

# Pandemic Influenza Action Plan for Schools

August 2009



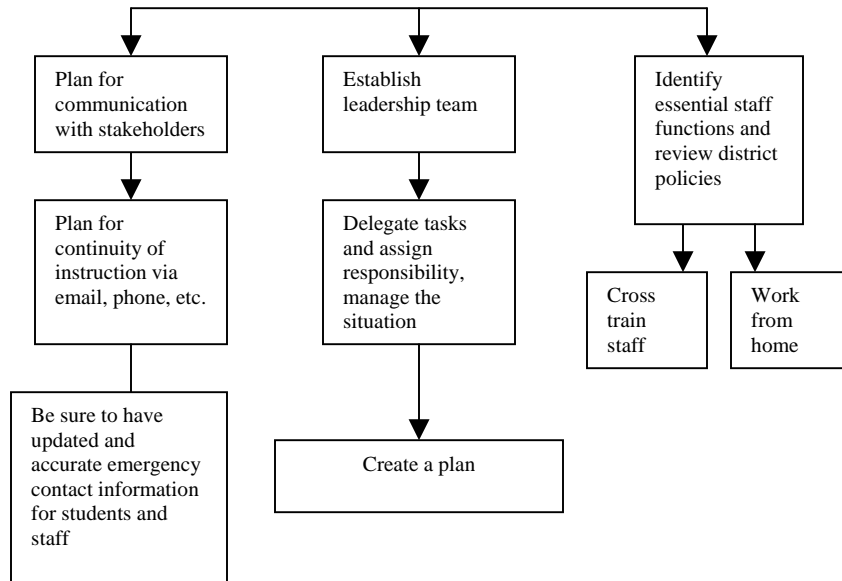
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Colorado Department  
of Public Health  
and Environment

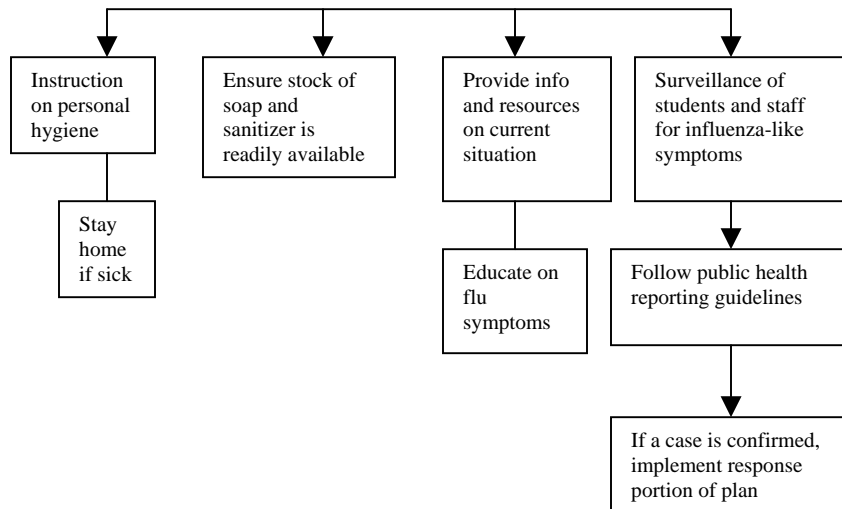
cde Improving  
Academic  
Achievement

## Before a Pandemic

### Preparedness and Planning



### Education and Prevention

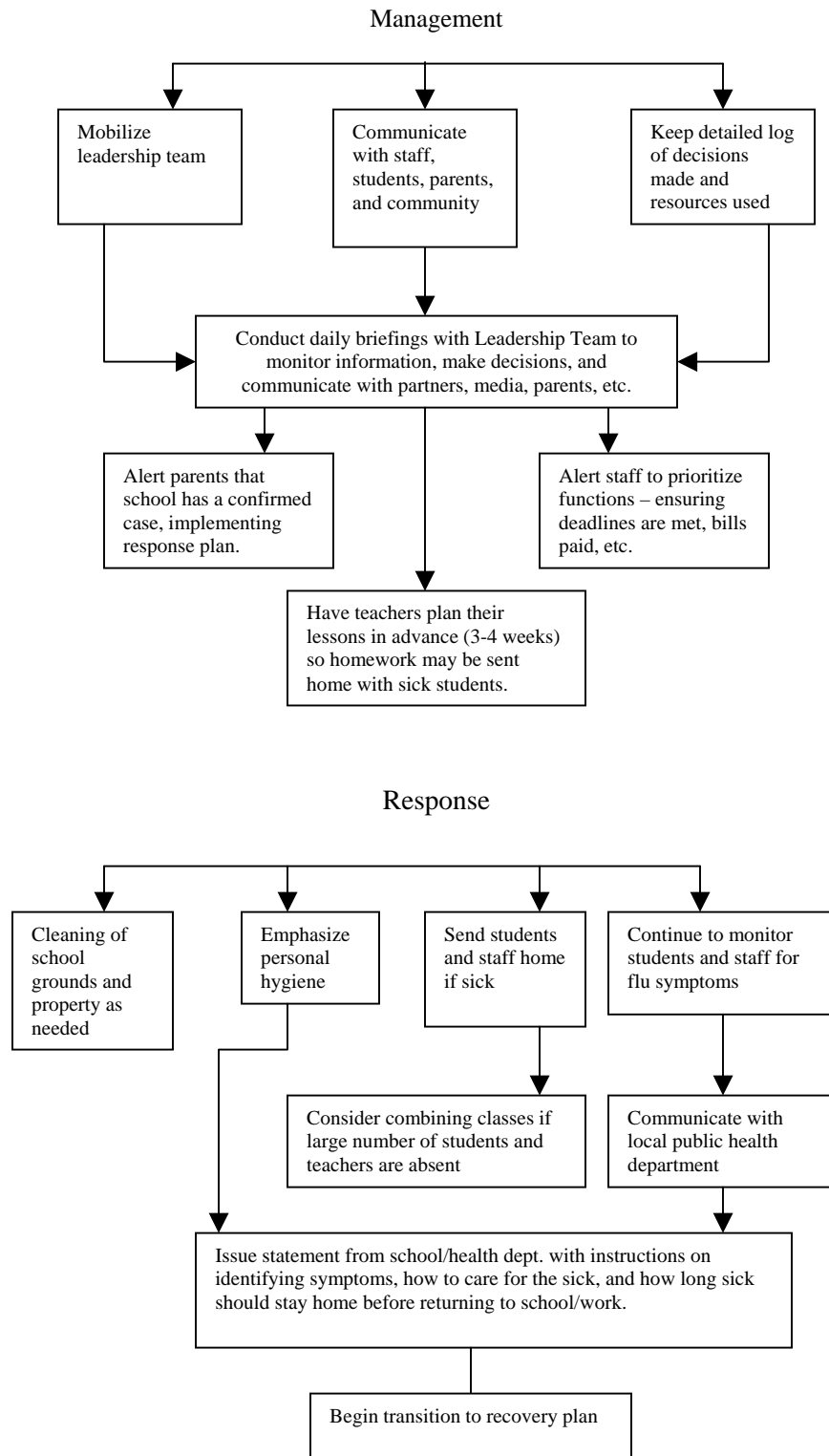


## **Before a Pandemic**

The first section, entitled “Before a Pandemic” focuses on education and prevention and preparedness and planning. The following are the main focus points included in the 1<sup>st</sup> section:

- Teaching parents, staff and students the importance of personal hygiene and ensuring that all classrooms, restrooms, and public areas are equipped with an adequate supply of soap and sanitizer.
- Education for parents and students regarding the symptoms of influenza and instruction to stay home when sick.
  - The school district may want to provide information and resources to parents, students, and staff regarding the current H1N1 influenza virus and what steps the school district is taking to safeguard its students.
- Creation of a Leadership Team to establish, implement and manage a pandemic plan. Members can include teachers, superintendent, nurse, and/or members of the school board.
  - The Leadership Team should work with other key stakeholders in the community, especially the local public health department, in order to integrate the school district’s pandemic plan in the community plan.
  - The members of the Leadership Team are responsible for delegating tasks, assigning responsibility and managing the situation. This can include developing a communications plan and designating a spokesperson to being responsible for all media inquiries.
  - It is important that all schools within the district are communicating the same message to the community, parents, students and staff. This also includes ensuring that parents, students and staff are aware of the district’s pandemic plan and understand the actions the district will take in the event of a pandemic.
  - The Leadership Team should also develop a plan for continuity of operations and instruction if there are large numbers of absenteeism among students and staff.
    - This can involve sending homework to sick students via the internet, phone, television, or postal service by having teachers create lesson plans in advance.
    - It is vital that the school district update all emergency contact information for its students and staff, especially addresses and phone numbers.
- The school district should identify and prioritize essential staff functions (payroll, IT, maintenance, etc.) and cross train staff in those areas, to ensure that if up to forty percent of its staff is absent; other employees are able to fulfill those roles.
- In addition, school districts should examine their current human resources policies and ensure that those policies take extended absences as the result of a pandemic into consideration. The school district should then communicate its sick leave and compensation policies to staff members. School districts should review vendor, contractor and supplier contracts to ensure that critical supplies or services will continue in the event of a pandemic.
- The school district should closely monitor its employees and students for influenza like symptoms and follow the reporting guidelines set forth by their local public health departments.
- If a case is confirmed, the school district should transition to the response portion of its pandemic plan.

## During a Pandemic/Outbreak in School



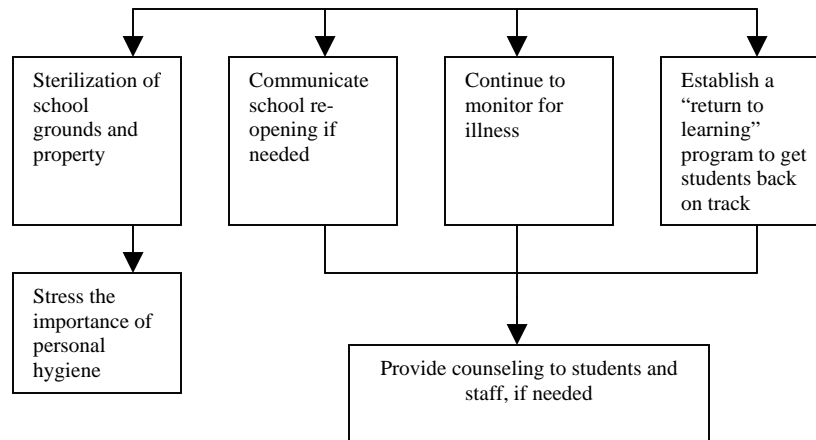
## **During a Pandemic/Outbreak in School**

The second section, entitled “During a Pandemic/Outbreak in School” focuses on the school district’s response to and management of a confirmed case of pandemic flu in the school. The following are the main focus points included in the 2<sup>nd</sup> section:

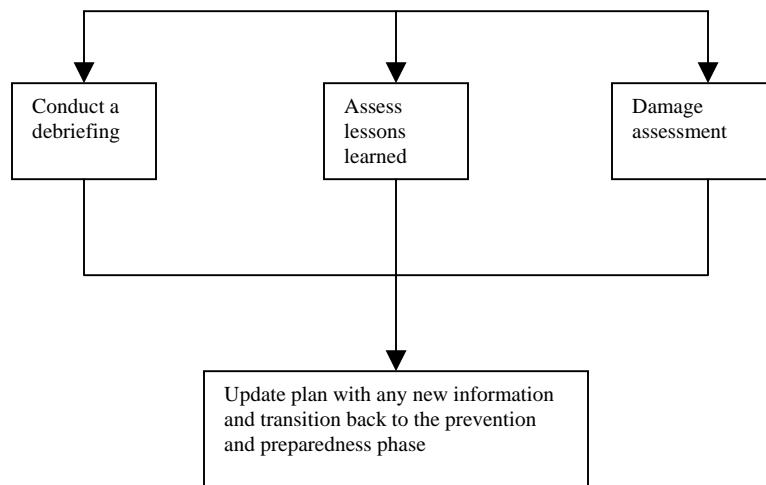
- The school district should begin a thorough cleaning of all school grounds and property and continue to monitor students and staff for influenza-like symptoms.
- Continuing to stress the importance of personal hygiene and communicating that all students and staff exhibiting influenza-like symptoms will be sent home is another step that schools can implement.
- If there are high numbers of absenteeism among students and staff, schools can consider the combination of classes or amending the traditional class day/schedule to ensure that students are still receiving instruction.
- The school district should issue a joint statement along with the local public health department detailing how to identify symptoms, how to care for the sick, and how long those who are sick should stay home before returning to work or school.
- The management section details the actions that the Leadership Team should implement in response to a confirmed case in the school.
  - The Leadership Team should alert staff to prioritize functions to ensure that basic needs and deadlines are met.
    - Teachers should be told to plan their lessons up to 4 weeks in advance so that homework may be sent home with sick students.
  - The Leadership Team should keep detailed records that document the decisions made and resources used throughout the duration of the outbreak.
  - The Leadership Team should conduct daily briefings to monitor information, make decisions and communicate with the community, the media, and parents.
    - This involves regular communication with parents, students, and staff regarding what steps the school is taking in response to the confirmed case.
  - The school district should continue its surveillance of students and staff, and when the number of sick individuals begins to decrease, it should shift to the recovery portion of the plan.

## After a Pandemic

### Recovery



### Management



## **After a Pandemic**

The third section, entitled “After a Pandemic” focuses on the recovery efforts which detail the steps taken by the school district to get students and staff back onto a regular schedule once the threat of a pandemic begins to diminish. The following are the main focus points included in the 3<sup>rd</sup> section:

- Communicating to parents, staff, and students that it is safe to return to school.
- All school grounds and property should be sterilized and the school should continue to monitor its students and staff, since pandemics often occur in waves.
- The district should also establish a “return to learning” program to get students who have missed numerous days of instruction back on track.
  - This can involve establishing a daily schedule for students to follow and assigning specific homework to each student.
  - Counseling services may be provided to staff and students, if needed.
- The Leadership Team should conduct a debriefing of the situation.
  - This involves summarizing the events that took place and decisions that were made, and measuring the effectiveness of the pandemic plan.
  - From this, Leadership Team members can identify the strengths and weaknesses of the plan and incorporate those lessons them into an updated version of the school district’s pandemic influenza plan.
- After the plan is updated, the Leadership team should transition back to the prevention and preparedness phase and continue to monitor its students and staff for influenza-like illnesses.