

# Fremont

## Public Schools



# Pandemic Plan

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## **Defining Pandemic**

According to the [World Health Organization \(WHO\)](#) a pandemic emerging infectious disease is a disease that will affect people around the world, arriving even to the most remote corners of the world. Three criteria determine a pandemic emerging infectious disease:

1. A new emerging infectious disease to which humans have no immunity.
2. Humans are infected and become very sick (or die).
3. Is contagious and spreads from person-to-person efficiently.

## **The Purpose of the Guide**

The purpose of this document is to assist in managing the impact of an emerging infectious disease pandemic, if one should transpire, that affects Fremont Public Schools. The document focuses on two main strategies which include:

- Sustaining educational functions
- Reducing the spread of the virus within school facilities

This guide provides procedures to address:

- Communication to schools from external sources regarding a pandemic virus, and internal communications within the school.
- Activities to reduce the spread of the virus:
  - Reducing the risk of infected persons entering Fremont Public Schools, including: students, staff and all visitors
  - Student Spacing - reducing person-to-person interactions
  - Social distancing - reducing or postponing school events or activities
  - Cleaning and disinfecting school facilities
  - Educating parents, students and staff to address potential concerns
  - Address those students and employees that may become ill while at school as well as those who may have been exposed to a virus

## **Prevention and/or Treatment**

- Disseminating information regarding:
  - Vaccinations
  - Anti-viral medication
  - Antibiotics

➤ Maintaining School Functions:

- Identify essential staff and school functions
- Plan for absenteeism of students and/or staff members
- Communicate to parents, guardians, students and staff
- Education for employees, students, parents and guardians regarding the pandemic

## **The District Emergency Response Team**

### **Management of Operations**

- The District Emergency Response Team will be responsible for the Pandemic Plan.
- The District Emergency Response Team (composed of the Superintendent, Associate Superintendent, Executive Directors, Administrators, School Nurses, Director of IT, Security Coordinator, General Operations Administrator, Communications Coordinator) will be responsible for implementation of the Pandemic Plan.
- A District Emergency Response Team Media Coordinator will be assigned and is responsible for communications as directed by the District Emergency Response Team.
- An Incident Command Center will be located at the Main Street Education & Academic Center to manage the Pandemic Plan. The School Nurse and Associate Superintendent will collaborate with Three Rivers Public Health Department.
- The necessary provisions of sufficient and accessible infection prevention supplies (soap, alcohol-based hand hygiene products, tissues and appropriate receptacles) will be readily available and used as directed by Three Rivers Public Health Department.
- The district will continue to work with Three Rivers Public Health Department to report a substantial increase in absenteeism among students and faculty.
- Upon notification that a pandemic is occurring, the District Emergency Response Team will:

- Set up prominent notices at all facility entry points advising staff, students and visitors not to enter if they have symptoms of the emerging infectious disease.
- Educate employees, students, parents and visitors on how to stop the spread of the virus by disseminating the appropriate information to each school. The information will then be placed in conspicuous places (including entrances, notice boards, meeting rooms and restrooms). Notices should contain hygiene information regarding hand washing, covering coughs and sneezes and student spacing.
- Measures will be taken to ensure the adequate supplies of tissues, hand sanitizing gels, soap and water cleaning supplies are available for employees and student use.
- A pandemic emerging infectious disease fact sheet containing information to help stop the spread of the virus and performing effective student spacing will be shared with parents and/or guardians.
- Shared work areas will be cleaned at least daily with a disinfectant.
- Decisions on how and when to operate the school system with a significant shortage of staff and students will be made by the Superintendent of schools. Such a decision will be made in conjunction with Three Rivers Public Health Department. These decisions may also consider alternatives such as staggered school times, changes to busing and telecommunications.
- Procedures for implementing containment measures, such as canceling sporting events and other mass gatherings, will be determined by the Superintendent of Schools or the Activities Director.
- Procedures to assure continuity of instruction will depend on the variables of the pandemic event. Alternative methods of instruction *may* include web-casts, e-mail, television broadcasts or other alternative methods.

### **Communication for Schools**

- Fremont Public Schools has aligned its pandemic emerging infectious disease plan with Three Rivers Public Health Department, as well as the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services pandemic emerging infectious disease recommendations in order to coordinate an appropriate response and to avoid causing unnecessary concern. Key features include: working closely with Three Rivers Public Health Department and establishing communication mechanisms.

- The primary communication channel will be the Three Rivers Public Health Department website located at <http://threeriverspublichealth.org/>. Specific information for schools will also be made available through both the aforementioned website and through [www.fremonttigers.org](http://www.fremonttigers.org).
- Fremont Public Schools will communicate and educate faculty, staff, students and parents about effective hygiene habits before any outbreaks occur. This information will include standard precautions pertaining to good hand washing as well as coughing/sneezing etiquette.
- The Superintendent or the District Emergency Response Team Media Coordinator will act as spokesperson(s) for the district. Communication channels will be used according to the nuances of the pandemic which may include: website information, school and district newsletters, e-mail, social media and the District's communication system.

### **Communication to Employees**

- Communication to employees will flow from the Main Street Education & Academic Center to the building level. The building principal will advise the employees in advance where to find up-to-date and reliable information about pandemics.
- Communication will be made via the District's communication system, e-mail, and the Fremont Public School's Website [www.fremonttigers.org](http://www.fremonttigers.org).
- Links to Three Rivers Public Health Department website and the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services will be disseminated via e-mail and/or the Fremont Public School's website.
- Educational communications regarding best healthcare practices will be provided to encourage employees to acquire and maintain personal, regular health care services that address any pandemic event that may occur.
- Communication will also be provided regarding school policies for employee's compensation and sick leave absences that may be unique to a pandemic.

### **Communications to Students/Parents/Guardians**

- The dissemination of information pertaining to the district's pandemic preparedness and response plan can be found on the Fremont Public School's website.

- The district will have rapid and accurate communications. Communications will address the potential for fear and anxiety that the students and/or families may have as a result of rumors or misinformation.
- To the greatest extent possible, the district will disseminate information for parents about the potential impact of a pandemic on school functioning (i.e., parents may have to arrange for childcare in the event of school closures).
- To the greatest extent possible, the district communications will be culturally and linguistically appropriate to meet the needs of all students/families.

### **Student Spacing (social distancing)**

Student spacing refers to the distance between individuals and strategies to reduce the spread of the virus between people.

- In the event of a pandemic, education on student spacing will be distributed to all staff, students and parents.
- Student spacing strategies *may* include:
  - spacing students' desks three (3) feet apart
  - shortening passing periods
  - sending students to eat lunch at their desks
  - staggering school attendance times
  - staggering bus routes so there are fewer people on each route
  - limiting group activities and interaction between classes
  - canceling gym class, choir or other school activities that place individuals in close proximity

### **School Cleaning**

- Disinfecting of shared work areas, counters, railings, door knobs and stairwells should be performed more frequently during an emerging infectious disease pandemic.
- Appropriate ventilation to the facility will be used to ensure a clean learning atmosphere.
- Filters of the air conditioning systems should be cleaned and changed more frequently during a pandemic.

- To the greatest extent possible, telephones should not be shared.
- Frequent cleaning will remain a best practice. We will follow the Three Rivers Public Health Department guidelines. Specialized cleaning solutions may not be necessary. Therefore, standard cleaning products may be adequate (including soap and water) and will disinfect most surfaces.
- Details regarding cleaning solutions can be located on the fact sheets at the CDC's Website <https://www.cdc.gov/flu/school/cleaning.htm>

### **Educating Students/Staff/Parents to Reduce Concern**

It is likely there will be anxiety regarding the pandemic emerging infectious disease and this may contribute to increased absenteeism and/or increased distress to students, parents and staff.

- Suggested methods to address this include:
  - educating those involved in the District's preparedness efforts
  - provide timely updates to students, parents, teachers and other relevant parties
  - during a pandemic, continue to educate staff, students and parents regarding the progress of the pandemic and its effects
  - as needed, work with local resources and local public health officials to assure support mechanisms are readily available (For example: district counselors, mental health, social services and faith based resources)

### **Managing Illness in Staff, Students or Visitors**

- The building principal will post information on what to do if people get sick while at school.
- The School Nurse will inform staff and students regarding symptoms of the illness.
- If a person becomes ill or if someone observes that another person is exhibiting symptoms of the emerging infectious disease at school, the building principal, school nurse or designated person will evaluate the person and send home as soon as possible.



- To the greatest extent possible, the transportation of ill students will be done by parents and/or guardians.
- Students or staff members will be directed to seek medical care and report back to the School Nurse if the emerging infectious disease is likely, who will then notify Three Rivers Public Health Department.
- Parents and/or students, as well as staff members, will adhere to guidelines set forth by Three Rivers Public Health Department regarding standard baselines for staying home and when they may return to school.

## ***Treatment***

### **Vaccines**

Public health officials will make the best use of available vaccines and will inform schools and the public on all available vaccines.

- Meanwhile, we encourage all employees and students to obtain the annual seasonal influenza vaccines.
- The Nebraska Department of Public Health and the Center for Disease Control will provide advice on priority groups for pandemic immunizations.

### **Anti-Viral**

Antiviral medications may play an integral role in the treatment and prevention of a pandemic emerging infectious disease, however, their efficacy against a pandemic strain may be unknown. There may be limited amounts of certain anti-viral medications available, as well as there may be barriers in attempting to use them as a treatment and prevention tool in the event of a pandemic emerging infectious disease.

- The Nebraska Department of Public Health will provide recommendations on the use of antiviral medication.
- The Associate Superintendent will check the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services (NEDHHS) and/or Three Rivers Public Health Department website for the latest information on the use of antiviral medications and recommendations. Information will be disseminated accordingly.

### **Continuity of Operations**

The District Emergency Response Team will ensure that core functions, people and skills have been identified and that strategies are in place to manage these prior to a pandemic.

## **Required Personnel**

- All district administrators – to assist with communication, work with other agencies and plan accordingly
- All building principals – to assist with communication and planning with district level administration
- All secretarial staff – to assist in carrying out the plan of action
- All custodial staff members – to ensure a safe, clean environment
- Nursing staff members – to assist in planning and promoting safe and healthy environments

Identify a process for maintaining the operation of Main Street Education & Academic Center (including budget, payroll, and on-going communications with parents and students).

All budgetary and payroll issues that arise due to a pandemic will be addressed according to state and federal law, school district policy and the idiosyncrasies of the pandemic.

## **Alternative Education Methods**

The Fremont Public School District reserves the right to educate children based on the details of the pandemic. Alternative modes of education may be delivered by: web-based learning, e-mail, television broadcasts and/or U.S. Postal Service.

## **School Pandemic Maintenance**

- The District Pandemic Plan will be reviewed and revised annually by the District Emergency Response Team.

# Appendices

## **Appendix A**

### **Pandemic Influenza**

#### **Background**

According to the World Health Organization (WHO):

“An influenza pandemic occurs when a new influenza virus appears against which the human population has no immunity, resulting in several simultaneous epidemics worldwide with enormous numbers of deaths and illness. With the increase in global transport and communications, as well as urbanization and overcrowded conditions, epidemics due to the new influenza virus are likely to quickly take hold around the world.”

Influenza is a highly contagious respiratory virus that is responsible for annual epidemics in the United States and other countries. Each year an average of 200,000 people are hospitalized and 36,000 die in the U.S. from influenza infection or a secondary complication. During an influenza pandemic the level of illness and death from influenza will likely increase dramatically worldwide.

The impact of an influenza pandemic on the local economy and business processes could be devastating. It is likely that 15-35% of Nebraska’s population will be affected. There is a potential for high levels of illness and death, as well as significant disruption to society and our economy, making planning for the next influenza pandemic imperative.

#### **Assumptions**

##### **Pandemic Influenza**

Predicted spread and severity:

- Over a several month period, illness rates in Nebraska’s population: 15-35%
- Global spread in:3 months
- Vaccine availability:6 months after initial outbreak
- Antiviral treatment: Likely to be in short supply and may not be effective

Potential Effects:

- Large percentages of the population may be unable to work for days to weeks during the pandemic
- Diminished numbers of people and expertise available
- Diminished emergency and essential services-fire, police, and medical
- Potential for school closures

Potential School Effects:

- Large numbers of staff absent making it difficult to maintain school operations
- Loss of services from suppliers (e.g. food service, other essential products)
- Large numbers of student absenteeism

## **Resources**

Three Rivers Public Health Department

<http://threeriverspublichealth.org/>

Frequently Asked Questions and Answers

<http://www.pandemicflu.gov/faq/pandemicinfluenza/>

Center for Disease Control

<http://www.cdc.gov>

Plan for a Pandemic

<http://www.pandemicflu.gov/plan/pdf/Individuals.pdf>

# Appendix B

## Background

The Center for Disease Control ( CDC ) is responding to an outbreak of respiratory disease that can spread from person to person. It was first detected in China and has now been detected internationally including the United States. The disease has been named Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19).

According to the CDC:

“COVID-19 is a respiratory illness caused by a novel(new) virus, and we are learning more about it every day. There is currently no vaccine to protect against COVID-19. At this point, the best way to prevent infection, is to avoid being exposed to the virus that causes it. Stopping transmission (spread) of the virus through everyday practices is the best way to keep people healthy.”

The World Health Organization(WHO) and CDC recommend non-pharmaceutical interventions(NPI) to prevent the spread of infection including regular hand washing, covering mouth and nose when coughing and sneezing, staying home if ill, practice social distancing, keep surfaces clean and avoiding close contact with anyone showing symptoms of respiratory illness such as coughing and sneezing.

## Assumptions

Predicted spread and severity:

- This is an emerging, rapidly evolving situation and CDC will provide updated information as it becomes available, in addition to updated guidance.

Potential Effects:

- Large percentages of the population may be unable to work for days to weeks during the pandemic
- Diminished numbers of people and expertise available
- Diminished emergency and essential services-fire, police and medical
- Potential for school closures

Potential School Effects:

- Large numbers of staff absent making it difficult to maintain school operations
- Loss of services from suppliers (e.g. food service, other essential products)
- Large numbers of student absenteeism

## **Resources**

Center for Disease Control (CDC)

<http://www.cdc.gov/covid19>

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/specific-groups/guidance-for-schools.html>

<https://www.cdc.gov/flu/school/cleaning.htm>

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/faq.htm>

Three Rivers Public Health Department

<http://threeriverspublichealth.org/>

Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services

<http://www.dhhs.ne.gov/coronavirus>

Nebraska Department of Education

<https://www.education.ne.gov/publichealth/>