Pandemic Response Plan Protocol

# Don’t Forget!

Include your school’s logo, mission statement, and the date of this plan.

# Introduction

Your introduction should explain the purpose of this plan. State your school’s/district’s commitment to the safety and wellbeing of your students and the broader community, and commitment to delivering high quality instruction whenever possible. If applicable, specify the types of pandemics that this plan prepares your school/district to respond to (for example, influenza, novel viruses, etc.). Include any guiding principles that may determine your approach and response in various situations. State that you will be operating in accordance with guidelines from your state, the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and/or other governing authorities in case of a pandemic.

## Some principles to keep in mind:

* **Work with a team**. Don’t try to create every policy or handle every phone call by yourself. Times of emergency are opportunities for leadership at all levels of the building.
* **Establish norms and processes**. Anticipate that a pandemic may lead to higher volume of phone calls, questions, reports, and/or incidents. Establish norms and processes for documentation and lean on your team to handle lower-level incidents and report up to you.
* **Safety and compassion first**. Pandemics are times of high anxiety. You have an opportunity to set the tone for your school by responding with understanding, compassion, and positivity.
* **Be creative**. Look for opportunities to partner with the community and think creatively about how to cope with the unique challenges posed.

Most schools/districts identify varying levels or phases of a pandemic and provide their anticipated responses to each level:

# Level 1

Typically, “Level 1” pandemics involve a higher-than-normal rate absences due to illness. Schools remain open, but it’s important to address what proactive measures you are taking during this time to help prevent the spread of disease. Some questions to consider and address in this section include:

**Communication**

* How will you communicate with parents?

**Preparing Staff and Teachers**

* Will you provide any training for teachers to recognize symptoms?
* Do you have enough substitutes or other teachers who can cover for teachers who exhibit symptoms?
* What is the plan of action if a child exhibits symptoms at school?

**Instruction**

* What are the learning expectations for students who miss school?
* Review your existing curricula for online supplemental resources, and make sure that teachers and students know how to access them.

At Level 1, it’s prudent to conduct a School Technology Audit (see template on the Corwin School Leader’s Online Toolkit) to start planning for Levels 2 and 3, if necessary.

# Level 2

When a pandemic reaches “Level 2,” schools may have a large number of students and/or staff who miss school due to the pandemic. The CDC may recommend quarantines of people who exhibit symptoms of disease. Schools remain open but must consider whether to shift to a hybrid model of learning, with some forms of learning taking place online. Questions to address at this phase include:

**Communication**

* How will you provide ongoing, regular communication to staff, parents, the community, and governing bodies about the status of the pandemic at your school?
* Designate team members and a process for fielding incoming calls/concerns from parents and other stakeholders. Consider establishing a “hotline” for parents to call.

**Preparing Teachers and Staff**

* How will you cover for teachers who may have prolonged absences due to illness?
* What is your paid leave policy for teachers and staff who may experience prolonged absences?
* Do you have a process for staff and teachers to report up about the health of their students and/or any situations that may arise in their classrooms? Anticipate that you may have a high volume of reports, so designate team members who can respond appropriately and document incidents.

**Instruction**

* What are the learning expectations for large numbers of students who miss school?
* Review your School Technology Audit with a team to determine whether online learning is a viable option for students who are absent.

**School Closure**

* What are the criteria you will use to determine whether your school closes?

# Level 3

At a Level 3, the CDC and other governing bodies recommend that schools close to prevent the spread of infectious disease – and/or your school board or team may have proactively decided to close schools. Ideally, your Level 3 planning builds on the proactive measures that you took during Levels 1 and 2. At a Level 3, in the event of school closures, your plan should answer the following questions:

**Leadership and Governance**

* Are plans in plate to allow for the school board and other leadership teams to meet remotely if access to buildings is restricted?

**Communication**

* If Internet connectivity fails, do districts have a contingency plan to allow for continued communication (for example, phone trees, conference lines, etc.)?

**Preparing Teachers and Staff**

* Will teachers and staff continue to be paid?
* Can staff continue to work remotely? If so, will they need remote access to certain functions such as payroll and other systems?
* In the event that it is unsafe for staff to access school buildings, ensure that your team is equipped with devices and access to programs to continue necessary communication from home.

**Instruction**

* After reviewing your School Technology Audit, will your school(s) be moving to deliver instruction online for all students? If so, what will that look like?
* If moving instruction online, will school follow a typical schedule? Consider creating an ideal weekly schedule for teachers to allow for flexibility and continued instruction.
* If moving instruction online, how will you ensure that all teachers and students have access to tools, devices, and software programs to continue learning?
* Continue to provide ongoing communication to all stakeholders through the media identified during Level 2.

**Community Support**

* How can unused school resources be reallocated to support the community? For example…
  + Could unused cleaning supplies be donated to medical facilities?
  + Could school buses and drivers be mobilized to deliver food to families in need?
  + Could school buildings be made available as hospitable outreach/overflow sites?
  + Could donations be collected at school sites, as locations that are central and well-known in the community?

# Don’t Forget!

Include specific contact information in your Pandemic Response Plan so that parents, staff, and others know how to communicate effectively at each level of response.