



Procedural Guideline

Guideline: *Pandemic Protocol*

Process / Function: *Custodial Services*

Primary Responsibility: *Supervisor – Building Services*

Frequency: *As Required*

Guideline Owner: *Manager – Facility Services*

RATIONALE:

This procedure has been created to complement plans established by the World Health Organization, Health and Welfare Canada, the Ministry of Health and Long Term Care, Health Units of the Municipality of Chatham-Kent and County of Lambton. The Board anticipates the following predictions in its planning:

- The possibility that 40 – 60% of staff will be absent at some point during the course of the pandemic
- There will be two distinct waves of illness occurring three to nine months apart, each lasting approximately six to eight weeks.

The World Health Organization identifies the following pandemic cycles:

Period	Phase	Description
Interpandemic Period	Phase 1	No new influenza virus subtypes have been detected in humans. An influenza virus subtype that has caused human infection may be present in animals. If present in animals, the risk of human infection is considered to be low.
	Phase 2	No new influenza virus subtypes have been discovered in humans. However, a circulating animal influenza virus subtype poses a substantial risk of human disease.
Pandemic Alert Period	Phase 3	Human infection(s) with a new subtype, but no human-to-human spread, or at most, rare instances of spread to a close contact.
	Phase 4	Small cluster(s) with limited human-to-human transmission but spread is highly localized, suggesting that the virus is not well adapted to humans.
	Phase 5	Large cluster(s) but human-to-human spread still localized, suggesting that the virus is becoming increasingly better adapted to humans, but may not yet be fully transmittable (substantial pandemic risk).
Pandemic Period	Phase 6	Increased and sustained transmission in general population
Post Pandemic Period		Return to Interpandemic period

The St Clair Catholic District School Board could be faced with extremely high absenteeism rate during a pandemic. For this reason, the Board is planning ahead to ensure we have the capacity to maintain service delivery during this time. The Board may be asked to close schools to reduce the potential spread of influenza and health agencies may request the use of schools to act as temporary health facilities.

During a pandemic, the health and safety of staff and students will be closely monitored. If health and safety becomes a concern, the Executive Council will consider recommending the closure of specific facilities in consultation with Public Health. It is also possible that the Chief Public Health Officer may make recommendations regarding the closure of individual schools, or all schools.

The Board's protocol identifies the Board's key issues, responsibilities, and obligations, and provides general framework for coordinating resources, making decisions, and communicating with the media. It is based on two overriding priorities:

- Preventing the spread of the influenza virus and protecting SCCDSB staff and students from infection
- Maintaining school operations as completely as possible in the event of an influenza pandemic

RESPONSIBILITIES:

Facility Services will work alongside the Associate Director, the Executive Manager – Human Resources, the Superintendents of Education and the Health & Safety Officer to:

- Ensure the health and safety of staff, students and community members.
- To make a clear and complete assessment of situations that may arise
- To determine the closing of any school(s) due to excessive absenteeism
- To make recommendations regarding communications, including media releases
- To act as an emergency resource for Board personnel

PROCEDURE:

1. If an Ontario pandemic is declared, it is the intention of the Board to keep schools open whenever possible. However, disruptions in normal events and activities will occur in certain cases, events/activities may be suspended.
 - 1.1. **Access to Schools** – Access to school buildings may be limited and controlled as needed.
 - 1.2. **After Hours School Permits** – Existing/new permits for school facility use may be cancelled/not issued.
 - 1.3. **Assemblies** – All special events, including student assemblies, may be canceled.
 - 1.4. **Board Meetings** – Board Meetings will be held as scheduled and more frequently if necessary.
 - 1.5. **Cafeterias** – Cafeterias in secondary schools may be closed.
 - 1.6. **Community Schools** – Afterhours activity/access to community schools may be canceled.
 - 1.7. **Courier Services** – Will operate as usual.
 - 1.8. **Custodial Services** – A contingency plan will be developed which may include cleaning of facilities outside of school hours.
 - 1.9. **Daycares** – Daycare centres will continue to operate, as long as the school building remains open.

- 1.10. **Essential Maintenance Services** – Facility Services staff will develop and implement contingency plans to ensure adequate resources to maintain schools in the event of a pandemic.
- 1.11. **Extracurricular Activities** – Extracurricular activities may be canceled.
- 1.12. **Garbage Collection** – The normal process for garbage collection will be maintained.
- 1.13. **Maintenance** – The accepted practice shall continue; i.e. emergency calls will be directed to the Maintenance Supervisor(s) with a follow-up to the Facility Services – Manager as soon as possible. Maintenance items, which are not of an emergency nature should be communicated to the Maintenance Supervisor(s) in a normal manner. Board staff and outside contractors will be used for all types of emergency maintenance and routine maintenance may be suspended.
- 1.14. **Meetings** – Meetings that take administrators or staff out of school may be canceled or held by teleconference.
- 1.15. **Professional Development Days** – All professional development activities and attendance at conferences may be canceled.
- 1.16. **Security of Facilities** – While schools are open, security of facilities will continue in accordance with current procedures.
- 1.17. **Student Transportation** – Subject to daily review. Wherever possible, buses will operate as normal.
- 1.18. **Supplies Orders** – The normal process for order and delivery of supplies will be maintained.

2. Strategic Considerations

- 2.1. SCCDSB's first priority is the safety and wellbeing of students and staff.
- 2.2. SCCDSB will rely on the advice and direction of provincial public health officials in the event of a pandemic. Decisions regarding school closings will be on the advice of the Medical Officers of Health.
- 2.3. SCCDSB spans two municipal jurisdictions – Chatham-Kent and Sarnia-Lambton, with separate, autonomous public health units. SCCDSB will coordinate with both Medical Officers of Health to ensure consistent messaging across the district.

3. Communication

- 3.1. Communication with stakeholders and community members is critical during a pandemic to ensure confidence in the Board and its actions and decisions. Key messages will include:
 - i. The SCCDSB has a well-considered and organized pandemic plan. The plan will be posted to the Board's public website.

- ii. During a pandemic, the SCCDSB will follow the advice and guidance of provincial and local public health officials who have the expertise to assess the level of health risk posed by a specific situation.
- iii. Our priority during a pandemic is to keep schools open as long as it is safe to do so. Non-essential services, functions and events may be cancelled to limit the spread of illness and to focus on providing the most necessary services to our community.
- iv. Consultations with public health authorities will inform the Board's communications to parents, students, staff and the community.

Appendix A – Pandemic Preparedness Plan Fact Sheet

What is a Pandemic?

A pandemic is any infectious disease that spreads quickly. Pandemic flu is usually a new and highly infectious viral respiratory illness that occurs when a new strain of the flu virus appears and spreads quickly. Humans may have little or no immunity to this virus.

What is the St Clair Catholic District School Board's pandemic plan?

The SCCDSB is well prepared for a pandemic. The Board has developed its pandemic preparedness plan for its schools and worksites. In developing the plan, the Board worked closely with local Medical Officers of Health, Health Units and the Ministries of Education and Health, as well as its own staff, federations and unions.

If a pandemic in Ontario is confirmed by the local Medical Officers of Health, the SCCDSB will activate its pandemic plan. During a pandemic, the Board will follow the advice and guidance of provincial and local public health officials who have the expertise to assess the level of health risk posed by a specific situation.

Our priority during a pandemic is to keep schools open as long as it is safe to do so unless otherwise advised by Ontario public health authorities. If the health and safety of staff and students become concerns, the Board will consider school and site closures.

Will activities continue as usual during a pandemic?

The SCCDSB will continue to provide its regular services and operate as usual if a pandemic is declared outside of Ontario. Once a pandemic is declared in Ontario, the Board will activate its pandemic preparedness plan. Some activities may be cancelled or modified.

What activities will continue during a declared pandemic in Ontario?

As identified above, many activities will continue during a declared pandemic in Ontario. These activities may, however, result in a modified level of service. The Board will endeavor to offer services to the best of its ability, including but not limited to:

- Instruction, evaluation and reporting
- Student transportation – buses will maintain regular schedules while schools remain open
- Childcare – providers will remain open unless unsafe to do so
- Occasional teachers – administrators will be able to bring in occasional teachers to ensure appropriate levels of coverage and supervision in schools
- Volunteers – regular practice regarding SCCDSB schools will be reviewed on a regular basis
- Cafeteria services and hospitality programs
- Maintenance services – including but not limited to heating, air conditioning, plumbing electrical and computer repair
- Garbage collection
- Security of facilities – if schools are closed, additional security patrols will be scheduled
- Board meetings – may be held more frequently and/or electronically
- Critical incident response teams will continue to operate with regard to health and safety
- Ordering of supplies
- Internal courier and printing

What activities may be suspended during a declared pandemic in Ontario?

Based on the advice of Medical Officers of Health, some activities may be suspended during a pandemic, in order to protect the health and wellbeing of students and staff. These may include:

- Extracurricular activities
- School-based food programs – such as pizza days
- Field trip/excursions – all field trips/excursions will be cancelled, including ones that have already been planned and paid for by families
- School council meetings – principal would remain in regular contact with the school council chair
- Professional development activities
- Staff meetings – meetings that take administrators or staff outside of school will be cancelled or held by teleconference
- After hours' school permits – existing and new permits for school facility use
- Continuing education – night school, summer school and international language programs
- Community Use of Schools – afterhours activity/access to community schools
- Home instruction

During a declared pandemic in Ontario, how will the SCCDSB keep its employees and community informed?

The SCCDSB is committed to ensuring that all employees, students, parents and members of the community be kept up-to-date on its plan. The Board has developed a comprehensive communications plan to ensure that all stakeholders are kept informed in the event a pandemic is declared in Ontario.

During a declared pandemic in Ontario, the Board will provide overall information and status of schools through the SCCDSB website – www.st-clair.net