
Date of Issue	March 2020
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Subject	PANDEMIC PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE PLAN
References	Policy 4245 – Emergency Response Procedures Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act R.S.O. 1990, c. E. 9 Employment Standards Act, 2000, S.O. 2000, c. 41 Government of Canada Health Promotion and Protection Act R.S.O. 1990 c. H. 7 (HPPA) Occupational Health and Safety Act R.S.O. 1990 c. O.1 Ontario Ministry of Health Personal Health Information Protection Act, 2004, S.O. 2004, c.3 Sched. A Public Health Agency of Canada, Centre for Emergency Preparedness and Response Quarantine Act R.S.C. 1985, c. 20 Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit (SMDHU) SMDHU Infectious Diseases Emergency Response Plan World Health Organization (WHO)
Contact	School Services, Facility Services

1. Introduction

A pandemic is any infectious disease that spreads rapidly. A pandemic is essentially an outbreak occurring over a large geographical area, often worldwide, affecting an exceptionally large proportion of the population.

These outbreaks are likely to be an influenza pandemic flu, a highly infectious viral respiratory illness that occurs when a new strain of the flu virus appears and spreads quickly. Due to the rapid onset of influenza pandemic, humans will have little or no immunity to this new virus.

Experts cannot predict when the next pandemic might occur. Historically, pandemics have occurred three to four times every 100 years. Experts say that it's possible that 40 to 60 percent of staff will be absent from work at some point during a pandemic. A pandemic outbreak may lead to significant absenteeism and contribute to the disruption of services provided by the Simcoe County District School Board (SCDSB). Contingency planning is essential for an effective response.

2. Purpose and Guiding Principle

The purpose of pandemic planning is to provide direction and guidance in the event of a pandemic emergency. The SCDSB's Pandemic Preparedness and Response Plan, and the strategies set out within, have been developed to support one central goal: safeguarding the health and welfare of students, staff and members of the community.

Decisions and activities undertaken throughout a pandemic phase will be based on this plan's stated guiding principle and will, to the most reasonable extent possible, be made in a consultative manner with related employee associations.

3. Definitions

- 3.1 Critical Incident: During a pandemic, only the death of a student or staff member will be referred to as a “Critical Incident”. Other distressing or stressful situations shall be deemed a crisis but will not fall within this mandate.
- 3.2 Influenza: A highly contagious, febrile, acute respiratory infection of the nose, throat, bronchial tubes, and lungs, caused by the influenza virus. It is responsible for severe and potentially fatal clinical illness of epidemic and pandemic proportions.
- 3.3 Pandemic: An outbreak occurring over a large geographical area, often worldwide, affecting an exceptionally large proportion of the population.
- 3.4 Medical Officer of Health (MOH): The MOH is authorized under Section 22 of the *Health Promotion and Protection Act* (HPPA) to issue an order under prescribed conditions to control communicable diseases (see section 4.2).
- 3.5 Pandemic Emergency Management Committee (PEMC): During a pandemic, the PEMC will manage matters related to a pandemic emergency. The PEMC members will include: the Director of Education, the Senior Administrative Team, the Manager of Communications, and additional staff as required.
- 3.6 Virulent Disease: A virulent disease is one that is highly infectious and spreading. Examples of virulent disease include the bird flu, swine flu, Ebola and Coronavirus (i.e. SARS).
- 3.7 World Health Organization (WHO): A global network of laboratories and surveillance systems tasked with keeping a watchful eye for new influenza and virulent disease strains. When a suspected pandemic strain emerges, international surveillance will provide Canada with an early warning so that vaccine production and inoculation may commence.

4. Relevant Legislation

Actions taken during an emergency response must be guided by the legislative framework that gives authority to the municipality and public health unit.

The following statutes provide legal authority to respond to a pandemic at the provincial and local level:

- 4.1 *Employment Standards Act, 2000 and Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act: The Employment Standards Act, 2000* state that an employee is entitled to a leave of absence without pay if the employee will not be performing duties of their position because of an emergency declared under section 7.0.1 of the *Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act* and,
 - 4.1.1 because of an order that applies to them made under section 7.0.2 of the *Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act*;
 - 4.1.2 because of an order that applies to them made under the HPPA;
 - 4.1.3 because they are needed to provide care to an individual referred to in subsection (8) (see below); or,

4.1.4 because of such other reasons as may be prescribed in the *Employment Standards Act*, 2006, c. 13, s. 3.

Subsection (8) clause (1) (c) of the *Employee Standards Act* applies with respect to the following individuals:

- 4.1.5 the employee's spouse;
- 4.1.6 parent, step-parent or foster parent of the employee or employee's spouse;
- 4.1.7 a child, step-child or foster child of the employee or employee's spouse;
- 4.1.8 a grandparent, step-grandparent, grandchild, step-grandchild of the employee or of the employee's spouse;
- 4.1.9 the spouse of a child of the employee;
- 4.1.10 the employee's sibling; and,
- 4.1.11 a relative of the employee who is dependent on the employee for care or assistance. 2006, c. 13, s. 3 (3).

4.2 *Health Promotion and Protection Act* (HPPA): In Ontario, the *Health Protection and Promotion Act* requires Boards of Health to provide or ensure provision of a minimum level of public health programs and services in specified areas such as the control of infectious and reportable diseases, health promotion, health protection and disease prevention.

Regulations published under the authority of the HPPA assist in controlling the spread of communicable and reportable diseases. These regulations establish the parameters within which those who are required to report communicable and reportable diseases to the MOH must operate. It also specifies the information that must be reported.

A MOH is authorized under Section 22 of the HPPA to issue an order under prescribed conditions to control communicable diseases. The content of these orders could include an order requiring an individual to isolate oneself at home, to place oneself under the care and treatment of a physician (if the disease is a virulent disease, as defined in the HPPA), to submit to an examination by a physician, or to be placed in isolation in a hospital or other facility.

4.3 *Personal Health Information Protection Act* (PHIPA): PHIPA regulates the collection, use and disclosure of personal health information by health information custodians (a defined term in the Act), and includes physicians, hospitals, long-term care facilities, Medical Officers of Health and the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care. The Act also establishes rules for individuals and organizations receiving personal information from health information custodians.

Consent is generally required to collect, use and disclose personal health information; however, the Act specifies certain circumstances when it is not required. For example, the Act permits disclosure of personal health information to the Chief Medical Officer of Health or MOH without the consent of the individual to whom the information relates, where the disclosure is for a purpose of the HPPA.

- 4.4 *Quarantine Act*. The purpose of the federal *Quarantine Act* is to prevent the introduction and spread of communicable diseases in Canada. It includes a number of measures to prevent the spread of dangerous, infectious and contagious diseases including the authority to screen, examine and detain arriving and departing individuals, as well as goods and cargo, which may be a public health risk.
- 4.5 *Occupational Health and Safety Act*. The *Occupational Health and Safety Act* is enforced by the Ministry of Labour. The Act imposes a general duty on employers to take all reasonable precautions to protect the health and safety of workers.

5. **World Health Organization (WHO) Pandemic Phases**

The WHO pandemic phases (APPENDIX D) is a global framework to aid countries in pandemic preparedness and response planning.

Phases 1-3 correlate with preparedness, including capacity development and response planning activities. Phases 4-6 signal the need for response and mitigation efforts. Post pandemic recovery activities follow the first pandemic wave and should include review and debriefing of the effectiveness of the response plan.

6. **General School Operations**

- 6.1 The board has a statutory responsibility to maintain school operations and keep the Education Centre and all schools open. However, the Provincial Government of Ontario, and its agencies, may determine that schools be closed during a pandemic.
- 6.2 During a pandemic emergency, the PEMC, in consultation with the principal, will decide whether or not there are enough staff members present in the school to ensure the safety and welfare of students. The individual situation of students requiring accommodations or specialized support under the *Ontario Human Rights Code* (OHRC) will be treated on a case-by-case basis.
- 6.3 If the Director of Education has reason to believe that keeping a school open might endanger students, staff or the public, then that school may be closed.
- 6.4 If the Director of Education decides to close a school or workplace, the students involved will not be permitted to enter, or to remain in the school. The principal, vice-principals, teachers and any working support staff, may be reassigned.
- 6.5 Unless the school is closed, the decision to attend during a pandemic emergency is left to the parents/guardians/adult students.
- 6.6 Closed schools will be re-opened in consultation with local health authorities. Schools will also be stringently disinfected after any period of closure.
- 6.7 The board may be required to turn over their schools for various health purposes (care and treatment) during a pandemic. If this situation occurs, the Director of Education may be required to order a school's temporary closure or consolidation with another school.

- 6.8 Principals will make every effort to ensure accurate student attendance record keeping during a pandemic.
- 6.9 Depending on the number of staff available, the school program will be offered in as normal a manner as possible. This will vary from school to school and will be subject to daily review by the principal and the appropriate superintendent.
- 6.10 Study and library resource areas will be open to students attending school provided adequate supervision is available.
- 6.11 Principals or managers should consult with their superintendent to address any challenging or unexpected situations as they arise.
- 6.12 Established and approved school volunteers will be welcomed as part of normal school operations throughout a pandemic.

7. Pandemic Emergency Management Committee (PEMC)

- 7.1 During a pandemic, a PEMC, consisting of the following supervisory officers and board staff, will manage matters related to the pandemic emergency:
 - 7.1.1 Director of Education;
 - 7.1.2 Associate Director and members of the senior administrative team;
 - 7.1.3 Manager of Communications;
 - 7.1.4 Executive Assistant to the Director; and,
 - 7.1.5 other staff, as required.
- 7.2 The primary functions of the PEMC include:
 - 7.2.1 to direct the overall operation of the system on a daily basis;
 - 7.2.2 to review information items and news releases prepared by the PEMC, and to authorize media releases;
 - 7.2.3 to provide direction and act as an emergency resource to principals, managers and other board personnel;
 - 7.2.4 to provide the Board of Trustees with appropriate background data and any other information or assistance which may be required;
 - 7.2.5 to recommend to the Director of Education the closing of any school(s) due to excessive absenteeism; and,
 - 7.2.6 to the most reasonable extent possible, consult with employee associations.

8. Operational Strategies

- 8.1 **Each day**, the Director of Education's office shall receive updated (PowerSchool and EasyConnect) absenteeism reports about all schools and departments.
- 8.2 **Each day**, the PEMC will review the data. The committee will assess the situation and draft any required news releases. Members of the committee should be available at all times to respond to an emergency situation.
- 8.3 The PEMC will make recommendations to the Director of Education regarding school and system operations, closures and reallocation of staff, as needed.

- 8.4 **Each day**, the PEMC will meet to respond to ongoing pandemic events and revise action plans as needed.
- 8.5 All requests by the media will be referred to and received by the Director of Education. Schools will be closed to all media.
- 8.6 All communication regarding the pandemic will be through the Director of Education or designate.
- 8.7 The Executive Assistant to the Director of Education shall be designated the recorder for the PEMC meetings.
- 8.8 All managers or designates must consult with their superintendent before making any decisions or taking any significant action. This will ensure appropriate consultation and that issues will be addressed in a consistent manner throughout the system.

9. Program Considerations

- 9.1 **Adult and Alternative Education:** All credit and non-credit programs under Adult and Alternative Education will continue to operate during a pandemic, where possible.
- 9.2 **Child Care Centres, Full Day, or Before and After Care:** Childcare programs may continue to operate during a pandemic. The board's ability to provide custodial services may be impacted during a pandemic. The superintendents responsible for Facility Services and the Early Learning portfolios, will keep the PEMC informed of situations that may impact childcare and before and after care program delivery.
- 9.3 **Co-instructional Activities:** Co-instructional activities may continue during a pandemic, provided coaches and activity coordinators are available in adequate numbers to provide appropriate supervision.
- 9.4 **Co-operative Education:** Students in co-operative education placements will continue to report to the placement location during a pandemic. However, where the placement of a student is with a staff member on sick leave, an alternative placement or in-school component should be arranged by the principal.
- 9.5 **Critical Incidence Response during a Pandemic:** During a pandemic, only the death of a student or staff member will be referred to as a critical incident. Upon learning details of a critical incident, the principal of the affected school will contact the superintendent of education for consultation and support.
- 9.6 **Field Trips:** During a pandemic, field trips outside of the province or country will be reviewed individually, on a case by case basis, by the office of the area superintendent and Corporate Risk. Local day or in-province overnight field trips will be permitted to continue provided:
 - 9.6.1 they do not put students and/or staff at an increased risk of infection;
 - 9.6.2 there is adequate staff available for adequate supervision; and,
 - 9.6.3 the principal has been consulted and approves with proceeding with the local day field trip.

- 9.7 **Home Instruction:** Home instruction will continue as scheduled during a pandemic, provided teaching staff are still available in adequate numbers to support individual programs.
- 9.8 **Information Technology Services:** During a pandemic emergency, resources and equipment may not be available from Information Technology Services. Support Desk inquiries may be affected depending on availability of staff.
- 9.9 **Out-of-Classroom Activities:** Any activities which take students and teachers from regular classroom instruction may continue during a pandemic, provided the required supervision is available. The principal will decide if an out-of-classroom activity should be rescheduled due to general staff and student absentee rates and safety concerns.
- 9.10 **Professional Development Activities:** Professional development activities for staff may be suspended during a pandemic if availability of occasional staff is impacted.
- 9.11 **Safe Arrival Program:** Safe arrival programs may be modified during a pandemic. Staff shortages may require the utilization of automated systems. Communication with parents/guardians may focus on requesting that parents/guardians notify the school in the event that their child will be late or absent.
- 9.12 **Student Assignments and Homework:** Every attempt will be made to provide assignments to students whose parents/guardians voluntarily withdraw their child from school during a pandemic, or those students required to self-isolate at home. These assignments will be included as part of program assessment and evaluation.

10. Program Support for Students with Specialized Needs

- 10.1 For some students with specialized needs (e.g. physical, medical, behavioural and safety), a plan to support safe attendance will be required. The decision that a student will not be able to attend during a pandemic emergency, based on the individual student needs, will be made by the principal, in consultation with the superintendent of education or designate, and with the parent(s)/guardian(s).
- 10.2 Guidelines to support attendance:
- 10.2.1 safety is paramount;
 - 10.2.2 some programming, such as physical therapy, may not continue if it is not deemed essential to maintaining the student's safety;
 - 10.2.3 the decision to support attendance will be based on individual student needs; and,
 - 10.2.4 communication will be with individual parents/guardians and not by general notice or instructions to a group of parents/guardians.
- 10.3 Alternative supports may be available from one or more of the following sources:
- 10.3.1 parents/guardians (especially for feeding and toileting);
 - 10.3.2 other responsible family members;
 - 10.3.3 volunteers already in place;
 - 10.3.4 staff who have provided the support from time to time as part of their regular duties;
 - 10.3.5 staff volunteers;

- 10.3.6 regrouping students; or,
- 10.3.7 re-organizing classrooms, programs and/or teaching assignments.

10.4 Guidelines to support students who are not able to attend school:

- 10.4.1 The safety and welfare of students with significant physical, medical or other safety needs, may not be able to be maintained.
- 10.4.2 The decision that a student will not be able to attend during a pandemic emergency will be based on individual student needs in keeping with the provisions of the (OHRC). Should the principal be faced with this decision, the principal will notify the superintendent of education.
- 10.4.3 Communication will be with individual parents/guardians and not by general notice or instructions to a group of parents/guardians.
- 10.4.4 Teaching staff will provide, in consultation with the parents/guardians, a list of appropriate learning activities that these students may complete at home.
- 10.4.5 Whenever possible, teaching staff should also provide the appropriate resources and materials to support the suggested learning activities.

11. Staff/Student Absence Reporting and Workplace Safety Concerns

- 11.1 Student Absence: Daily monitoring of student absenteeism should continue throughout the pandemic phase.
- 11.2 Staff Absence: The SCDSB staff absence reporting system, EasyConnect, will operate during a pandemic emergency for all staff including occasional teachers. All staff will continue to report their absence through the EasyConnect system.
- 11.3 Staff Safety Concerns: Where staff have raised safety concerns regarding assigned tasks, the principal will seek to resolve these concerns with the support of the PEMC through the appropriate superintendent, and the related employee associations where possible, and will be reflective of an staff member's duty of care.
- 11.4 Work Site Change: Staff may be redirected to an alternative work site if their normal school or work site has been disrupted.

12. Communication Plan

In the event of a pandemic, the Public Health Agency of Canada and the Federal Government will coordinate interprovincial communications. The flow of information in Simcoe County will be initiated by the Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit (SMDHU) to the SCDSB. Information received by the Director of Education will be shared with the PEMC. This group will direct the flow of information throughout the SCDSB and back to the SMDHU as required (APPENDIX B).

- 12.1 The objective of the Communication Plan is to coordinate widespread awareness and understanding amongst the board's internal and external stakeholders, of:
 - 12.1.1 the SCDSB's pandemic preparedness; and,
 - 12.1.2 public health information to assist students, staff, parents/guardians and communities in making the best possible decisions about their well-being throughout a pandemic.

- 12.2 Key Messages
 - 12.2.1 The SCDSB has a plan in place in the event a pandemic. APM A1222 – Pandemic Preparedness and Response Plan is available on our board website to staff, parents/guardians, students and the community to access information.
 - 12.2.2 During a pandemic, we will follow the advice and guidance of provincial and local public health officials, who have the expertise to assess the level of health risk posed by a specific situation.
 - 12.2.3 Our priority during a pandemic is to keep schools open as long as it is safe to do so. Non-essential services may be halted to focus on providing the most necessary services to our community.
- 12.3 The board spokesperson to the media, during a pandemic emergency, will be the Chairperson of the Board, the Director of Education, or designate.
- 12.4 Official media releases to the public will be made by the Director's office following consultation with the PEMC.
- 12.5 Communication mediums will include a number of varying avenues, utilizing both electronic, written and verbal communications, and will be developed to provide ongoing communication with identified audiences.
 - 12.5.1 Students, Families and School Community
 - 12.5.1.1 Throughout a pandemic, the board website (www.scdsb.on.ca) will be the main portal for our public communication efforts to provide up-to-date pandemic information to both external and internal audiences.
 - 12.5.1.2 Parents/guardians, students and community partners will receive direct communication via letters through SchoolConnects, pre-packaged school newsletter articles, signage within the school and scripted public address messages.
 - 12.5.1.3 Should the situation warrant, an information hotline will be enabled in order to provide up-to-date information regarding any disruption to normal school practices or operations.
 - 12.5.2 Staff
 - 12.5.2.1 Primary internal audiences will be informed through direct communication. This will be supported by discussion at regular administrator and staff meetings.
 - 12.5.2.2 Principals, vice-principals and managers will be provided with speaking notes to lead coordinated discussions across the board.
 - 12.5.2.3 Messages will be reinforced through reminders on the SCDSB website and through direct communication with established groups such as school councils and the parent involvement committee.
- 12.6 The effectiveness of the identified messages and strategies will be reviewed and evaluated periodically to ensure their consistency, value, and effectiveness throughout the active pandemic phase.

13. Responsibilities of School Staff during a Pandemic

The following special responsibilities for school staff will be in effect during a pandemic:

13.1 Principals and Managers

The objective of principals and managers during a pandemic emergency will be maintaining the safety and well-being of students and staff and to provide and support academic programming within the limitations of available staff and resources.

Principals and managers will:

- 13.1.1 instruct staff who are at work regarding their responsibilities during a pandemic;
- 13.1.2 ensure the security of the property;
- 13.1.3 ensure that student and staff absenteeism is reported in accordance with attendance procedures as specifically directed; and,
- 13.1.4 monitor and report staff safety concerns.

13.2 Staff

Staff who are on duty at the school are expected to fulfil the assignments established by the principal within the scope of their duties. These will be governed by consideration of safety. Emergencies may require the assistance of all staff.

14. Security of Board Property

The Superintendent of Facilities Services, in consultation with the PEMC, will develop a Staffing and Operational Plan, to maintain all board buildings during a pandemic, including the Education Centre.

15. Community Use of Schools

- 15.1 While there is a desire to maintain community use of school programs, due diligence will be exercised to protect the health, welfare and safety of staff and members of the public using facilities.
- 15.2 Community activities which occur after normal school hours may be cancelled during a pandemic emergency and will be resumed subject to the approval of the PEMC on a case-by-case basis.
- 15.3 The Permit department will advise all community school users and permit holders if community use is cancelled.

16. Occasional/Supply Teachers

EasyConnect will operate during a pandemic emergency for all staff, including occasional teachers. All staff will report absences through EasyConnect.

17. School Cafeterias

- 17.1 Where food services are provided on contract, the company providing the service is expected to continue doing so during a pandemic. Due to staff absenteeism, the cafeteria operation may be limited in its ability to operate and may be required to close.

- 17.2 The Superintendent of Business Services, or designate, will establish a daily contact process with the cafeterias to inform the PEMC of the status of cafeteria operations.

18. Supply and Delivery of Purchases

- 18.1 Subject to the approval of the principal, schools will continue to accept deliveries in the normal manner.
- 18.2 If it is not possible for shipments to be accepted at a school, the Superintendent of Business Services will direct the Purchasing department to redirect such shipments to other locations, if possible.

19. Bus Transportation for Students

- 19.1 Normal morning and afternoon bus schedules for transporting students from their homes to school and return, will be maintained unless otherwise directed by the superintendent responsible for the transportation portfolio and the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the Simcoe County Student Transportation Consortium (SCSTC).
- 19.2 Transportation will be monitored on a day-to-day basis and some routes may be postponed, rescheduled or consolidated.

20. Operations at the Education Centre

- 20.1 Normal hours of business will be maintained, where possible.
- 20.2 Meeting rooms will be available as usual, unless they are required by the PEMC.

21. Tasks Following a Pandemic

- 21.1 The Director of Education and the PEMC will develop a plan to facilitate the re-entry of students and staff into the system, taking into account the emotional and psychological impact of a pandemic.
- 21.2 The Director of Education, the PEMC, and principals and managers will consult to develop strategies to minimize any detrimental effects of the pandemic emergency on students and schools, and to resume normal activities within the SCDSB.

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Issued under the authority of the Director of Education

PANDEMIC RESPONSE HANDBOOK

MARCH 2020

SCDSB Pandemic Response Handbook

General Information

The Simcoe County District School Board (SCDSB) has the responsibility to ensure the safety of students, staff, volunteers and visitors inside board buildings, and on board property.

This handbook is to be used when the risk of a pandemic has been declared by the World Health Organization (WHO). It is designed to assist SCDSB staff and schools as they respond to the various phases of a pandemic. This document provides an outline to be followed.

Phase 1: No Infection in Humans

Board

- Ensure the SCDSB has a *Pandemic Preparedness and Response Plan* including a *Pandemic Response Handbook*.
- Ensure the board has an *Enhanced Cleaning Protocol* in place.

Phase 2: Potential Pandemic Threat

Board

- Ensure the SCDSB's *Pandemic Preparedness and Response Plan* is current and available in all board locations, and available to all school administrators and managers.
- Review the *Pandemic Preparedness and Response Plan* and *Pandemic Response Handbook* with senior administration and all administrators/managers.
- Inform all stakeholders of the SCDSB's *Pandemic Preparedness and Response Plan*.
- Identify suppliers of infection control supplies.
- Review the board's *Enhanced Cleaning Protocol*.
- Communicate periodically, to all board staff, information about pandemics, the importance of system and personal preparedness, and personal preventative techniques.
- Consider cancellation of international school trips.

School

- Inform staff, school council, students and parents/guardians of the SCDSB's *Pandemic Preparedness and Response Plan*.

Phase 3: Conditions Developing for a Pandemic

Board

- Review the *Pandemic Preparedness and Response Plan and Response Handbook* with all staff.
- Convene *Pandemic Emergency Management Committee (PEMC)*.
- Develop procedures for emergency communications to all sites.
- Develop a procedure to be used when dealing with suspected cases of the pandemic in the school or workplace.
- Develop plan and schedule to address students' missed time, tests, assignments, etc.
- Review infection control procedures with staff.
- Ensure accurate listing of school permit and user holders and inform them of possible school closure.

School

- Review the *Pandemic Preparedness and Response Plan* content with all staff.
- Emphasize good hygiene practices as a way of slowing spread of pandemic.
- Consider cancellation of school trips.
- Report absences and reasons for absence for students/staff following SCDSB's procedure.
- Encourage parents/guardians, through newsletters, to provide a reason for the student's absence when contacting the school.
- Share education materials with staff, students and parents/guardians on infection control and personal prevention measures.

Phase 4: Increased Risk for Pandemic

Board

- Initiate backup training for maintaining essential services and functions, if necessary.
- Review infection control procedures with all staff to prevent disease transmission.
- Monitor infection control procedures at all sites.
- Monitor absences and reasons for absence for students/staff.
- Ensure all staff emergency contact lists for the system are up to date.
- Initiate enhanced monitoring of communications from the Ministry of Health (MOH) and SMDHU.
- Review continuation of all after hours school permits, community school activities, night school and summer school, extracurricular activities, field trips, school food programs, home instruction, administrator/staff meetings, professional development activities, school council meetings and volunteer programs in schools.
- Review participation in co-op programs.
- Discuss continuity plans for student transportation and for food service in secondary schools.
- Establish link on board website to SMDHU and inform all staff.
- Distribute educational material from SMDHU to staff regarding the pandemic, precautions and measures to reduce exposure and spread when required.
- Follow Internal Communication Protocol.

School

- Ensure all contact lists are up-to-date for staff, students, and volunteers.
- Develop an emergency contact plan for all school staff.
- Monitor absences and reasons for absence for students/staff following board's procedure.
- Provide links to educational material from SMDHU to students and parents/guardians regarding pandemic precautions and measures to reduce exposure spread.

Phase 5: Confirmed Human to Human Spread of VirusBoard

- Announce cancellation of all after hours school permits, community school activities, night school and summer school, extracurricular activities, field trips, school food programs, home instruction, administrator/staff meetings, professional development activities, school council meetings and volunteer programs in schools.
- Announce cancellation of co-op placements.
- Inform all staff, students and parents/guardians of possible school closure.
- Consider closing Education Centre to volunteers, visitors, etc.
- Post signs on exterior doors when a school or office is closed to the public.
- Continue to provide accurate, relative and timely information to staff.
- Implement the procedure to be used when dealing with suspected cases of the pandemic in the school or workplace.
- Implement enhanced cleaning protocol.
- Implement procedures required when a building is to be used by the SMDHU to deal with the general public.
- Follow Internal Communication Protocol.

School

- Restrict visitor access.
- Post signs on exterior doors when a school is closed to the public.
- Implement rigorous infection control methods.
- Cancel co-op placements.
- Activate the emergency contact plan for all school staff.
- Continue to provide accurate, relative and timely information to staff, students and parents/guardians as provided by the board.
- Implement the following procedure to be used when an identified case is confirmed at a school:
 - communication will be provided to inform the school community;
 - school will work with the SMDHU on specific direction to be provided to those closely impacted (i.e. those who had close contact with the individual);
 - school will monitor with the SMDHU those closely impacted;
 - school will facilitate clinics with the SMDHU if required; and,
 - school will follow enhanced cleaning protocol for deep clean.
- Report absences and reasons for absence for students/staff following the board's procedure.

Phase 6: Global Pandemic Declared by WHO

Board

- Implement plan for enhanced cleaning protocol.
- Assess impact of closure/disruption on academic studies.
- Review missed activities/functions/trips and determine action plan.
- Open closed sites with only staff first and hold information sessions with health professionals.
- Provide health information to students and parents/guardians on reopening day for students.
- Provide opportunity for counseling and support for students and staff.
- Follow Internal Communication Protocol.

School

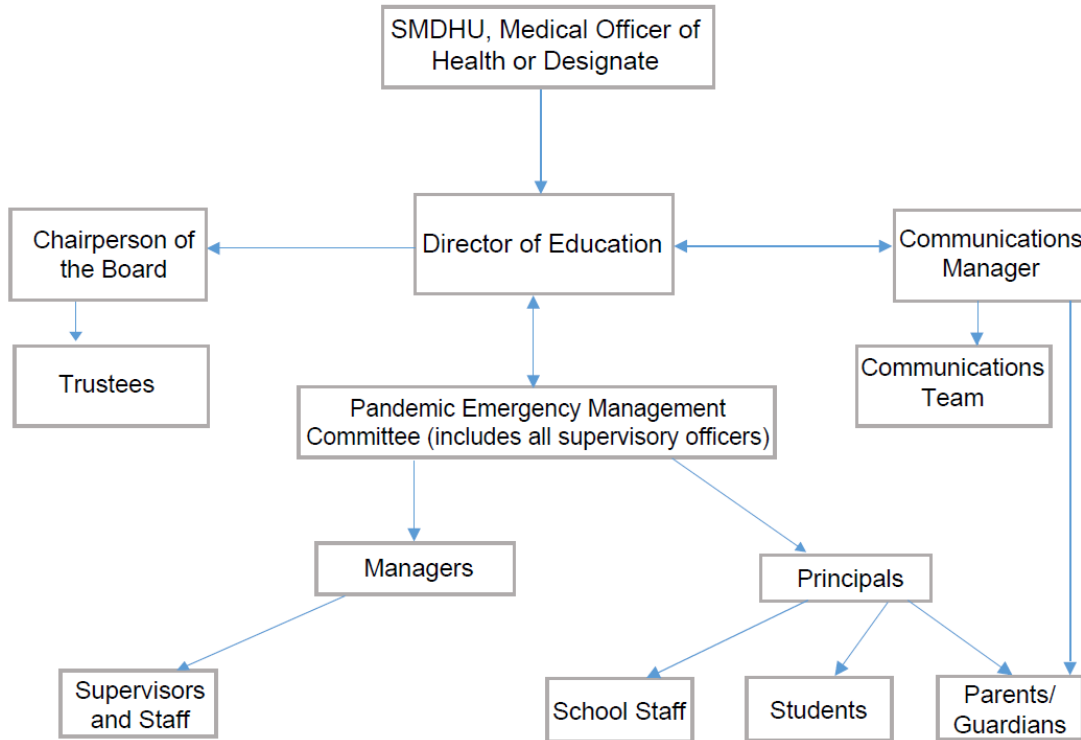
- Ensure all touched surfaces have been properly cleaned.
- Open school with staff only and hold information sessions with health professionals.
- Review impact of closure/disruption of academic studies and the board's start-up plan.
- Review missed activities/functions/trips and determine action plan.
- Provide opportunity for counseling and support for students and staff.

Phase 7: Post Peak Pandemic Period

Board

- Conduct debriefings, an incident review and a review of the Pandemic Preparedness and Response Plan, including the Pandemic Response Handbook.

Communication Flow Chart



All external communications are issued by the Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit (SMDHU) Medical Officer of Health.

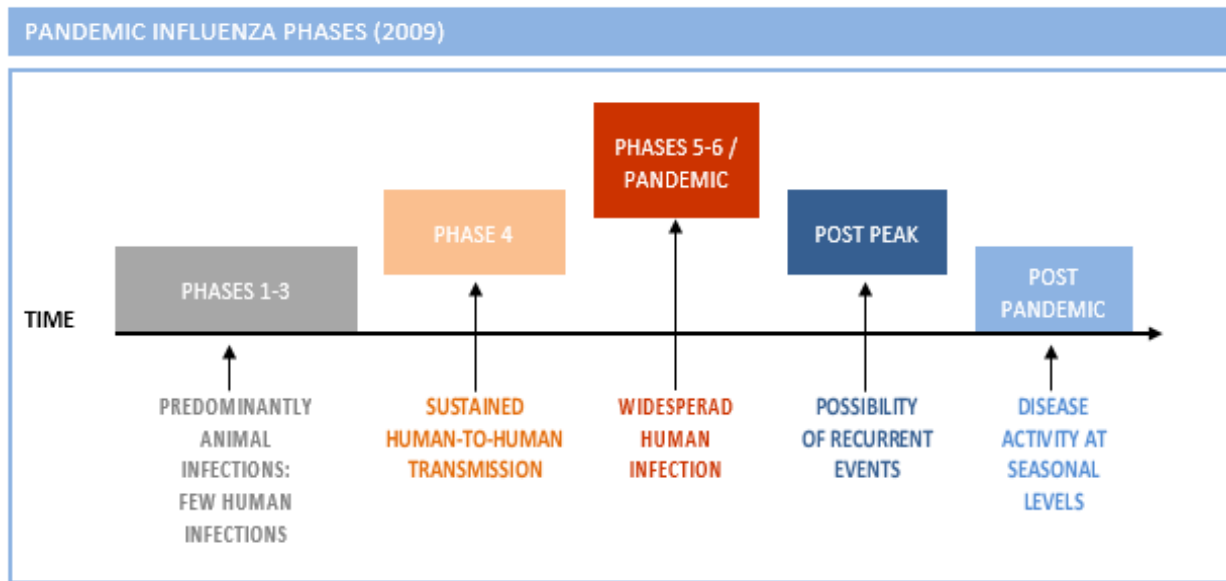
All internal communications and directives will be through the Director's Office in consultation with the Ministry of Health through the SMDHU, and the Pandemic Emergency Management Committee (PEMC).

SCDSB Pandemic Preparedness and Response Plan

WHO Pandemic Phases	Description of Phase	SCDSB Lead	Strategy	Details
Phases 1-3	Predominantly animal infections; few human infections.	Superintendent responsible for health portfolio and Manager of Communications.	Annually review the SCDSB Pandemic Response Plan in partnership with the SMDHU.	<p>Principals and managers review the plan annually with staff.</p> <p>Plan posted on board webpage.</p> <p>Plan shared with trustees, employee associations and partner organizations (childcare providers, transportation consortium).</p> <p>Convene Pandemic Emergency Management Committee (PEMC)</p> <p>Reinforce hygiene messaging and share information regarding signs, symptoms and prevention.</p> <p>Review infection control procedures with staff.</p> <p>Monitor travel advisories.</p>
Phase 4	<p>Sustained human to human transmission.</p> <p>Increased risk for pandemic declared.</p>	PEMC convenes.	Activate contingency plans, increase surveillance, monitor and reduce spread of disease.	<p>Communicate important information using SCDSB website.</p> <p>In consultation with SMDHU, send letter home via SchoolConnects, reinforcing appropriate cough and hand washing hygiene and advising students to stay home if ill.</p> <p>Ensure cleaning supplies at all locations are adequate.</p> <p>Implement infection control procedures at all sites.</p> <p>PEMC advises partner organization (childcare providers, transportation consortium) of immediate and future impact on service delivery.</p> <p>Monitor travel advisories.</p> <p>Ensure all staff emergency contact lists at the school and system level are up to date.</p> <p>Review and revise field trip plans if required.</p> <p>Monitor staff and student attendance.</p> <p>Follow Communications Protocol for internal messaging.</p>
Phases 5-6	<p><u>Phase 5</u></p> <p>Widespread human infection in Canada.</p> <p>Pandemic is imminent.</p>	Director of Education, Simcoe Muskoka Health Unit and PEMC.	<p>Regular communication with SMDHU.</p> <p>Adjust service levels to maintain safe and supportive environments.</p> <p>Program and service changes posted daily.</p>	<p>Daily communication with SMDHU.</p> <p>Close or reopen schools based on the ability to maintain staff and student safety.</p> <p>Cancel non-essential services.</p> <p>Replenish cleaning supplies.</p> <p>Follow Communications Protocol for internal messaging.</p>

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	<p><u>Phase 6</u> Pandemic is impacting Simcoe County as determined by SMDHU.</p>		<p>Review non-essential service delivery.</p>	<p>PEMC meetings daily to review staff and student attendance. Review field trips, and after-hours programs in affected communities to determine which events can continue. Review permits daily to determine which activities and events can continue. Reassign staff as needed. Develop communications messages or information sharing for board spokespeople, letters home to parents/guardians, webpage updates, and SchoolConnects messages. Communications Manager posts updates on board website and through social media as they become available. Develop contingency plans for time sensitive board items if meetings need to be cancelled. Using SchoolConnects, communicate program and transportation changes and cancellations, school closures and re-openings.</p>
<p>Phase 7 Post Peak</p>	<p>Possibility of recurrent events. Prepare for a possible second wave.</p>	<p>Director of Education and PEMC.</p>	<p>Daily communication with SMDHU. Review status of schools and facilities. Post updates for stakeholders.</p>	<p>PEMC meetings continue daily; remains alert to the possibility of additional outbreaks. Monitor student and staff attendance. Respond to messages and direction from the SMDHU. Review status of schools and facilities working towards reopening all schools. Replenish cleaning supplies at all sites. Reintroduce non-essential services. Trustee Update outlining the criteria for school and facility re-opening shared. School status and information updates posted daily.</p>
<p>Post Pandemic</p>	<p>Disease activity at seasonal levels.</p>	<p>Director of Education and PEMC.</p>	<p>Review protocol.</p>	<p>PEMC debrief actions taken during pandemic and revises pandemic response plan as needed. Operations return to normal levels.</p>

World Health Organization (WHO) Pandemic Phases



WHO Pandemic Phase Descriptions and Corresponding SCDSB Response Protocol

Phase 1: In nature, viruses circulate continuously among animals, especially birds. Even though such viruses might theoretically develop into pandemic viruses, in Phase 1 viruses circulating among animals have not been reported to cause infections in humans.

Phase 2: A potential pandemic threat has been identified by the WHO. An animal virus circulating among domesticated or wild animals is known to have caused infection in humans and is, therefore, considered a potential pandemic threat.

Phase 3: Conditions developing for a pandemic. An animal or human-animal reassortant virus (containing genetic material from two or more similar viruses) has caused sporadic cases or small clusters of disease in people, but has not resulted in human-to-human transmission sufficient to sustain community-level outbreaks. Limited human-to-human transmission may occur under some circumstances, for example, when there is close contact between an infected person and an unprotected caregiver.

However, limited transmission under such restricted circumstances does not indicate that the virus has gained the level of transmissibility among humans necessary to cause a pandemic.

Phase 4: Increased risk for a pandemic declared by WHO. Verified human-to-human transmission of an animal or human-animal reassortant virus has caused “community-level outbreaks”. The ability to cause sustained disease outbreaks in a community marks a significant upwards shift in the risk for a pandemic. Any country that suspects or has verified such an event should urgently consult with WHO. The situation will be jointly assessed to determine if implementation of a rapid pandemic containment operation is warranted in the affected country. Phase 4 indicates a significant increase in risk of a pandemic but does not necessarily mean that a pandemic is a forgone conclusion.

Phase 5: Confirmed human-to-human spread of the virus into at least two countries in one WHO region. While most countries will not be affected at this stage, the declaration of Phase 5 is a strong signal that a pandemic is imminent and that the time to finalize the organization, communication, and implementation of the planned mitigation measures is short.

Phase 6: A global pandemic is declared.

This phase is characterized by sustained community level spread of the new flu strain in several countries in at least two [WHO regions](#). The declaration is based on the spread of the virus, not the severity.

Phase 7: Post-peak period

Surveillance indicates pandemic disease levels in most countries have dropped below peak observed levels. Previous pandemics have been characterized by waves of activity spread over months. Once the level of disease activity drops, a critical communications task will be to balance this information with the possibility of another wave.

Post-pandemic period

Influenza or virulent disease activity has returned to normal levels. It is important to maintain surveillance and update pandemic preparedness and response plans accordingly.