

# **SOUTH ORANGETOWN CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT PANDEMIC FLU PLAN**

## **BACKGROUND**

The Federal Government, via Presidential Directive, has required schools to develop a plan for dealing with the challenges that would be created in the event of a pandemic illness. This Pandemic Illness Plan in conjunction with Rockland BOCES Emergency Plan outlines steps that may be taken should a widespread communicable disease occur.

Throughout this document several assumptions have been made. These assumptions are based upon documentation from various Federal and State health authorities. These assumptions are as follows:

1. There will be little or no warning that an outbreak of a highly contagious illness is about to occur.
2. Vaccination production and dissemination will not occur in time to immunize significant numbers of the population. Vaccine production for a new virus is likely to take six to eight months. Anti viral medication may be in short supply.
3. The illness is transmitted by human-to-human contact.
4. Natural immunity to the pathogen is limited or non-existent.
5. The pandemic would cause at least 25 percent morbidity in the general population. Morbidity in school-aged children is expected to be at least 40 percent.
6. The pandemic outbreak would occur in waves. The first wave is expected to last for six to eight weeks. Subsequent waves will follow with as little as thirty days between events. The impact on the school may last as long as two years.
7. The disease will impact all segments of the school community including students, staff, parents and suppliers of essential services and supplies.

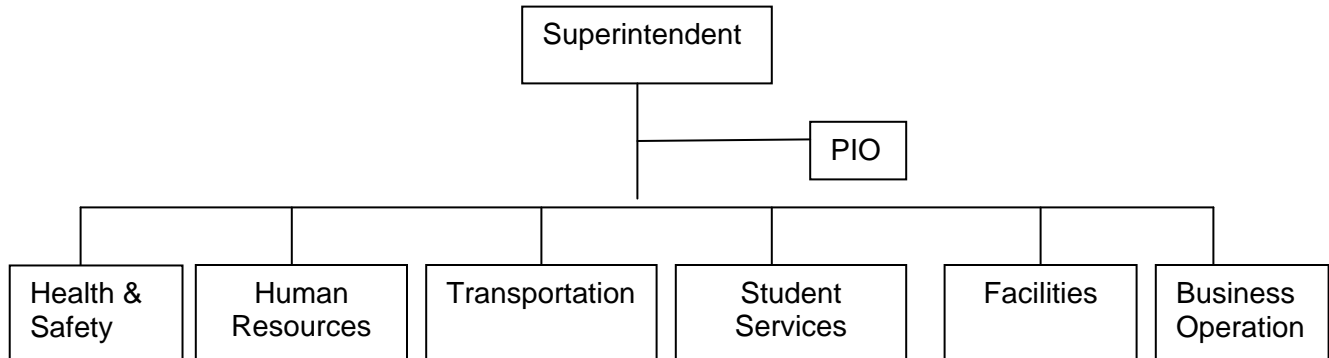
## **AUTHORITY**

The New York State Department of Health or the Rockland County Health Commissioner will make a declaration of a public health emergency. Once this declaration is made, the District Superintendent shall implement all or any portion of this plan in coordination with Federal, State, and local authorities. In the event of any emergency, Rockland BOCES, via the District Emergency Plan, has established various methods for communication with the local authorities and has created liaisons that will interact with these governmental agencies. In the event of a public health crisis those interagency procedures outlined in the District Emergency Plan shall be implemented.

## **CHAIN of COMMAND: The Pandemic Response Team**

In an effort to provide for a coordinated response to any school emergency it is important that all response agencies operate using a common emergency management method. The National Unified Incident Command System will be used when responding to an emergency at the South Orangetown Central School District. All administrative staff shall be trained in ICS on an annual basis as outlined in our District's Emergency Plan. Accordingly, in compliance with the National Incident Management System, the South Orangetown Central School District has identified the following critical operations and instituted the following Incident Command Structure for those operations.

The Pandemic Response Team shall be activated by the Superintendent or his alternate when the World Health Organization raises the Pandemic Alert Level to Level 4 or under direction of State or County Health Officials.



## **PERSONNEL ASSIGNMENTS**

The following are the current personnel assignments for the Incident Command System:

Superintendent: Dr. Ken Mitchell  
Deputy Superintendent: Ann Vaccaro-Teich  
Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources: Mary Sculnick  
Director of Special Education & Student Services: Michele Fenster  
Facilities/Health & Safety: Phil Scala  
Transportation: Denise Derfus  
Public Information Officer: BJ Greco

## **Alternates**

In the event that Dr. Mitchell is not available, the Deputy Superintendent (and Assistant Superintendent next) shall serve as Incident Commander. All chiefs of critical operation sectors shall designate at least one alternate Sector Chief that shall serve in the event of their absence. It is further recommended that those Sector Chiefs responsible for large departments create their own departmental ICS to ensure adequate accountability in light of the anticipated morbidity rate.

In the event of a pandemic illness, the District shall create a Pandemic Response Team. This team shall be under the authority of the district superintendent. The team's responsibilities shall include implementation of this plan to ensure that vital operations continue.

### **Notification of Parents, Guardians and Staff**

In an effort to provide a safe, secure and conducive learning environment the Rockland BOCES has developed a District Wide Safety Plan and Building Specific Safety Plans to address issues that could adversely affect the employees, staff, students and visitors of the District. These plans provide for specific procedures as to the method and manner of notification of parents, guardians, and persons in parental relationship of issue regarding incidents that occur in or on district owned properties. The Superintendent shall ensure that timely and appropriate information about incidents in or on District Owned property is communicated to parents, guardians, and persons in parental relationship. This notification may include but will not be limited to written, video, audio, or other electronic methods. The notifications will include such information that is pertinent to the incident but that will not compromise an on going investigation, violate laws of privacy or civil right, compromise sensitive or confidential information or violate any other district policy or procedure or legal statute.

### **INFECTION CONTROL**

1. Display notices at entry points to the buildings, advising staff, students and visitors not to enter if they have symptoms of influenza.
2. Ensure ample supply of tissues, waste receptacles, soap or hand sanitizing gels.
3. Ensure that surfaces are cleaned at least daily.
4. Where possible, increase building ventilation and replace filters frequently.
5. Cancel group activities that encourage close personal contact.
6. Encourage staff and students to seek for medical assistance as soon as symptoms develop.
7. Discourage the use of shared workspaces such as desks.
8. In addition to Standard Precautions, school nurses shall implement Droplet Precautions in accordance with World Health Organization and Centers for Disease Control guidelines. Appropriate respirators will be supplied to staff by the district.
9. Students and Staff shall be encouraged to adopt CDC procedures as outlined below.
10. If necessary, close school.

## **CENTER FOR DISEASE CONTROL PROCEDURES**

### **How Germs Spread**

Illnesses like the flu (influenza) and colds are caused by viruses that infect the nose, throat, and lungs. The flu and colds usually spread from person to person when an infected person coughs or sneezes.

### **How to Help Stop the Spread of Germs**

Take care to:

- Cover your mouth and nose when you sneeze or cough
- Clean your hands often
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth
- Stay home when you are sick and check with a health care provider when needed
- Practice other good health habits

### **Cover your mouth and nose when you sneeze or cough**

Cough or sneeze into a tissue and then throw it away. Cover your cough or sneeze if you do not have a tissue. Then, clean your hands, and do so every time you cough or sneeze.

### **Clean your hands often**

When available, wash your hands -- with soap and warm water -- then rub your hands vigorously together and scrub all surfaces. Wash for 15 to 20 seconds. It is the soap combined with the scrubbing action that helps dislodge and remove germs.

When soap and water are not available, alcohol-based disposable hand wipes or gel sanitizers may be used. You can find them in most supermarkets and drugstores. If using a gel, rub the gel in your hands until they are dry. The gel doesn't need water to work; the alcohol in the gel kills germs that cause colds and the flu.\*

### **Avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth**

**Germs are often spread when a person touches something that is contaminated with germs and then touches their eyes, nose, or mouth.** Germs can live for a long time (some can live for 2 hours or more) on surfaces like doorknobs, desks, and tables.

**Stay home when you are sick and check with a health care provider when needed**  
**When you are sick or have flu symptoms, stay home, get plenty of rest, and check with a health care provider as needed.** Your employer may need a doctor's note for an excused absence. Remember: Keeping your distance from others may protect them from getting sick. Common symptoms of the flu include:

- fever (usually high)
- headache
- extreme tiredness
- cough
- sore throat

- runny or stuffy nose
- muscle aches, and
- nausea, vomiting, and diarrhea, (much more common among children than adults).

### **ABSENCES: Staff & Students**

Staff and students with known or suspected pandemic influenza should not remain in the District, and they should not return until their symptoms resolve. Under the direction of the CDC and HHS, the District has adopted the following pandemic influenza sick-leave policies.

The Pandemic Illness Team shall ensure that all staff members are aware of the signs and symptoms of the disease that prompted the public health emergency. This awareness training shall take the form of departmental meetings, posters, email, or district-wide awareness training. The Director of Human Resources shall encourage all ill staff members to stay home and seek medical attention. Infected staff shall not return to work until such time that they are symptom free or past the contagious period. Staff members who become ill and stay home shall not be penalized.

Students that display the signs and symptoms of the illness will be sent home after being evaluated by the school nurse. In the event that the student's illness appears to require immediate medical care, the nurse shall call 911. Where possible, all students displaying signs and symptoms of the pandemic illness will be cohorted and separated from the general population until they leave the school. Students shall not return until such time that they are symptom free or past the contagious period. Upon return to school and prior to entering the general population, the student shall report to the school nurse for evaluation. In the event that child is still exhibiting signs and symptoms, i.e. fever, the student shall be sent home. Student absenteeism policies shall follow New York State Education Department guidelines.

Student absences that appear to be part of contagious illness cluster shall be reported to the Pandemic Response Team via the nurse leader.

### **TRANSPORTATION**

Student transportation will be conducted in one of three methods. Having the ill student transported by their parents is the ideal scenario. In the event that the parent or guardian cannot pick up an ill student, ambulance transportation should be obtained. In event that a shortage of ambulances arises, the school nurse will make every attempt within her/his scope of practice to make the patient as comfortable as possible. All well students shall be transported in their usual fashion. Should the need arise, the District may have to suspend student transportation due to lack of staff.

### **OFF CAMPUS EDUCATION**

In the event that the World Health Organization raises its Pandemic Alert Level to Phase 5 with evidence of clusters in North America, the anticipated rate among students and staff effected is going to present a number of challenges with respect to continuing student education. In response, the District will implement the plan developed by the New York State Education Department to address these challenges.