

Pandemic Flu Checklist for Local Educational Agencies in California

Pandemic flu starts when a new flu virus develops and begins to spread around the world. Right now, there is no pandemic flu. But experts believe the current virus that is now seen in birds (avian flu) could change into a virus that can be transferred from person to person. That may lead to a pandemic. There are steps that individuals, families, and communities (including schools) can and should take to prepare.

Schools must help protect the health and safety of staff and students. Experts believe that up to 30 percent of the population may be sick at the same time. When pandemic flu occurs, there will likely be NO VACCINE for the first six months of the pandemic, and anti-viral medication will be in very limited supply. To control the spread of illness, social distancing, such as closing schools and having people stay at home, will be the primary approach to preventing the spread of the flu virus. Schools may have to be closed for a few weeks to a month or more if there is an outbreak of flu in the area.

We hope that the following checklist will help schools and before- and after-school programs plan for a possible flu pandemic. Please note that a separate checklist for child care agencies and preschools is available at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ls/he/hn/fluinfo.asp>. Not everything on this list will apply to every school and before- and after-school program. This list will serve as a guide to schools and before- and after-school programs as they develop their own plans. It is important for all schools and before- and after-school programs to communicate with and know the roles and policies of local agencies, such as the local health department and local office of emergency services. Both of these agencies will have important roles if there is a pandemic.

1. Mitigation and Prevention:

Completed	In Progress	Not Started	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>1.1 Identify or create a countywide, districtwide, or regional committee to provide guidance regarding pandemic flu preparations to district school sites, including charter schools and private schools. The committee should include (if available):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • District administrators from instructional departments • District administrators from operations departments, such as custodial supervisor, human resources director, information officer, information technology/computer specialist, legal adviser, risk manager, and transportation director • Site administrators • School nurse/health services administrator • Adult education director • Food services director

Completed	In Progress	Not Started	
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Charter school representative • Private school representative • Before- and after-school program providers • Local health department representative¹ • Mental health professional • Teachers • Parents
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	1.2 Review communicable disease policies as well as district and school emergency/crisis response and safe school plans.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	1.3 Determine if any additional policies or procedures are needed. ²
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	1.4 Develop procedures for communicating with the local health department and the media during normal and emergency conditions.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	1.5 Prepare for the possibility of schools functioning with up to 30 percent of all school staff absent. ³
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	1.6 Assess the financial impact of alternate scheduling, school closures, and before- and after- school programs closures.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	1.7 Assess the requirements of medically fragile students and students with special needs and incorporate the requirements into the emergency/pandemic response plan.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	1.8 Develop communication and dissemination plans for staff, students, and families, including information about schedule changes, busing changes, and possible school closures. ⁴

¹ This person should be the health officer or local health department designee who is the authority responsible for declaring a public health emergency and who will activate the district's pandemic influenza response plan in the event of a pandemic. (Find a list of local health officers at <http://www.dhs.ca.gov/cclho/default.htm>.)

² For example, policies regarding staff and student absences (non-punitive), sick leave, infirmaries for temporary placement of ill students, and transporting ill students.

³ High rates of absenteeism may be clustered by neighborhood or may occur district- or countywide. Look at alternatives, such as staggered school times, changes in busing, and telecommunications, and develop a substitute pool list for *all* levels and types of staff.

⁴ Possible avenues of communication may include automated phone messages, e-mail, Web sites, text-messaging, local media outlets, and cable television.

Completed	In Progress	Not Started	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	1.9 Develop information about alternative instructional delivery systems and communicate that information to staff, students, and families to ensure that students continue to receive instruction and academic credit in the event of school closures. ⁵
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	1.10 Identify school-based individual(s) to work with the local health department pandemic planning committee on the possible need for school sites to help meet temporarily the health-related needs of the community. ⁶
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	1.11 Identify strategies to provide meals for those children who rely on school meals as their primary source of daily nutrition.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	1.12 Identify school-based individual(s) to educate all staff, including before- and after-school program staff, about pandemic flu and the school plan.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	1.13 Identify school-based individual(s) to educate students, staff (including before- and after-school program staff), and parents about washing hands, following hygiene/cough etiquette, obtaining seasonal influenza vaccine, and staying home when sick.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	1.14 Identify individual(s) to ensure (1) each room has adequate supplies of soap/water/paper towels or waterless hand sanitizer for hand washing and receptacles for disposal; and (2) basic hygiene supplies are replaced daily and trash is disposed of daily.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	1.15 Distribute and display “Stop the Spread of Germs” posters in each classroom. Posters are downloadable at http://www.cdc.gov/flu/protect/covercough.htm and http://www.cdc.gov/germstopper/materials.htm .
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	1.16 Identify individual(s) to educate families about pandemic flu and the school plan. Family resources are available online at http://pandemicflu.gov/plan/tab3.html and http://pandemicflu.gov/planguide/checklist.html .

⁵ Develop procedures to ensure continuity of instruction (e.g., Web-based distance instruction, e-mailed lessons and assignments, automated phone messages, print media, cable television).

⁶ For example, school may be designated as a contingency hospital, vaccination center, casualty collection site/temporary morgue, site for feeding vulnerable populations (keeping in mind that not all schools have kitchens). Community may also need to utilize the LEA’s healthcare and mental health staff, etc.

Completed	In Progress	Not Started	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	1.17 Anticipate the potential fear and anxiety of staff, students, and families due to rumors and misinformation and plan communications accordingly. Consider developing key messages for various scenarios.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	1.18 Identify school-based individual(s) to implement a tabletop exercise/drill to practice the emergency/pandemic response plan.

2. Preparedness:

Completed	In Progress	Not Started	
			In addition to the steps listed above:
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	2.1 Continue educating staff, families, and students on pandemic flu prevention and school plans.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	2.2 Identify the district and school site staff chain of command in case of illness. Establish a backup chain of command if necessary.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	2.3 Develop a continuity of operations system for essential central office functions, including payroll, custodial service, waste management, food service, transportation, and facility maintenance (including daily cleaning of student and staff restrooms, kitchen and dining areas, and classrooms).
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	2.4 Review procedures for communicating with staff, students, and families.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	2.5 Identify the languages spoken by the student population, including the communicatively disabled (such as students who are blind or deaf), and the information to be translated into those languages.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	2.6 Identify and recruit translators; translate information into template form so only minor changes will need to be made later. Recruit and train a pool of interpreters who can help deliver public announcements to students and families when a pandemic occurs.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	2.7 Review policies and procedures for identifying ill students and staff, isolating them as necessary, and sending them home.

Completed	In Progress	Not Started	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	2.8 Use prevention strategies ⁷ now for reducing the spread of germs this flu season; look at results to gauge how these efforts are working and what more will need to be done in the event of a pandemic.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	2.9 Preplan for recovery: Identify and prescreen health and grief service providers, develop template letters, and provide training for school staff regarding grief and possible health problems.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	2.10 Identify or develop educational materials for families and staff on topics such as how to support their student with recovery from pandemic flu, common symptoms of loss and grief, and constructive ways to cope with stress.

3. Response:

Completed	In Progress	Not Started	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	3.1 Track the number of staff and students absent daily.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	3.2 Report to the district office and to the local health department the number of students absent if it is over ten percent of the student population or as requested.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	3.3 Finalize the information that needs to be communicated to staff, students, and families.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	3.4 Have translators review information templates and finalize the written and oral information that will be provided to non-English-speaking families.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	3.5 Hold staff meeting(s) to provide information on the extent of infection at the school site and potential changes that may take place.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	3.6 Conduct timely debriefings with the districtwide and/or community pandemic committee to identify lessons learned and make necessary changes to the response plan.

4. Recovery:

Completed	In Progress	Not Started	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	4.1 Mobilize the district crisis recovery team that provides emotional-psychological support. If there is a loss of life

⁷ Teach and practice hand washing and hygiene/cough etiquette. Although annual flu vaccine does not protect against pandemic flu, health officials recommend encouraging students, staff, and families to obtain seasonal influenza vaccine and to stay home when sick.

Completed	In Progress	Not Started	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	in the school community, establish the location of a “safe room” for counseling services to be provided.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	4.2 Hold staff meetings and provide information on the extent of pandemic flu in the community.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	4.3 Provide staff with information on activities that may assist students and inform staff of the signs and symptoms of emotional distress to watch for.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	4.4 Announce counseling support services available to faculty and staff. Utilize employee assistance programs for assistance in coping with loss and stress.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	4.5 Announce counseling support services that are available to students and families.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	4.6 Provide rest places for those staff and students who tire easily.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	4.7 Make educational materials available to families and staff on topics such as how to support their student with recovery from pandemic flu, common symptoms of loss and grief, and constructive ways to cope with stress.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	4.8 Identify students, families, and staff who may need long-term physical and mental health support or intervention and develop school and community resources to provide these services.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	4.9 Assign staff to monitor the effects of cumulative stress on caregivers, such as office staff, school nurses, teachers, aides, school counselors, and other crisis team members.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	4.10 Consider offering school-based health and mental health services, if available, by community, university, or public/nonprofit mental health agencies and identify funding to support these services.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	4.11 Modify work roles and responsibilities or add volunteer or support staff as needed.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	4.12 Follow up with student referrals made to community agencies.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	4.13 Conduct debriefings with the crisis recovery team.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	4.14 Document “lessons learned” and incorporate them into revisions and training.

References:

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, “Child Care and Preschool Pandemic Influenza Planning Checklist.” <http://www.pandemicflu.gov/plan/preschool.html>

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, “School District (K-12) Pandemic Influenza Planning Checklist.” <http://www.pandemicflu.gov/plan/schoolchecklist.html>

Tacoma/Pierce County Health Department, “Pandemic Flu Model Plan—Planning Tool for Schools.” <http://www.tpchd.org/files/library/a4eaa3b511a9687a.pdf>

U.S. Department of State, “Pandemic Response Matrix.” <http://www.state.gov/m/a/os/c17204.htm>