

Turtle River School Division



Pandemic Preparedness Guidelines

March 2020

Mandate of Pandemic Planning Committee

The mandate of Turtle River School Division is to

- Continue to operate during a pandemic
- Provide a safe environment for students and staff prior to, during, and after a pandemic
- Continue to provide essential services (curricular requirements, supervision, transportation, building security)
- Communicate accurately with students, staff, families, and management before, during, and following a pandemic
- Monitor and record the activities and additional expenses incurred as a result of a pandemic

Turtle River School Division will formulate *Pandemic Preparedness Guidelines* to address the needs of its students and their families, and its staff. This document will complement the existing emergency response plan of each of its schools.

TRSD has organized a Pandemic Planning Committee and has assigned responsibility for coordinating:

- Preparation of *Pandemic Preparedness Guidelines*
- Response and recovery activities during and following a pandemic

Preparing for a Pandemic – Parents

As directed by the Deputy Minister of Education, Turtle River School Division advises all parents that schools will continue to operate in as normal a manner as possible in order to lessen the degree of potential disruption to each community.

School administration will frequently remind students and staff to take precautions to improve general hygiene in order to prevent becoming infected and to prevent spreading infections to others. It is also important that parents take steps at home to limit the spreading of infections.

These steps include:

- Wash your hands often and ensure others around you do likewise.
- Keep your hands away from your mouth, nose, and eyes.
- Do not share eating utensils, glasses, pencils, pens, erasers, rulers, or musical instruments with mouthpieces.
- Cough or sneeze into the crook of your arm or shoulder.
- Stay home if you are sick.

Parents can access further information online by consulting the document, *Preparing for Pandemic Influenza in Manitoba* found at <https://www.gov.mb.ca/health/publichealth/cmoh/docs/ppim.pdf>

Academics:

- Students will be educated about flu prevention and flu symptoms, and will be encouraged to make appropriate personal health decisions.
- Every effort will be made to offer school services as normally as possible during a pandemic.
- Administration will inform students and their families of the school's plan and expectations for continued instruction.
- The school principal will be responsible for daily instructional decisions.
- Decisions to extend the term, revise exam schedules, or alter academic schedules will be made by the board of trustees and the superintendent.
- Decisions will be made at the school level regarding special circumstances in which a student may have missed or has not completed work due to illness, class cancellations, or other reasons related to the pandemic.
- In the event of a school closure, administration will provide parents with as much lead time as possible, along with an estimate of the duration of the closure and the reasons for the closure.

Preparing for a Pandemic – Schools

School staff can implement effective health practices, educate the students on these practices, and share these ideas with parents/guardians. The expectation is that schools will continue to operate and provide an environment that is safe as possible for all staff and students during a pandemic. By continuing to operate, schools can lessen disruptions in the communities, as parents will be able to continue their own work.

Impact on Schools

- Employee absenteeism
- Student absenteeism
- Potential school closure
- Potential spread of infection at school
- Staff and students becoming ill while at school
- Interruption of services and supplies
- Financial losses/costs

Preventative Steps

- Wash your hands often and ensure others around you do likewise.
- Keep your hands away from your mouth, nose, and eyes.
- Do not share eating utensils, glasses, pencils, pens, erasers, rulers, or musical instruments with mouthpieces.
- Cough or sneeze into the crook of your arm or shoulder.
- Stay home if you are sick.
- Get a vaccine when available.

Further information is available online by consulting the document, *Preparing for Pandemic Influenza in Manitoba* found at <https://www.gov.mb.ca/health/publichealth/cmoh/docs/ppim.pdf>

Pandemic Preparedness – Implementation Activities “To Do”

- Send information letters to parents regarding symptoms of the flu and preventative measures to follow.
- Educate the students on flu prevention and encourage frequent hand washing and coughing or sneezing into their elbows.
- Post posters on flu preventative measures.
- Disinfect doorknobs, doorframes, fountains, taps, and washrooms three or four times during each day.
- Install hand sanitizer stations in each school.
- Sanitize bus seats after each afternoon run.
- Communicate with Public Health
- Permission for Field Trips and Sports Trips will be at the discretion of the principal and superintendent.

TRSD Pandemic Checklist – Division

- ❑ Compile lists of substitute teachers and retired teachers
- ❑ Compile lists of students and staff contact information for R.H.A.
- ❑ Notify R.H.A. of any reported flu cases and/or when there is over 10% absenteeism in the whole school
 - Alonsa School – Terri Lynn Archambault , PHN, 447-4094
 - École Laurier – Terri Hopfner, PHN, 447-4083
 - Glenella School – Melanie McLaughlin, Neepawa 476-7832
 - Grass River School – Melanie McLaughlin 476-7832
 - McCreary School – Nicole Musgrave, CHN 835-5010
 - Parkview School – Melanie McLaughlin 476-7832
 - Ste. Rose School – Terri Lynn Archambault 447-4094
 - Ste. Rose Community Health Services 447-4080
 - Neepawa Health Unit 476-2341
- ❑ Notify Manitoba Education of an outbreak or reported cases.
(Education Admin. Services 1-204-945-6899)
- ❑ Instruct the following groups to institute their plans.
 - Operations
 - School Administrators
 - Student Services
- ❑ Senior administration will meet with Computer Consultant and Computer Technician for an update on current state of communications technology at all sites.
- ❑ Superintendent will provide a written report to the board of trustees on the current conditions and current state of planning for the division.
- ❑ Superintendent and local trustees will liaise with Village/Town, R.M., R.H.A., Province as to the current state of planning for the school division.

TRSD Pandemic Planning Checklist – Operations

- List of
 - Spare bus drivers
 - Spare cleaners
 - People who are qualified to operate school boiler systems
 - Contractors who are familiar with each school
- Determine current level of
 - Critical supplies (fuel, cleaning supplies, etc.)
 - Non-critical supplies
- Note and address supplies that may be a concern if the pandemic were to continue for an indeterminable period of time.
- Inspect and address issues that could result in the failure of
 - Heating system
 - Water system
 - Electrical system
 - Air exchange system
 - Transportation
- Confirm list of interchangeable staff
 - Essential maintenance – heating, plumbing, electrical
 - Cleaning
 - Transportation
- Identify essential services to be continued in the event of a school closure (heat, security)
- Identify changes that may be necessary during a pandemic (increased cleaning, an increase in cleaning supplies, etc.)
- Maintenance supervisor will prepare written instructions so untrained employees or volunteers can complete some essential tasks.
- Maintenance supervisor will provide a written report to Senior Administration, as to the current state of planning.

In the event of a school closure, only essential services will be maintained. Buildings will be monitored.

All weekend and evening activities held in TRSD schools may be postponed or cancelled during a pandemic.

When a school is designated as an emergency housing alternative, the school will inform that organization about the potential for school closure in a pandemic.

TRSD Pandemic Planning – Student Services

- Consult with Prairie Mountain Health Authority regarding current URIS plans.
- Inventory and request top-ups for any medical inventory necessary to address URIS plans.
- Review current transportation plans for students with mobility concerns. Meet with parents and Transportation Supervisor to address alternatives should the special needs bus drivers be unavailable.
- Have resource teachers liaise with teachers to provide home study access for home-bound students via the safest means possible:
 - Pick-up at the school
 - Home delivery
 - Mail
 - Phone
 - School web site
 - E-mail
- Provide a written report to Senior Administration, as to the current state of planning.

TRSD Pandemic Planning – School Administrators

- Send memos to parents/guardians March 11, 2020.
 - *Preparing for a Pandemic – Parents*
 - *Information regarding COVID-19*
- Send memos to staff
 - *Preparing for a Pandemic Schools*
 - *Information regarding COVID-19*
- Compile list of staff with interchangeable skills
 - Teachers
 - Operations
 - Maintenance
 - Cleaning
 - Secretaries
 - Educational Assistants
- Compile list of possible volunteers who may be willing to assist in the provision of school services.
- Consult with Student Services Coordinator regarding students with special needs.
- Consult with Resource Teacher regarding plans for home bound students.
- Consult with Computer Consultant
 - Maintenance of web sites
 - E-mail address
 - Communication with home bound students
 - Communication with staff
- Ensure students are receiving regular instruction in preventative measures.
- Provide a written report to Senior Administration, as to the current state of planning.

Provincial Government –Latest Updates – Coronavirus/COVID-19

<https://www.gov.mb.ca/health/coronavirus/>

Public Health Guidance for K-12 Schools and childcare programs (COVID-19) – February 28, 2020

<https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/2019-novel-coronavirus-infection/health-professionals/guidance-schools-childcare-programs.html>

Recovery Plans

A pandemic will impact the school division in a variety of ways, including

- Significant loss of instructional time
- Backlog of work postponed
- Disruption of communication with students and families
- Psychological stress and low morale
- Additional financial costs to schools/division
- Permanent loss of employees

Turtle River School Division will consider implementing the following as part of its schools' recovery plans:

- Strategies for catching up on backlogged work
- Implementing programs for students and staff to help them deal with the impact of the pandemic
- Identify sources of stress counseling for employees, students and their families
- Temporary or permanent reassignment of employees to maintain operations
- Recruiting and retraining of replacement employees

Appendix A - Hand Hygiene

Hand washing/hand hygiene reduces the number of micro-organisms on the hands and is the most important practice to prevent the spread of infection.

When:

Before:

- Direct hands-on care of others.
- Preparing, handling, serving or eating food.
- Feeding others.

After:

- Contact with items known or considered to be contaminated.
- Personal use of toilet, wiping nose or coughing.

Products:

Plain soap and water:

- Recommended for routine hand washing.

Alcohol-based hand rub:

- Products containing a minimum of 60 per cent alcohol are an alternative when plain soap and water are not available, except if hands are visibly soiled.
- If hands are visibly soiled, heavy soiling should be removed before using alcohol-based hand rubs for maximum effectiveness.

How to wash your hands:

Using plain soap and water:

- Wet hands under warm running water. Use either liquid or bar soap.
- Apply soap and distribute over hands.
- Rub hands together vigorously for 10 to 15 seconds to create a good lather.
- Using friction, cover all hand surfaces including wrists, fingernails, web spaces, thumbs and palms.
- Rinse under warm running water.
- Dry hands gently and thoroughly with a disposable towel.
- Turn off faucet using a clean disposable towel.

Using an alcohol-based hand rub:

- Apply two to three millilitres of the product to the palm of one hand.
- Rub hands together covering all surfaces including, wrists, fingernails, web spaces, thumbs and palms.
- The product generally dries within 15 to 20 seconds.
- Ensure hands are completely dry before performing another task.

Note: *Alcohol-based products are flammable.*

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Appendix B - What can I do to prevent myself from getting infected with influenza during a pandemic?

Public health officials expect that if a new type of influenza emerges and causes a pandemic, this virus will spread in a similar fashion to the influenza viruses that cause outbreaks each winter. Influenza is highly contagious so it spreads quickly in families and communities. There are, however, some steps you can take to reduce your risk of infection.

Improve your overall health.

In general, healthier people are better at fighting off disease. To stay healthy, you should eat healthy foods, get plenty of sleep, exercise and not smoke. Avoid heavy alcohol consumption and try to maintain a positive and balanced outlook.

Wash your hands often.

Washing hands is the most effective way of preventing the spread of disease. Get into the habit of washing your hands often with soap and warm water, scrubbing your wrists, palms, web spaces, thumbs, fingers and nails for 10 to 15 seconds. Rinse and dry with a clean towel. This should be done especially before meals, after using the toilet and after you cough, sneeze or blow your nose. Teach your children to do the same.

Avoid visiting people who have the flu if practical to do so.

This will help to prevent you from becoming infected. This advice must be balanced with the need to provide support and care to sick people. Caregivers looking after sick people should wear a mask when coming face-to-face with a coughing individual to minimize influenza transmission.

Avoid large crowds.

Remember that large crowds are ideal for the spread of influenza, so consider staying at home. Wearing masks to prevent transmission of influenza is not helpful when it is circulating in the community.

Don't share eating utensils or drinks.

If a family member is sick, keep their personal items (ex: towels and toothbrushes) separate from those of the rest of the family.

Get a vaccine when available.

Vaccination is the principal measure for preventing influenza and reducing the impact of epidemics. Various types of influenza vaccines have been available and used for more than 60 years.

Take antivirals if recommended by your doctor.

Antivirals are drugs used for the prevention and early treatment of influenza. If taken shortly after getting sick (within 48 hours), they can reduce influenza symptoms, shorten the length of the illness and potentially reduce any serious complications. Antivirals work by reducing the ability of the virus to reproduce; however, they do not provide immunity from the virus.

Antiviral drugs, given at the onset of the disease, may assist but are not likely to be available in sufficient quantities to treat the majority of the population.

Planning for antiviral use during a pandemic is ongoing at the national level, however, it is most likely that antiviral drugs will be used at the beginning of a pandemic to treat people who become ill pending the development of a vaccine.

What if I think I have the flu?

Most people with influenza recover without any serious problems. The disease can last for four to seven days and leave a cough and tiredness for several weeks. In general, there is no specific treatment for influenza. Antivirals may occasionally be prescribed by your doctor. Antibiotics are not effective against the influenza virus, although, they will be effective against complications caused by bacteria such as pneumonia. Avoid going to work or social gatherings if you are ill. Wear a mask if you need to visit your doctor. At the time of a pandemic, Manitoba Health will provide information on steps you can take to help care for yourself if you have influenza.

What if my child is sick?

Like with adults, most children get better from influenza without any specific treatment. Sick children should be kept home from school and daycare. At the time of a pandemic, Manitoba Health will provide information on steps you can take to help care for your children if they have influenza.

DURING A PANDEMIC, IT WILL BE IMPORTANT TO:

- Follow directions given by public health. These may change as more information becomes available about the characteristics of the particular virus causing the outbreak.

- Follow infection control procedures if caring for a person with influenza. Providing care to an individual with an influenza-like illness will be common during a pandemic. The likelihood of transmitting the disease is reduced by following basic precautions.

Watch the Manitoba Health website for updates at and the latest information regarding COVID-19 at <https://www.gov.mb.ca/health/coronavirus/>

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Appendix C - How can I care for myself when I have the flu?

- Stay home and rest.
- Drink plenty of fluids.
- Take medication for your symptoms.
NOTE: Do not give children or teenagers any products containing aspirin or ASA (acetylsalicylic acid) as it can cause a very serious illness called Reye's syndrome, which affects the nervous system and liver.
- For a sore throat, gargle a glass of warm water mixed with a half-teaspoon of salt. Throat lozenges are also effective for relieving a sore throat.
- For a stuffy nose adults can take a decongestant, but consult with a health care professional such as a pharmacist, nurse or doctor. Children can be given saline nose drops.
- Wash your hands frequently.
- Ask for help – you may need to ask for help at home until you are feeling better.
- If you require further advice call **Health Links-Info Santé at 788-8200** (in Winnipeg) or toll-free **1-888-315-9257** (outside Winnipeg) or a health care provider.

Should I wear a mask?

- Ill people or those caring for them may be advised to wear a surgical mask to reduce the spread of disease.
- Wearing of masks by well people in the community is not recommended as a general measure. This is because it is unlikely to be sustainable for the entire duration of a pandemic. In addition, masks can provide false security and can lead to contamination unless properly handled.

When should I see a doctor?

- If you or your child experiences any of the following:
 - shortness of breath or difficulty breathing,
 - chest pain or pressure,
 - coughing up dark-coloured or bloody sputum,
 - wheezing,
 - extreme ear pain,
 - fever for three or more days that is not going down or if you do not start feeling better in a few days,
 - you have started to feel better and suddenly feel much worse,
 - confusion, extreme drowsiness or difficulty waking up

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Appendix D - Building Hygiene

The following steps are recommended to maximize hygiene in schools during a pandemic. They focus on reducing the spread of viral infection. Most of these activities are standard in schools and should be undertaken routinely. These activities will be equally important during a pandemic. Building hygiene should be addressed in school contingency plans, including supply and human resource management.

General

- Surfaces must not show any visible soil before they are sanitized.
- Cleaning equipment should be maintained in a clean, dry state after use. Cloths, mop heads and other supplies should have single purpose use (floors or walls or furnishings only) and be changed when soiled after use.
- Waste baskets for disposal of soiled tissues are needed throughout the school, close to the point of use.

Products for Cleaning and Sanitizing

- Cleaning with detergent and water is generally acceptable.
- Commercial household products are acceptable to sanitize environmental surfaces when used according to manufacturer's instructions.
- To prepare a noncommercial sanitizing solution, use unscented chlorine bleach:
 - for wiping surfaces, etc., mix one tablespoon (15 millilitres) in four litres (3.5 quarts) of water.
 - for immersing dishes, toys, dishcloths, etc., mix one tablespoon (15 millilitres) in four litres (3.5 quarts) of water.
- Mix fresh solutions daily.
- Either liquid or bar soap can be used in washrooms. Liquid soap containers should not be "topped up"; instead, liquid soap should be supplied in disposable bags in wall containers by sinks or in small, non-refillable containers to avoid product contamination. Bar soap should be stored in racks which allow drainage of excess water (disease producing organisms can survive in stagnant water).
- Disposable (paper) towels should be used in public washrooms. If possible, install dispensers that require no hand contact to remove a towel. Individual cloth towels should not be shared.
- Provide a waste basket for towels used to open washroom doors upon exiting, or leave washroom doors open.

Cleaning Methods

- Cleaning should proceed from least to most soiled. Cleaning solutions should be changed when they appear dirty and/or after a spill cleanup.
- Cleaning primarily involves horizontal surfaces (ex: desks, countertops, table tops, floors) and surfaces that are frequently handled (ex: door knobs, telephones, bathroom fixtures).

Cleaning Schedules

Cleaning schedules should be established according to the type of surface to be cleaned and the type of soiling that occurs. For example:

- spills – clean immediately.
- surfaces used for food preparation or diapering – clean after each use.
- kitchen, bathrooms, playroom – clean daily and as necessary.
- offices, countertops, computer keyboards, phones, appliances – clean weekly and as necessary.
- furniture, walls and carpets – follow a rotating schedule (monthly/yearly) and as necessary.
- sports equipment such as balls for games – clean weekly.
- reusable gloves – clean after each use.

Adequate Supplies

Schools should plan in advance for maintaining adequate resources for infection prevention and control in schools (soap, paper towels, alcohol-based hand rubs) as there may be an interruption of supply availability.

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