 70% isopropyl alcohol, must have a Health Canada D.I.N. (Drug Identification Number).
- Cleaning and disinfecting procedures will be implemented in accordance with Ministry guidelines/recommendations and in consultation with Public Health.
- Cleaning staff should use appropriate personal protective equipment, including gloves, when using chemical cleaners or disinfectants.

2. High-risk Population Group

- Identify geographical population, age and medical problems

3. Transportation

- The Superintendent of Business will supply the Sudbury Student Services Consortium with a copy of the Pandemic Plan, and will ensure their copy is the most current.

4. Vaccine Management

- The province will identify priority groups eligible to receive vaccines and antivirals.
- The vaccine will be administered and/or managed by Public Health.
- Staff, students and parents are encouraged to check with Public Health regarding priority groups and availability of vaccine.
- On request, the Board will distribute information about vaccine availability and sites.
- Responses will be directed from Public Health. Priority populations to receive the vaccine will be identified by the province

5. External Demand of our Resources

- **Advise Public Health of the following:**
 - School floor plans (Manager of Facilities will co-ordinate this.)
 - Contact lists of principals and other key personnel at the Centre for Education.
- **Maintenance and other services**
 - Inform key players of possible demands on resources during a pandemic.

PRE-PANDEMIC

6. PRE-PANDEMIC (*Pandemic alert stage with human infection confirmed elsewhere*)

The response to a possible pandemic increases when a novel virus causes widespread illness somewhere in the world, resulting in a pandemic. The World Health Organization has identified various phases that lead up to a pandemic. The phases are based on the development of a new strain, its ability to spread from person to person, and the number of people affected across multiple populations. The response may be prolonged depending on the number of waves and the interval between the waves.

A. Surveillance

1. Supervision of Students, Staff, Contract Workers (Bus Drivers)

When a pandemic is declared by Public Health, local school boards will implement enhanced surveillance activities including:

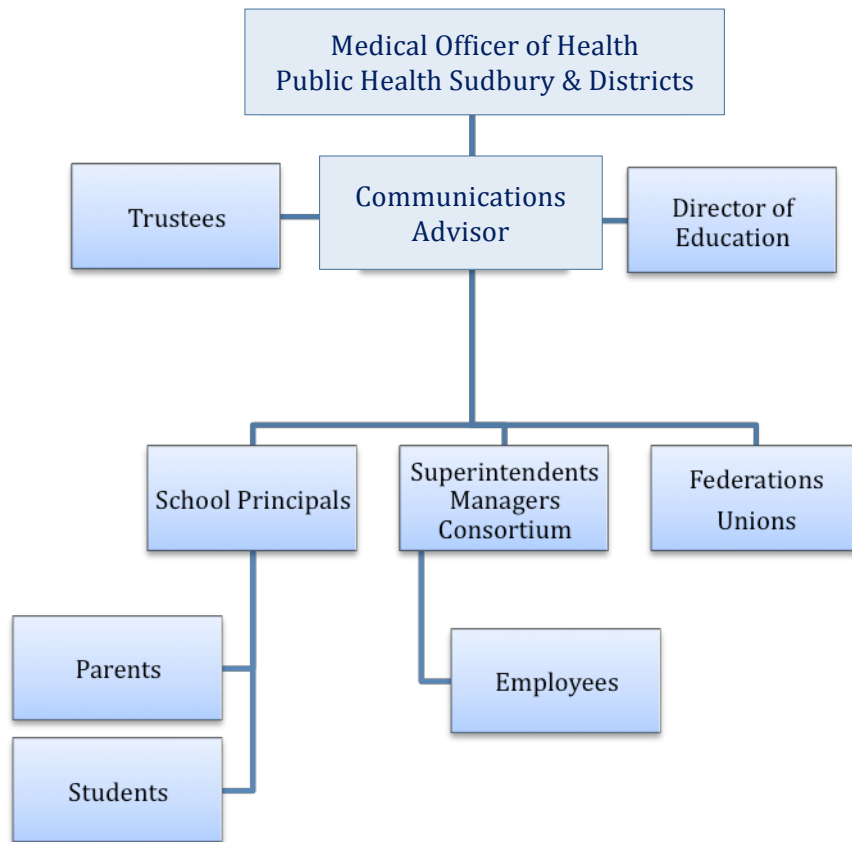
Absenteeism/Reporting Requirements: (Appendix C)

- The Human Resources department with Rainbow District School Board has the responsibility for collecting and managing information about staff absenteeism.
- All employees will call-in absences in the usual manner.
(Staff will be encouraged to voluntarily report flu/virus-like symptoms.)
- The schools will submit student absenteeism information as requested by Public Health to Information Services.
- Information Services will submit staff and student attendance daily to Public Health, including geographical data and other required information.
- Bus companies shall report absences to the Consortium who will communicate this information to Public Health, as requested.

B. Communication

The Public Health Agency of Canada and the federal government will co-ordinate interprovincial communications. Provincial health communications strategies will align with the federal plan, while local communications will follow provincial direction.

2. Contact List:



*All external communications will be issued by the Medical Officer of Health.
All internal communications and directives will come from the Director of Education,
including letters for parents/guardians.*

The communications plan will be implemented in conjunction with Public Health.

Key components of the plan are as follows:

Educate

Upon the declaration of a pandemic, accurate, relevant and timely information shared with and released to staff, students and parents/guardians will be the central focus for education.

Topics include:

- Infection control practices to prevent infectious disease
- Disease information
- Pandemic updates
- How to access available services
- Vaccine availability
- Personal preparedness

Updated information from Public Health will be made available to the schools, school boards and the general public. Protective measures and personal preparedness will be highlighted.

For up-to-date information, visit the Public Health Sudbury & Districts at <https://www.phsd.ca/>

Reassure

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.

Report

Be as consistent as possible in preparing and reporting information regarding absenteeism. Be aware of website updates and public information lines regarding local impact and emergency response.

The Communications Advisor or designate will communicate the following:

- Information related to the pandemic and public services to our staff, students and parents/guardians
- Pertinent information from the Board to all media
- Briefings and pertinent information to the Director of Education
- Regular updates on the Board website with information on the pandemic
- Communications with the Federations/Unions

2. Education/Training

Custodians

- Provide training to custodial staff regarding new chemicals that may be used in schools.
- Revisit cleaning and disinfecting procedures
- Ensure inventory of cleaning supplies and materials are well stocked.

Staff

- Staff shall be made aware of basic infection control guidelines to prevent the transmission of infectious disease i.e. handwashing procedures, etc.
- Staff shall be educated to raise awareness about the pandemic emergency.
- High-risk staff (with respiratory ailments, compromised health) are encouraged to consult their health care provider.

Students

- Send letter and notices to parents/guardians with key messages.
- Students shall be made aware of basic infection control guidelines to prevent the transmission of infectious disease i.e. handwashing procedures, etc.

Parents/Guardians

- Parents/guardians are encouraged to have a plan in place to take care of sick children at home, including alternative day care and transportation.
- Parents/guardians of high-risk students (i.e. respiratory ailments, compromised health) are encouraged to consult their health care provider.
- Parents/guardians are encouraged to report symptomatic-like illness to their child's school and keep children home if they are not well. Parents/guardians should be informed to contact Public Health for further instruction.

C. Emergency measures

Upon the declaration of a pandemic, it is imperative that essential services, public safety and security be maintained.

1. Custodial practices

- Consider increasing custodial hours for preventative cleaning to ensure cleaning of surfaces such as keyboards, photocopiers, phones, desks, etc.
- Additional cleaning and other supplies will be purchased as required.
- A system shall be in place to replenish depleted supplies through Facilities.

2. High-risk Population Group

- Ensure that all emergency contact numbers are updated and easily accessible.
- Develop internal contingency plans within the school.

3. Transportation

- Bus companies are responsible to ensure increased cleaning of buses.

School bus operators

- Provide training on new chemicals that may be used on buses.
- Revisit cleaning and disinfecting procedures.

4. Vaccine Management

- The province will identify priority groups who will be eligible to receive vaccines and antivirals.
- The vaccine will be administered and/or managed by Public Health.
- Staff, students and parents/guardians are encouraged to consult Public Health for vaccine availability.
- The Board will be responsive to disseminate information regarding vaccine availability and sites.

5. *External Demands/Enhanced Services Demands*

- Advise Superintendents in preparation of an upcoming pandemic and its impact on students and staff.
- Every effort will be made to maintain all essential services.
- Monitor extracurricular activities and after hours use of schools.
- Develop internal contingency plans for all services offered by the Board including transportation.

Note: Schools may be used as clinics, and school buses may be required for purposes other than transporting students to and from school.

PANDEMIC

7. PANDEMIC (*Pandemic period when human infection has spread locally*)

A. Surveillance

1. Supervision of Students, Board Employees, Contract Workers (Bus Drivers)

The Medical Officer of Health has the authority to issue an order if she or he is of the opinion, upon reasonable and probable grounds, that a communicable disease exists or may exist or that there is an immediate risk of an outbreak, when the order is necessary to decrease the hazard.

A pandemic alert or the start of pandemic activity anywhere in Canada will become a national issue. Ontario's response will be based on local "issues" that may or may not correspond to other countries. Enhanced surveillance activities will be implemented and modified as needed. Public Health will monitor disease activity on a daily or weekly basis and report to the provincial Public Health Division.

Note: Schools and day cares will be asked to report overall absenteeism rates to Public Health on a daily basis. Reporting of staff and students that report symptoms will also be encouraged. The Board will work closely with Public Health to ensure surveillance requirements are understood and followed up on at the school level. In Rainbow Schools, the information will be reported centrally to Information Services who will provide data to Public Health on a daily basis.

In order to respond appropriately, local health and emergency services planners will need to determine which "phase" their jurisdiction is in. The Medical Officer of Health may receive direction from the province to close school facilities. For collective agreement purposes, this type of closure would be deemed the same as a "quarantine".

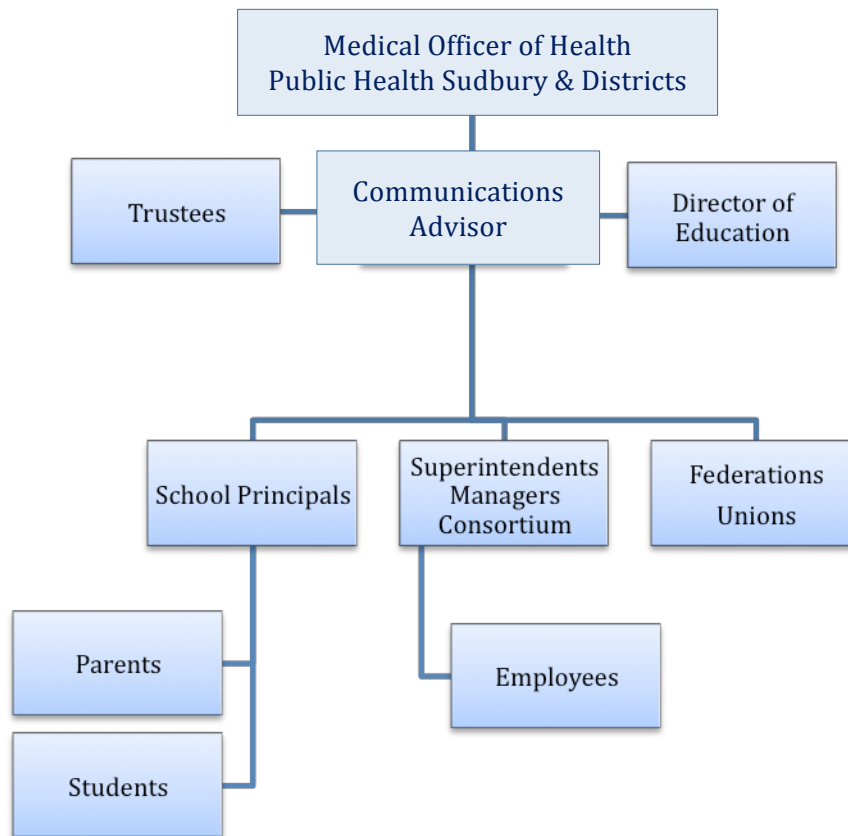
Teaching staff is required to report all absences to their immediate supervisor. Staff is encouraged to report symptoms during the pandemic stage.

All other staff absences will be called in as usual. Departments will report daily absences to Human Resources. Staff is encouraged to report symptoms during the pandemic stage.

B. Communications

The Public Health Agency of Canada and the federal government will co-ordinate interprovincial communications. Provincial health communication strategies will be aligned with the federal plan. Local communications will follow provincial direction.

1. **Contact Lists: (keep list updated)**



*All external communications will be issued by the Medical Officer of Health.
All internal communications and directives will come from the Director of Education,
including letters for parents/guardians.*

2. **Education/training**

A pandemic will create intense public and media interest.

The focus of public communications will be on raising awareness of the risks of an infectious disease and the steps to prevent spreading it.

Internet-based applications, around-the-clock phone lines, and resources designed to provide a secure way for Public Health authorities to share information and manage the outbreak will be set in motion.

Information bulletins to schools will be issued in conjunction with Public Health to ensure a consistent message while outlining the local action that is being taken to address the pandemic.

Community containment strategies may be invoked, such as measures to increase social distance (close schools, discourage public gatherings) and general messages about how to avoid getting or spreading infectious disease including:

- avoid daycare, school, work and public events when sick
- avoid crowds
- wash hands frequently and meticulously
- practice respiratory hygiene (coughing or sneezing in your sleeve and proper tissue disposal)
- open windows to increase air circulation, adjust central building controls

3. Target Groups: Students, Staff and Parents/Guardians

- Messengers need to model a calm approach designed to reduce fear, avoid panic and encourage vigilance.
- Boards need to release information regarding changes to transportation, interschool activities, field trips and community use of schools.

C. Emergency Measures

1. Custodial Practices

- Increase hours and change routines to address sanitization needs.

2. High-risk Population Groups

- Reduce services that can be condensed during a pandemic.

3. Transportation:

- Reduce non-essential travel.

4. Vaccine Management ([link to Public Health](#))

- The province will identify priority groups eligible to receive vaccines and antivirals.

5. External Demands of our Resources (Community, Schools and Staff)

- Assist with preparation and operation of alternative care sites and overflow facilities.
- Provide facilities for mass immunization campaigns.
- Relocate or suspend “before and after” programs.

POST-PANDEMIC

8. POST-PANDEMIC (*Following the infection*)

A. Assessment

1. Supervision of Students, Staff, Contract Workers (Bus Drivers)

- Was our emergency plan adequate?
- Did we minimize the risk of infection by using proper control measures?
 - Handwashing
 - Daily disinfecting (schools, buses, daycares, community spaces)
 - Attendance monitoring (sick students and staff to stay home)
 - Isolating sick students/staff when showing symptoms at school

Did we train/educate staff, children, parents/guardians to identify and recognize the symptoms; how to react to the virus; and protect themselves as well as others with whom they come in contact?

Were there sufficient supplies at each location i.e. latex gloves and non-latex for those with latex allergies)?

Was there adequate supervision at each location and for each target group i.e. students, staff, contract workers, visitors, etc.?

Were **all** absences monitored on a daily basis during the pandemic?
This is crucial to stay on top of and address any issues as they arise.

B. Communication

Back to business

After a pandemic wave is over, it is expected that many people will be affected in one way or another. Some may have lost co-workers, friends or relatives, will suffer from fatigue, or may have financial losses due to interruption of business.

- What is the recovery plan?
- Define services for social, psychological and practical support for affected employees. Organize training and education for personnel involved, if needed.
- Identify contacts for existing community groups such as religious, sports, etc.

1. Contact Lists

Public Health will advise that the pandemic/outbreak is over. Through the Communications Advisor, Rainbow District School Board will send a news release including communications with the federations and unions. Messages will be posted on the Board website in co-ordination with other school boards. Superintendents will contact their family of school Principals. School Principals will contact teachers.

If a school closure was initiated, Facilities will ensure all schools have been cleaned and disinfected prior to re-opening.

The Superintendent of Business will contact the Sudbury Student Services Consortium, who will contact individual bus companies. All buses must be cleaned and disinfected prior to providing transportation.

Principals contact all community centres in their respective schools. All spaces and equipment must be cleaned and sanitized prior to re-opening.

All stakeholders are to verify that their contact lists were updated and available during the pandemic.

Additional Support: In the event of fatalities, what support measures are in place to provide counseling, if needed, to personnel and/or students? Was it provided?

2. Education/Training

- Was enough training and education provided to target groups?

3. Target Groups

- Were sufficient control measures put in place?
- Did we properly estimate the impact of the pandemic virus?
- Were we able to identify the proper target groups/schools by having adequate, factual and timely information (absences and info on pandemic virus)?
- Did we respond quickly and adequately enough considering all aspects of the situation? If not, what were the inhibitors?

C. Emergency Measures

1. Custodial Practices

- Was the frequency of cleaning and disinfecting adequate for Public Health?
- Were custodians and bus drivers well trained using proper techniques?
- Was staff using proper products with the proper concentration of dilution?

2. High-risk Population Groups

- Were the students in a high-risk population identified? Did they receive adequate protection against the spread of the pandemic virus?
- Did key staff in these groups know whom to contact in the event that symptoms were displayed?

3. Transportation

- Was transportation adequate for evacuations?
- Did bus drivers respond appropriately and in a timely fashion in the case of an evacuation?
- Did the consortium have a sufficient number of drivers and buses?
- Did the bus drivers know how to protect themselves against the spread of the pandemic virus?

4. School-based Vaccine Program

- What were some of the successes and challenges identified? i.e. provide feedback to Public Health
- How accessible were our facilities in assisting Public Health with the vaccination program?
- Did our cleaning processes meet the needs of Public Health?

5. External Demand of our Resources

- Identify and evaluate mishaps that may have been encountered.
- When outside groups used our facilities, were the entrance, door handles and areas cleaned and disinfected after each use?
- How prepared and accessible were our facilities in assisting Public Health?

6. Other Considerations

- Was all sensory equipment removed or its use reduced during the outbreak?
- Re-introduction of sensory equipment/materials, field trips, etc.
- Did everyone wear personal protective equipment when they had to?
- Have we thought about a sanitizing station for handwashing at every entrance of schools to prevent the spread of germs?

EVALUATION AND REFLECTION

9. EVALUATION AND REFLECTION

Was the emergency plan carried out as stated? Was it effective?

Evaluation

	Preventative	Pre-Pandemic	Pandemic
Weaknesses			
Required Actions			
Strengths			

Summary

Reflection

TESTING

10. TESTING (*Dry-run/Mock Disaster*)

The City of Greater Sudbury and the health care sector are planning an exercise to test pandemic plans. Perhaps the schools could join in and make use of the scenarios for their own table-top exercises.

- What did we miss?
- Do we want to add a safety measure?
- How fast was our response time? Could we have been faster?
- Could we have done more to contain the spread of the pandemic virus?
If so, what are those preventative measures?
- Did we have all the information prior to delivering our plan?
- Did we receive all pertinent information from Public Health as far as the outbreak time, the symptoms, who were the most vulnerable people and why?
- What could we have improved to manage the crisis?

APPENDICIES

APPENDIX A (1) - SAMPLE

MEMORANDUM

To: Principals

From: Director of Education

Date:

Today, the Medical Officer of Health issued a pandemic (*type*) alert.

Our Pandemic Plan will be invoked immediately.

You are required to distribute the attached memorandum to all students, parents and Board employees at your site(s).

Using the attached form, you are required to report Pandemic Data to the Human Resources department on a daily basis until further notice.

In light of this situation, I am requesting that you check your e-mail regularly for any updates or further direction.

APPENDIX A (2) - SAMPLE

MEMORANDUM

To: All students, parents/guardians and Board employees

From: Director of Education

Date:

Today, the Medical Officer of Health issued a Pandemic (*type*) alert. Our Pandemic Plan will be invoked immediately. All schools will remain open and transportation will continue as usual.

Health and safety, as always, is first and foremost. The Board and its schools will take every reasonable step to ensure the safety of its students. However, we cannot guarantee that the usual cleaning standards will be maintained. The Board will monitor schools on a daily basis and update the plan as required.

In order to assist Public Health to monitor the (*illness type*) activity on a daily basis, I am asking for your co-operation in reporting suspected cases in your household.

When informing the school or your supervisor of an absence, you are strongly encouraged to indicate if this absence is due to flu like/virus symptoms.

Please be advised that only members of suspected cases will be reported to Public Health.

We would ask parents/guardians and the public at large to please listen to their local radio and television stations for updates. We will also post information on our website www.rainbowschools.ca

Thank you for your co-operation and understanding.

APPENDIX A (3) - SAMPLE

MEMORANDUM

To: Principals

From: Director of Education

Date:

Until further notice:

- All Board sponsored activities will cease.
- All use of Board facilities by outside groups will be suspended. Principals are required to inform these groups of action.

APPENDIX B - SAMPLE

Pandemic Data

Board: _____

School Site: _____

Supervisor: _____

Date: _____

Students

Number enrolled at school: _____

Number absent today: _____

Number absent with flu-like/virus symptoms: _____

Board Employees

Number assigned to site: _____

Number absent today: _____

Number absent with flu-like/virus symptoms: _____

APPENDIX C - SAMPLE

MEMORANDUM

To: All students, parents/guardians

From: Director of Education

Date:

Please refer to the attached information pertaining to proper hand washing.

This document is provided to you as a preventative measure to reduce the risks of communicable diseases.

Please ensure that you follow this procedure frequently throughout the day.

Thank you for your assistance in reducing the spread of a possible pandemic.

Please contact Public Health Sudbury & Districts for the most current information and resources.

Public Health Sudbury & Districts

Phone: 705.522.9200

Toll Free: 1.866.522.9200

www.phsd.ca