

# **SUFFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOLS**



**PANDEMIC PLAN  
2020**

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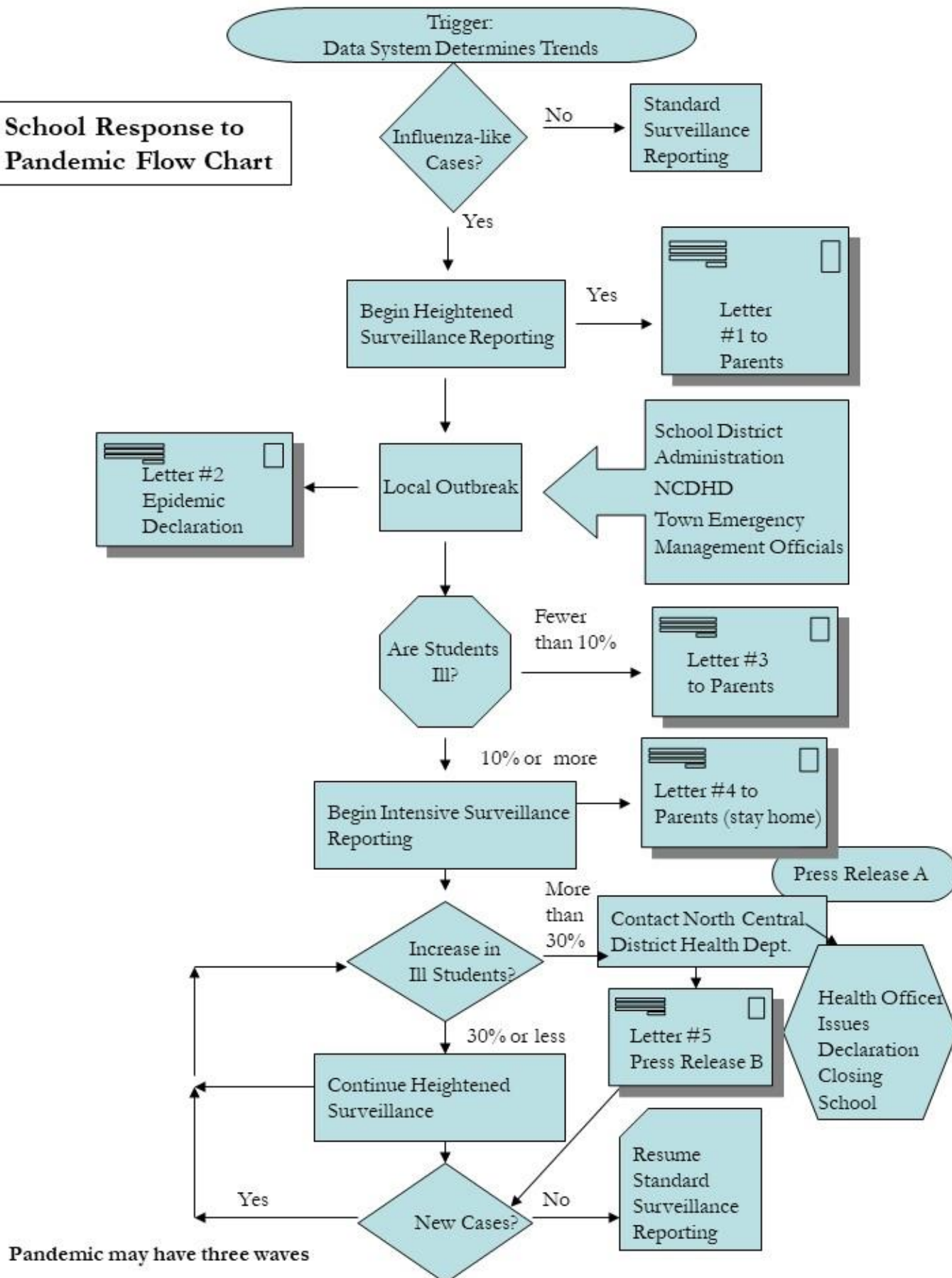
## INTRODUCTION

An increasingly important public health issue that our Nation and the world faces is the threat of a global disease outbreak called a pandemic. It is therefore important that adequate planning take place should a pandemic occur.

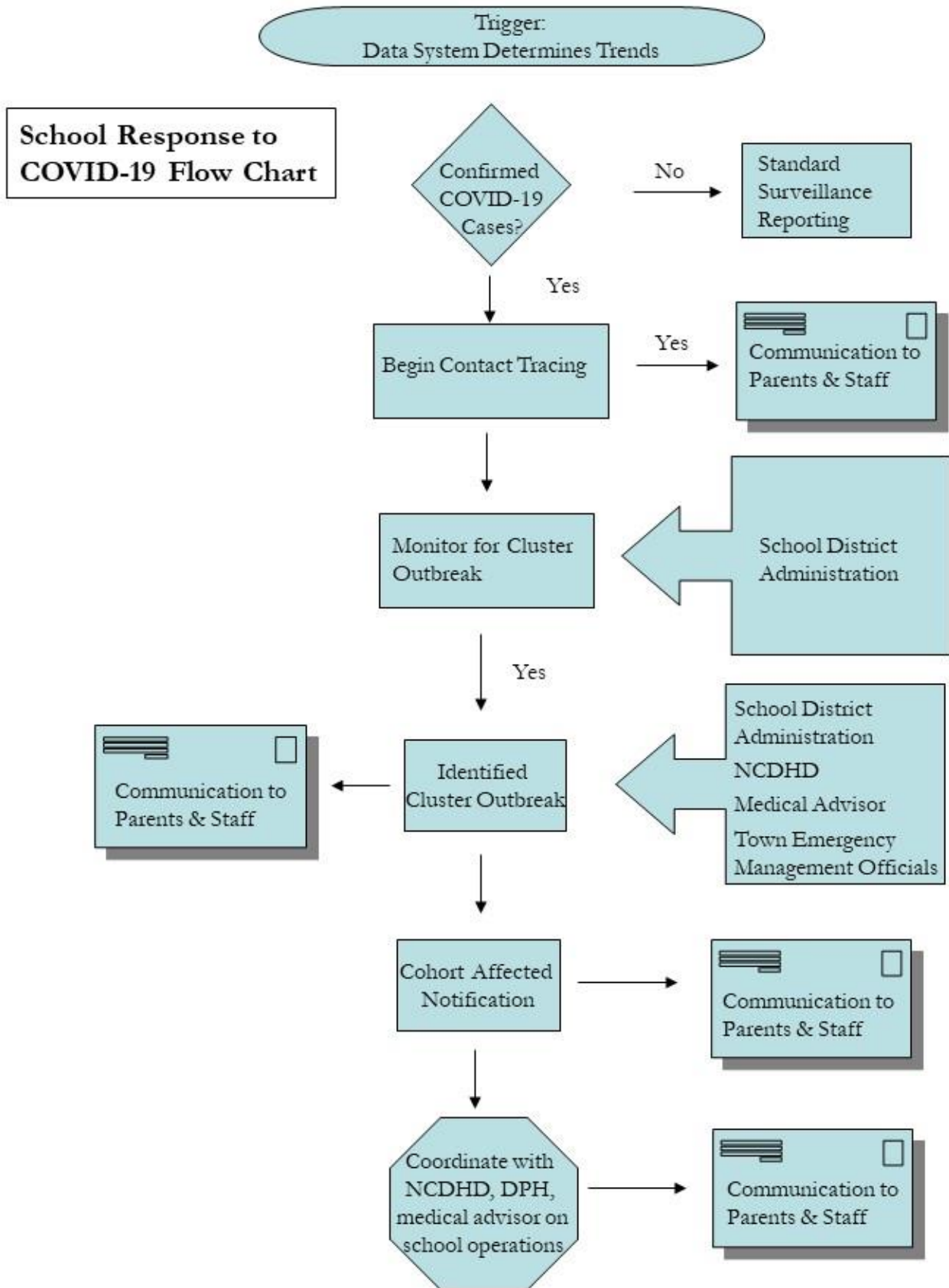
The ubiquitous nature of an influenza-like pandemic compels Federal, State, and local governments, communities (including schools), corporations, families and individuals to learn about, prevent, prepare for, and collaborate in efforts to slow, respond to, mitigate, and recover from a potential pandemic. The development, refinement, and exercise of pandemic influenza-like plans by all stakeholders are critical components of preparedness.

All pandemic plans need to be tailored to local circumstances. The purpose of this plan is to provide a protocol by which the Suffield school system can respond to, mitigate and recover from a possible pandemic. The plan attempts to address not only the health issues, but the continuing educational needs and psychological needs of the school children and staff. Specific interventions regarding the provision of educational instruction should the schools have to close, has not been determined at this time. Those decisions will be predicated upon actions taken and guidance offered by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the State of Connecticut Department of Public Health, the North Central Connecticut Health District, and the State of Connecticut Department of Education.

# School Response to Pandemic Flow Chart



Pandemic may have three waves



Pandemic may have three waves

## **INFLUENZA-LIKE CASE DEFINITION**

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention defines an Influenza-like illness as having the following symptoms:

Fever of 101.5 degrees Fahrenheit or higher  
AND ONE OF THE FOLLOWING

- Cough
- Sore Throat
- Headache
- Muscle Ache

A student with Influenza-like symptoms must be sent to the office for screening (symptom check and/or taking temperature). If student meets the case definition as described above, he/she must be excluded from school until symptom free. Enter the name of student on tracking log and report on the daily/weekly report form.

## **SCHOOL ACTION STEPS FOR PANDEMIC INFLUENZA-LIKE ILLNESSES**

The following is a chronological list of important step-by-step actions schools should take before, during and after a Pandemic Influenza-like outbreak. Pandemic Influenza-like illnesses can have several cycles or waves so this list may need to be repeated.

### **PRIOR TO OUTBREAK/PREPAREDNESS & PLANNING PHASE**

- Create a Pandemic Influenza-like plan.
- Work with local health officials and emergency preparedness officials. They may want to use the schools as a way to disseminate information to families.
- Continue routine interventions to prevent spread of illness in schools (i.e. classroom education; signage for hand washing).
- Nurses communicate with staff on Influenza-like symptom recognition.
- Remember that a person who is infected does not show symptoms right away. But children who are getting ill may show different behavior than usual, such as eating less or being irritable.
- Ensure that standard surveillance/disease recognition procedures are in place and implemented, such as daily and weekly attendance grids.
- Improve the hygiene of students and staff.
- Use simple non-medical ways to reduce the spread of Influenza-like illnesses by “cough and sneeze etiquette,” clean hands, and clean work areas.
- Determine improved/modified cleaning procedures (Facilities Director will be informed.)
- Determine whether the school should be cleaned differently or more often.
- Decide to what extent you will encourage or require children and staff to stay home when they are mildly ill. (Parent Communication to Occur)
- School nurses identify students who are most vulnerable to serious illness immune compromised, chronic illness, etc.
- School nurses will review the health needs of students.
- Some students and their families may have a greater risk of infections. Encourage those families to talk to their health care provider. Some parents may need to be more cautious in keeping their children out of school. REVIEW EXCLUSION CRITERIA with Public Health Department (i.e. illness free for 24 hours). See standing orders in nurses’ office; modify if needed.
- Through monthly newsletters, the website, and nurses’ hotline, educate staff, students and parents about the differences between seasonal flu, bird flu, and Pandemic Influenza-like illnesses.
- Through monthly newsletters, the website, and nurses’ hotline, educate staff, students and parents on the best hygienic practices to prevent any sort of Influenza-like illness.
- Through monthly newsletters, the web-site, and nurses’ hotline, educate staff, students and parents on what could occur in a pandemic.
- Develop specific plan for how to continue students’ education if schools are closed (i.e. web-based distance learning, mailed lessons).

**Outbreak of Influenza-like Disease****LESS THAN 10% OF STUDENTS**

- Begin Heightened Surveillance Reporting.
- Send out Parent Communication regarding Initial Outbreak.
- Inform parents that some students are sick but schools remain open.
- Include tip sheets and info resource list.
- Work with North Central District Health Department regarding a Press Release A announcing schools remain open but parents need to prepare.
- Post Influenza-like illness prevention signs throughout the schools.

**Expansion of the Outbreak****10% OR MORE OF STUDENTS ILL (but less than 30%)**

- Request the North Central District Health Department to issue ADA Support Letter to schools/Epidemic Declaration.
- Begin Intensive Surveillance Reporting (absentee grids).
- Send Parent Communication regarding Expanded Outbreak.
- Include prevention tip sheets.
- Resources for Emergency Information.
- Consider canceling any non-academic events.
- Coordinate with Facilities Director to initiate specialized cleaning procedures.

**Continued Expansion of the Outbreak****MORE THAN 30% OF THE STUDENTS ILL**

- North Central District Health Department issues declaration and school district issues press release closing school(s).
- Close school.
- Send Parent Communication regarding potential School Closure, announcing closure(s). School Closure is at the direction of the Public Health Agency.
- Cancel any non-academic events.
- Continue specialized cleaning procedures.

**Following the Outbreak**

- North Central District Health Department issues declaration and school district issues press release that schools can reopen.
- Send Parent Communication.
- Continue communicating with local health department.
- Return to heightened surveillance reporting.
- Ongoing specialized cleaning procedures.

If students get sick again, start checklist again at Outbreak section.



## **PANDEMIC INFLUENZA-LIKE ILLNESS SOCIAL DISTANCING POLICY**

### *Suspension of classes and other public gatherings*

Under the Suffield Public Schools Pandemic Response Plan, direction will come from the Superintendent's office to suspend classes and other public school events. Criteria for the decision to suspend classes includes one or more of the following:

- Confirmation of a high rate of infectivity, morbidity and/or mortality
- North Central District Health Department's recommendation to curtail/cancel public activities
- Falling class attendance (see School Response to Pandemic Flow Chart)
- Rising employee absenteeism

### **Continuity of Instruction**

Consider these issues in the event of a 4-8 week class suspension on instruction:

- Identify essential functions that must continue.
- Identify essential personnel (if available) to maintain these essential functions.
- Develop alternative plans, i.e., distance learning.
- Reschedule the instructional calendar after the period of contagion has passed.

### **Limitation of all other school business activity**

Under the Suffield Public Schools Pandemic Response Plan, direction will come from the Superintendent's office to limit business activity. Criteria for the decision to limit business activity includes one or more of the following:

- Suspension of classes and other public gatherings
- Confirmation of a high rate of infectivity, morbidity and/or mortality.
- Direction from the North Central District Health Department to curtail/cancel public activities.
- Falling class attendance (See School Response to Pandemic Flow Chart).
- Rising employee absenteeism.

### **Continuity of Business**

Consider these issues in the event of a 4-8 week limitation on business:

- Essential functions that must continue
- Essential personnel (if available) to maintain these essential functions
- Alternative work plans, i.e., telecommuting
- Recovery of full business operations

## **BUSINESS CONTINUITY PLAN**

This plan describes the critical functions and positions, designated personnel and response/recovery actions for Suffield Public Schools. Sections I to II require planning that is applicable to many types of emergency events or disaster scenarios. This document can be used as the business continuity plan for all hazards that could potentially impact Suffield Public Schools. This document will be combined with the Suffield Public Schools Emergency Management/Response Plan.

This plan should be reviewed every 3 years or when significant changes occur to business processes and functions whichever occurs first.

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### **I. Planning Structure:**

- 1) Organization Chain of Command
- 2) Business Continuity Workgroup

### **II. Phases of Pandemic Influenza-Like Illness and Recommendations for the School**

## I. PLANNING STRUCTURE

1. **The organizational chain of command consists of:**  
(List those leaders whose areas are included in this plan)

Name	Position	Work Location	Email	Office Phone	Home Phone	Cellular or Other	Text Capable?
Timothy Van Tassel	Superintendent	Central Office	<a href="mailto:tvantasel@suffield.org">tvantasel@suffield.org</a>	668-3394		559-4659	Yes
Laura Guerrette	Admin. Assistant to the Super.		<a href="mailto:lguerrette@suffield.org">lguerrette@suffield.org</a>				
Michelle Zawawi	Assistant Superintendent	Central Office	<a href="mailto:mzawawi@suffield.org">mzawawi@suffield.org</a>	668-3806		372-6479	Yes
Diana Kelley	Director of Special Services	Central Office	<a href="mailto:dkelley@suffield.org">dkelley@suffield.org</a>	668-3803		837-4762	Yes
Bill Hoff	Business Manager	Central Office	<a href="mailto:bhoff@suffield.org">bhoff@suffield.org</a>	668.3202		461-3202	Yes
Larry Plano	Director of Facilities	SHS	<a href="mailto:lpiano@suffield.org">lpiano@suffield.org</a>	668-3807		951-2273	Yes
Rebecca Osleger	Director of Technology	SMS	<a href="mailto:rosleger@suffield.org">rosleger@suffield.org</a>	668-3333		559-0112	Yes
Sue Mercik Davis	Chair of BOE		<a href="mailto:smercikdavis@suffieldstudent.org">smercikdavis@suffieldstudent.org</a>			559-3832	Yes

2. **The Business Continuity Workgroup is:**  
(List persons responsible for creating and maintaining this plan)

Name	Office Phone	Cellular or other
Melissa Mack, First Selectwoman	860-668-3838	
Patrice Sulik, Director North Central District Health Dept.	860-745-0383, ext. 117	
John Spencer, Chief of Services Suffield Volunteer Ambulance Assoc.	860-668-3881	860-212-4465
Chuck Flynn, Fire Chief	860-668-3888, ext. 3303	
Mike Thibedeau, Fire Marshall	860-668-3888, ext. 3304	
Richard Brown, Police Chief	860-668-3382	860-614-9111
James Canon, Police Captain	860-668-3870, ext. 3380	860-595-7199
Tom Kieselback, School Resource Officer	860-549-2350	860-209-6653

3. **Nurses' Hotline**

Name	Hotline
Marissa Auclair Lead Nurse	860-668-3225

## **II. PHASES OF PANDEMIC INFLUENZA-LIKE ILLNESSES AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SUFFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

Each of the following pandemic phases represents an increasing risk to the general population.

**INTER-PANDEMIC PHASE  
NEW VIRUS IN ANIMALS, NO  
HUMAN CASES**

**PHASE 1  
LOW RISK OF  
HUMAN CASES**

This phase is declared when there is a low risk of human cases. The following actions should be considered:

- Implement a sound health and hygiene program for all staff and students to follow.
- Develop specific pandemic response procedures and add to existing emergency plans.
- Conduct routine inventories of first aid and medical supplies.
- Verify that illnesses are properly monitored at each school site.
- Monitor trends, track percentage of student & staff illnesses at each school site.
- Increase pandemic awareness and strengthen training for school staff.

**INTER-PANDEMIC PHASE  
NEW VIRUS IN ANIMALS, NO  
HUMAN CASES**

**PHASE 2  
LOW RISK OF  
HUMAN CASES**

This phase is declared by the Superintendent of Schools when there is a higher risk of human cases. The following actions should be considered:

- Call Pandemic Response Team meeting to notify participants.
- Review and update school emergency plans; include pandemic response procedures.
- Review current communication plan to notify parents in times of emergency.
- Provide staff members and parents/guardians with any information that would strengthen a school's ability to respond to a pandemic.
- Promote the importance of reducing the spread of illness.
- Remind parents to keep sick children at home and remind staff members to stay home when they are sick.

**PANDEMIC ALERT  
NEW VIRUS CAUSING  
HUMAN CASES**

**PHASE 3  
NO OR VERY LIMITED HUMAN-  
TO-HUMAN TRANSMISSION**

This phase is declared when there is no, or very limited transmission among humans, but the virus continues to spread rapidly among animals. The following actions should be considered in addition to any specific plans that are developed and implemented:

- Initiate Pandemic Response Team meeting.
- Communicate the current phase level to all staff members and train them in pandemic response plans as they are developed.
- Communicate with North Central District Health Department, who will monitor government sources for warnings.
- Gather and disseminate pertinent information as it becomes available.
- Establish an internal planning team and develop specific pandemic response procedures.
- Identify who will make the decision to close schools (Superintendent) and at what point that decision will be made.
- Begin to consider the possibility of school closures and that staff members may not be able to report to work.
- Continue to verify proper health and hygiene procedures are being followed by staff and students.
- Review whether the precise characteristics of the pandemic threat require the refinement of any current emergency plans.
- Monitor daily illness trends & percentages

**PANDEMIC ALERT  
NEW VIRUS CAUSING  
HUMAN CASES**

**PHASE 4  
EVIDENCE OF INCREASED  
HUMAN-TO-HUMAN  
TRANSMISSION**

This phase is declared when there is evidence of an increased number of human-to-human transmissions. The following actions should be considered:

- Communicate the increase in phase level to all staff members.
- Monitor surveillance systems for the current characterization of the virus.
- Identify the need to implement any recommended social distancing measures.
- Encourage students and staff members who become ill after traveling to affected countries to see their health care provider.
- Report an increase in student and staff illness to the North Central District Health Department.
- Coordinate with the Superintendent's office daily.

**PANDEMIC ALERT  
NEW VIRUS CAUSING  
HUMAN CASES**

**PHASE 5  
EVIDENCE OF SIGNIFICANT  
HUMAN-TO-HUMAN  
TRANSMISSION**

This phase is declared when there is significant transmission among humans. The following actions should be considered in addition to any specific recommendations from local and state health officials:

- Mobilize Pandemic Response Team
- Communicate the increase in phase level to all staff members and parents. (See School Response to Pandemic Flow Chart.)
- Monitor surveillance systems for the current characterization of the virus.
- Identify the need to implement any additional social distancing measures.
- Evaluate your chain of command and identify key decision makers.
- Assess school events and take additional precautions, if necessary.
- Consider assigning mental health counselors for students and staff members, if needed.
- Discuss students' fears concerning a pandemic and offer available resources.

**PANDEMIC**

**PHASE 6**  
**EFFICIENT AND SUSTAINED**  
**HUMAN-TO-HUMAN**  
**TRANSMISSION**

This phase indicates the presence of a true pandemic. In conjunction with local and state health officials, determine the appropriate response with these considerations in mind:

- Communicate the increase in phase level to all staff members.
- Review the districts chain of command ensuring that a decision maker is available at all times.
- Gather and provide pertinent information to students, staff and parents. (See School Response to Pandemic Flow Chart.)
- Assess the pandemic condition on a regular basis and evaluate whether any further protective measures are needed.
- Evaluate recommendations from health officials for social distancing and quarantine and be prepared to respond accordingly.
- Consider canceling special events.
- Mobilize Crisis Teams to meet the mental health needs of students and staff members, if needed.

## **RESOURCES FOR EMERGENCY INFORMATION**

**NORTH CENTRAL DISTRICT HEALTH DEPARTMENT** (860.745.0383) for physicians and other medical and health personnel to report suspected disease outbreaks or bioterrorism and get answers to questions about communicable diseases.

<http://www.ncdhd.org/>

### **AMERICAN RED CROSS PREPAREDNESS INFORMATION,**

An emergency preparedness website with downloadable material to help prepare for natural and man-made disasters. Information for parents and educators to help children cope with fears and anxieties related to disasters.

[www.prepare.org](http://www.prepare.org)

### **CONNECTICUT STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION, 713-6500**

For information about school safety and emergency preparedness.

### **CENTER FOR DISEASE CONTROL**

[www.cdc.gov/flu/avian](http://www.cdc.gov/flu/avian)

### **SUFFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOLS WEBSITE**

Link to Pandemic Plan

<https://www.suffield.org/>

### **WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION**

[www.who.int/csr/disease/avian\\_influenza/en/](http://www.who.int/csr/disease/avian_influenza/en/)

### **FIRE MARSHAL/EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT DIRECTOR**

860-668-3888/860-668-3881

### **NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGISTS,**

[www.nasponline.org](http://www.nasponline.org)

### **NATIONAL CENTER FOR POST TRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDER**

1-802-296-6300

[www.ncptsd.va.gov/ncmain/index.jsp](http://www.ncptsd.va.gov/ncmain/index.jsp)

### **NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF MENTAL HEALTH INFORMATION CENTER**

1-866-615-6464

[www.nimh.nih.gov](http://www.nimh.nih.gov)



## **SURVEILLANCE AND REPORTING**

During all stages of a Pandemic Influenza-like outbreak, it will be essential to monitor and document the number of students and faculty who are absent and meet the definition of an Influenza-like illness. Keeping track of these numbers will help health officials determine when and whether to close schools, whether the epidemic is increasing in scope and whether to declare an epidemic, making schools eligible to apply for reimbursement of ADA funds during increased absenteeism.

**Schools are provided with the following information to monitor the illness rate and potential epidemic:**

- Basic surveillance instructions and definitions of surveillance levels.
- Case definition to assist in determining whether the ill student and/or faculty is suffering from an Influenza-like illness.
- Reporting form(s) to submit to the North Central District Health Department.
- Sample Attendance Log to identify Influenza-like related absences and document need to apply for an Average Daily Attendance Waiver

### **DEFINITION OF SURVEILLANCE LEVELS**

#### **Standard Surveillance**

**No Influenza-like activity reported in the community (flu season)**

- Monitor daily attendance for increased reports of absence due to Influenza-like illness.
- Do not report absences to the Health Department unless greater than 10%.

#### **Heightened Surveillance**

**Influenza-like activity reported in the community (less than 10% school absenteeism due to Influenza-like illness)**

- Monitor daily attendance for Influenza-like illness/absences.
- Begin morning “Influenza-like check” first hour of school – screen those who report positive for symptoms.
- Log absences due to Influenza-like illness.
- Send weekly absence report (via fax) to the Health Department.

#### **Intensive Surveillance**

**High number of Influenza-like illness reported in the community (10% or greater school absenteeism due to Influenza-like illness)**

- Monitor daily attendance and log absences on log sheet.
- Continue morning “Influenza-like check”.
- Send daily absence report to the Health Department.
- Begin preparation for potential school closure.