



WIDEFIELD SCHOOL DISTRICT 3 ACTION STEPS FOR PANDEMIC ILLNESS

The following are steps WSD3 schools take before, during, and after a pandemic outbreak. Remember that a pandemic may have several cycles, waves or outbreaks, so these steps may need to be repeated. Parents and staff can refer to guidelines issued by the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment, available at <https://www.colorado.gov/pacific/cdphe/covid-19-recommendations>

PREPAREDNESS/PLANNING PHASE – BEFORE AN OUTBREAK OCCURS

1. Update and reference pandemic action plan.
2. Maintain strong relationships with local health department.
3. Encourage good hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette in all staff and students.
4. Train nurse school staff to recognize symptoms of influenza and pandemic illness.
5. Encourage students and staff to stay home when they are ill.
6. Report increased absenteeism or new disease trends to the local health department.
7. Maintain supplies for frequent hand hygiene including soap, hand sanitizers and paper towels.
8. Identify students who may be most vulnerable to serious illness and communicate with families.
9. Develop alternative learning strategies to continue education in the event of a pandemic.
10. Maintain facility cleaning protocol and increase sanitation with recommended disinfectant.

RESPONSE – DURING AN OUTBREAK

1. Heighten disease surveillance and reporting to the local health department.
2. Communicate regularly with parents informing them of the community and school status and expectations during periods of increased disease.
3. Coordinate with local health officials to determine cancelation of events or school closures.
4. Report any school closures due to influenza or pandemic illness online to the CDC.
5. Continue to educate students, staff and families on hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette.

RECOVERY – FOLLOWING AN OUTBREAK

1. Continue communication with the local health department regarding the status of disease in the community and schools.
2. Communicate with parents on school status and impact to learning.
3. Continue to monitor absenteeism and report disease trends to the health department.
4. Provide resources/referrals to staff and students who need assistance in dealing with the emotional aspects of the pandemic experience.

COMMUNICATING ABOUT PANDEMIC ILLNESS

Be mindful that what you say and do about COVID-19, current prevention efforts, and related events can either increase or decrease your child's anxiety. Below are some tips from the National Association of School Psychologists.

- Remind children that adults in their lives are working to keep them safe and healthy at all times.
- Listen to children's feelings and reframe concerns into appropriate perspectives.
- Address the idea that stories on the internet may be based on rumors and inaccurate information. In the absence of factual information, children often imagine situations far worse than reality.
- Talk to children about factual information of the disease, including how the disease is spread and how to protect themselves.
- Don't ignore concerns. Explain current status of illness in your location (city/state/country).