

SCHOOL ACTION STEPS FOR PANDEMIC FLU

The following is a chronological list of important step-by-step actions schools should take before, during and after a pandemic flu outbreak. Pandemic flu can have several cycles or waves so this list may need to be repeated. Actions will be based on the severity of the pandemic (See the CDC Pandemic Severity Index)

PRIOR TO OUTBREAK/PREPAREDNESS & PLANNING PHASE

- Create a pandemic flu plan (Use the CDC School Pandemic Flu Planning Checklist and Flow Chart in this section of the binder)
- Work with local health officials and emergency preparedness officials. They may need to use the schools as a way to disseminate information to families. You can begin with Parent Letter #1 in the Parent section of this binder.
- Decide the roles and responsibilities of school staff (including all ancillary staff) to prevent the spread of flu.
- Train nurses and staff in flu-symptom recognition. (See surveillance section of this binder). 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.
- Insure that standard surveillance/disease recognition procedures are in place and implemented. (See surveillance section of this binder)
- Improve the hygiene of students and staff. Use simple non-medical ways to reduce the spread of flu by “cough and sneeze etiquette,” clean hands, and clean work areas. (See public information section of this binder for posters)
- 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.
- Identify students who are most vulnerable to serious illness (immune compromised, chronic illness, etc.)
- Review the health needs of students. Some students 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.
- Develop alternative learning strategies such as collaborative agreements with Contra Costa Television or other local cable stations, teleconferencing, lessons on CDs.
- Educate staff, students and parents about: the differences between seasonal flu, bird flu and pandemic flu; best hygienic practices to prevent any sort of flu; what could occur in a pandemic. (Use the information in the public information section of this binder)

Outbreak of Flu Disease

LESS THAN 10% STUDENTS (Category 1 pandemic)*

*Actions will be based on severity of pandemic. See CDC Pandemic Severity Index.

- County Health Officer issues notification to begin Surveillance Reporting
- Begin Heightened Surveillance Reporting
- Send out Parent Letter #3 Initial Outbreak, informing parents that some students are sick but classes remain in session, include tip sheets and info resource list*
- Work with Contra Costa Health Services regarding a Press Release A announcing classes remain in session but parents need to prepare for possible student dismissal /Use key messages A*
- Post flu prevention signs on campus

Expansion of the Outbreak (Category 1 or 2 pandemic)*

*Actions will be based on severity of pandemic. See CDC Pandemic Severity Index.

- Consider student dismissal
- Local Health Officer issues ADA Support Letter to schools/Epidemic Declaration
- Begin Intensive Surveillance Reporting
- Send Parent Letter #4 Expanded Outbreak, include prevention tip sheets, etc.

Continued Expansion of the Outbreak (Category 2-5 pandemic)*

*Actions will be based on severity of pandemic. See CDC Pandemic Severity Index.

- Local Health Officer issues Declaration and press release dismissing students (Decision to dismiss students will be based on severity of pandemic. In a Category 1 (low severity) pandemic, students may be dismissed if more than 30% of students absent)
- Dismiss students
- Send out Parent Letter #5 Student Dismissal, announcing dismissal(s)
- Cancel any non-academic events

Following the Outbreak

- Contra Costa Health Services issues declaration and press release that students and staff can return to school
- Issue Parent Letter #6
- Continue communicating with local health department
- Return to heightened surveillance reporting

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