

PANDEMIC PLANNING

The Board of Education recognizes the public's concern over the possibility of a contagious disease outbreak and acknowledges that it is in the best interests of its students, employees and the community to prepare for such a scenario. To this end, the Board directs the Superintendent of Schools to:

1. Implement infection prevention control procedures that could help limit the spread of contagious diseases at schools in the district, including but not limited to:
 - Encouraging, through classroom instruction at every grade level and posters, good hygiene habits recommended by public health experts to help protect the school community from contagious diseases (e.g., washing hands frequently with soap and water, coughing/sneezing into tissues or the crook of the elbow instead of one's hand, utilizing alcohol-based/waterless hygiene products and avoiding shaking hands).
 - Providing a description of warning signs and symptoms of contagious diseases infections and instruct parents and employees that students and staff displaying such symptoms should not report to school.
 - Providing sufficient and accessible infection prevention supplies including soap, alcohol-based/waterless hygiene products, face coverings and other personal protective equipment (PPE), tissues and receptacles for their disposal.
 - Following the recommendations of federal, state and local authorities regarding properly cleaning and sanitizing the schools.
 - Observing required or recommended social distancing measures (keeping adequate physical space between people as much as possible), utilizing physical barriers, screening people before or during entry to school, and following required or recommended wearing of face coverings.
2. Work with school administrators, district medical personnel, local county health representatives, teachers, guidance counselors, and other staff and parent representatives, as appropriate, to prepare, as part of the district's existing emergency/safety plan, a contagious disease preparedness plan. Such plan will include, but not be limited to:
 - Protocols that are substantially consistent with Section 27-c of the Labor Law, including: designating essential positions needed to work on-site; telecommuting for non-essential employees; staggered shifts of essential employees; procuring, storing, and accessing PPE; preventing the spread in the district by those who are exposed to, show symptoms of, or test positive for the disease (including leaves available to employees for testing, treatment, isolation, or quarantine); documenting hours and locations of individuals in order to track the disease and identify those who may have been exposed to the disease; identifying emergency housing for essential employees; and other requirements of the state Department of Health.

- Describing the potential impact of an outbreak on student learning (such as student and staff absences), school closing, school trips, and extracurricular activities based on having various levels of illness among students and staff and the alternative means of delivering education (e.g., educating students through the Internet, long-distance learning, sending assignments home, telephone conference calls, etc.), along with plans to assess student progress once school resumes.
 - Ensuring continuity of meal programs during school closure, which may involve utilizing school vehicles or satellite pickup points.
 - Establishing procedures for caring for, isolating, and/or transporting students and staff who become ill with contagious diseases while in school, and their return to school after illness.
 - Establishing liberal, non-punitive attendance policies, as needed, for students unique to an outbreak of contagious diseases.
 - Developing a process for gathering and analyzing the latest information and recommendations from health experts (for example, from the Centers for Disease Control, the New York State Health Department, the County Health Department, etc.) which will inform district policymakers' decisions.
 - Developing a process for communicating information concerning the outbreak of contagious diseases to the school community on a continuing basis. Such efforts may include preparing an information letter for distribution to person(s) in parental relationship(s) of students advising them of the dangers of contagious diseases and the steps that may be taken to reduce the risk of infection, and/or establishing a section on the district's website to communicate information about the district's policy concerning contagious diseases and links to relevant governmental websites.
 - Coordinating the district's plan with the local and state health departments as well as the State Education Department and area BOCES.
 - Assigning responsibility for the activities listed above to appropriate staff.
3. Facilitate discussions with all negotiating units representing employees of the district to determine whether it is appropriate to consider opening up negotiations for the limited purpose of bargaining over the inclusion in collective bargaining agreements of provisions related to sick time and absences on the part of employees, who have been either diagnosed as having contracted contagious diseases that have caused the outbreak or who have family members who have contracted the contagious diseases that has caused the outbreak.

In the event that the district implements its emergency plan in response to a pandemic, the Superintendent will keep the Board regularly informed regarding any actions taken and information gathered. The Board may temporarily suspend other policies to the extent necessary to comply with executive orders and other governmental guidance during a pandemic.

Cross-ref: 5100, Student Attendance
 5420, Student Health Services
 8130, School Safety Plans and Teams

Ref: Education Law §2801-a
 Labor Law §27-c

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