

EBCF - PANDEMIC/EPIDEMIC EMERGENCIES

Category O

The Board recognizes that a pandemic/epidemic is a serious threat that stands to affect students, staff, and the community as a whole. The Board establishes this policy in the event the town/municipality and/or school district is affected by a pandemic or epidemic. At all times the health, safety and welfare of the students shall be the first priority. The District shall follow the advice and recommendations contained in the State of New Hampshire's Influenza Pandemic Public Health Preparedness & Response Plan, as prepared by the New Hampshire Department of Health & Human Services.

Planning and Coordination

Planning for a pandemic requires a multi-faceted effort, and school preparedness should include input from a team of individuals to address their specific areas of expertise.

The Superintendent shall designate one or more employees to serve as a liaison between the school district and local and State health officials. This designee is responsible for communicating 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 to coordinate their pandemic/epidemic plans with that of the school district. The Board encourages the designee to become a member of the Health Alert Network through the New Hampshire Department of Health & Human Services.

The principal 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.

With fiscal concerns in mind, the district may purchase and store supplies necessary for an epidemic/pandemic response, including but not limited to disinfectant products, face masks, water, examination gloves, and other supplies as recommended by the school nurse.

The Superintendent shall develop procedures and plans for the transportation of students in the event students are released from school early. These procedures shall include provisions for students who cannot be transported to home in the event of an early dismissal.

Response: In the event anyone within the school is discovered or suspected to have a communicable disease that may result in transmission to other students, faculty, or staff, that person shall be immediately isolated pending further medical examination. Local and state health officials, including the New Hampshire Communicable Disease Control Section of the Department of Health and Human Services shall be notified immediately.

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

Infection Control

Any student or staff member found to be infected with a communicable disease that may bear risk of transmission will not be allowed to attend school until that individual's primary care

physician or other medical personnel, or the Commissioner of the Department of Health and Human Services, provide medical clearance, indicating that the individual does not bear the risk of transmitting the communicable disease. During an outbreak of a communicable disease for which immunization is required by State law, children exempted from immunization may be prohibited from attending school in accord with State law.

Students with excessive absences due to a communicable disease may 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, schoolwork 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 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 due to pandemic/epidemic. Such a plan may include providing students with assignments via mail, e-mail, local access cable television, or the school district's website.

In the event of a pandemic/epidemic, the Superintendent is authorized to amend the traditional class schedule and schedule of days. Such a plan may include extending the school day, having school days held on Saturdays, the use of previously scheduled vacation days, and/or extend the school year beyond the previously established end of school year.

Legal References:

RSA 141-C, Communicable Diseases

He-P 300, Diseases

NH Department of Health and Human Services, Influenza Pandemic Public Health Preparedness & Response Plan, available at:

<http://www.dhhs.nh.gov/DHHS/CDCS/LIBRARY/Policy-Guideline/dphs-influenza-plan.htm>

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