

PANDEMIC INFLUENZA PLANNING CHECKLIST FOR SCHOOLS, FAITH FORMATION, CHILD CARE AND PRESCHOOLS IN THE DIOCESE OF DAVENPORT

A pandemic is a global disease outbreak. A flu pandemic occurs when a new influenza virus emerges that people have little or no immunity to and for which there may be no vaccine. The disease spreads easily person-to-person and causes serious illness. It can sweep across the country and around the world very quickly. It is hard to predict when the next pandemic will occur or how bad it will be.

Local schools/parishes play an integral role in protecting the health and safety of their staff, students and their families. The Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Diocese of Davenport have developed the following checklist to assist parishes and schools in developing and/or improving plans to prepare for and respond to an influenza pandemic.

Building a strong relationship with the local health department is critical for developing a meaningful plan. The key planning activities in this checklist build upon existing contingency plans recommended for schools and faith based organizations by the U.S. Department of Education (Practical Information on Crisis Planning: A Guide for Schools and Communities can be found at www.ed.gov/admins/lead/safety/emergencyplan/crisisplanning.pdf and further information on pandemic influenza can be found at www.pandemicflu.gov).

1. Planning and Coordination:

Completed In Progress Not Started

Completed	In Progress	Not Started		Responsible Person(s)	Existing Resources	Information Needed	Next Steps
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	a. Identify the authority responsible for declaring a public health emergency at the state, Diocesan and local levels and for officially activating the school's/parish's pandemic influenza response plan.				
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	b. Identify for all stakeholders the legal authorities responsible for executing the community operational plan, especially those authorities responsible for case identification, isolation, quarantine, movement restriction, healthcare services, emergency care, and mutual aid.				
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	c. As part of the Diocesan crisis management plan, address pandemic influenza preparedness, involving all relevant stakeholders in the school/parish. (e.g., lead emergency response agency, school/parish administrators, pastors, local public health representatives, school health and mental health professionals, teachers, food services director, and parent representatives). This committee is accountable for articulating strategic priorities and overseeing the development of the school/parish operational pandemic plan.				
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	d. Work with local and/or state health departments and other community partners to establish organizational structures, such as the Incident Command System, to manage the execution of the school/parish pandemic flu plan. An Incident Command System, or ICS, is a standardized organization structure that establishes a line of authority and common terminology and procedures to be followed in response to an incident. Ensure compatibility between the school's/parish's established ICS and the local/state health department, and state education department's ICS and the Diocese.				
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	e. Identify or create health and safety committee to provide guidance to school sites regarding pandemic flu preparations				
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	f. Test the linkages between the Diocesan Incident Command System and the local school/parish health department's Incident Command System and state education department's Incident Command System.				
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	g. Delineate accountability and responsibility as well as resources for key stakeholders engaged in planning and executing specific components of the operational plan. Assure that the plan includes timelines, deliverables, and performance measures.				

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h. Develop template letters for staff, parents, students, and parishioners regarding the pandemic. Letters may include general information, grief counseling and possible health problems, etc.

i. Contribute to the local health department's operational plan for surge capacity of healthcare and other services to meet the needs of the community (e.g., schools designated as contingency hospitals, schools feeding vulnerable populations, community utilizing school's/parish's healthcare and mental health staff). In an affected community, at least two pandemic disease waves (about 6-8 weeks each) are likely over several months.

j. Incorporate into the pandemic influenza plan the requirements of students with special needs (e.g., low income students who rely on the school food service for daily meals), and for those who do not speak English as their first language.

k. Participate in exercises of the community's pandemic plan. Conduct timely debriefings to identify lessons learned and make necessary changes to the response plan.

l. Consider developing in concert with the local health department a surveillance system that would alert the local health department to a substantial increase in absenteeism among students. If there is a Faith Formation or Youth Ministry activity attendance must be taken and illness report as necessary to the county health department. Make sure those numbers are included with all important numbers and on a phone tree list.

m. Develop procedures for reporting numbers of students absent to your local public health department if over 10% or as requested.

n. Share what you have learned from developing your preparedness and response plan with Diocesan schools/programs as well as within the community to improve community response efforts.

o. Learn who in your area has legal authority to close child care programs if there is a flu emergency.

p. Learn whether the local/state health departments and agencies that regulate child care have plans. Be sure your flu plan is in line with their plans. Tell them if you can help support your community's plan.

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q. Identify all the ways a flu pandemic might affect your program and develop a plan of action. (For example, you might have problems with food service, transportation, or staffing.)

r. Encourage parents to have a "Plan B" for finding care for their children if the school or program is closed during a flu pandemic. Give them ideas about where they might seek help based on your knowledge of the local child care community.

s. Learn about services in your area that can help your staff, children, and their families deal with stress and other problems caused by a flu pandemic. An example might be SAP (Student Assistance Program) and EAP (Employee Assistance Program). If there is a loss of life in the school or parish community establish location site or "Safe Room" for counseling services to be provided.

t. Stage a drill to test your plan and then improve it as needed. Repeat the drill from time to time. Consider volunteering to help in community tests. Document "lessons learned" and revise plans and trainings.

u. Outline what the organizational structure will be during an emergency and revise periodically. The outline should identify key contacts with multiple back-ups, roles and responsibilities, and who is supposed to report to whom.

v. Identify and train essential staff (including full-time, part-time and volunteer staff) needed to carry on your organization's work during a pandemic. Include back-up plans, cross-train staff in other jobs so that if staff are sick, others are ready to come in to carry on the work.

y. Develop a continuity of operations plan for essential office/parish functions including payroll and ongoing communication with students and parents.

z. Have small denominations of cash on hand in case the ATM's or Banks are not available.

aa. Talk to other child care and preschool programs in your area to share information that could make your plan better. Discuss ways programs could work together to produce a stronger plan and combine resources.

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2. Plan for the impact of a pandemic at the local level:

a. The pandemic Committee/team will create or review school/parish pandemic flu plan. Identify chain of command in case of illness. Establish a back-up chain of command.

b. Determine the potential impact of a pandemic on your school/faith formation programs. Plan for situations likely to require increasing, decreasing or altering your programs.

c. Work with Human Resource Committee regarding school/parish functioning with 40% of work force absent. Look at alternatives such as staggered school/parish times, changes in bussing, and telecommunications.

d. Determine the potential impact of a pandemic on outside resources that your program depends on to deliver its services (e.g., supplies, travel, etc.)

3. Continuity of Student Learning and Core Operations:

a. Develop scenarios describing the potential impact of a pandemic on student learning (e.g., student and staff absences), school/parish closings, and extracurricular activities based on having various levels of illness among students and staff.

b. Plan ways to help families continue their child's learning/faith formation if your program is closed. (For example, give parents materials, lesson plans or ideas they can use at home. Tell them how to find activities and ideas on the internet?.

c. Develop alternative procedures to assure continuity of instruction (e.g., web-based distance instruction, telephone trees, mailed lessons and assignments, instruction via local radio or television stations) in the event of school/parish closures.

4. Communicate with and educate your staff, members, and persons in the local communities that you serve?

a. Find up-to-date, reliable pandemic information and other public health advisories from state and local health departments, emergency management agencies, and CDC. Make this information available to your organization and others. Use Diocesan website (www.davenportdiocese.org). It will have up-to-date links to state and federal sites.

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<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	b. Identify school/parish based individual(s) to educate staff about pandemic flu.				
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	c. Develop tools to communicate information about pandemic status and your school's/parish's actions. This might include websites, flyers, local newspaper announcements, pre-recorded widely distributed phone messages, etc.				
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	d. Distribute materials with basic information about pandemic influenza: signs and symptoms, how it is spread, ways to protect yourself and your family (e.g., respiratory hygiene and cough etiquette), family preparedness plans, and how to care for ill persons at home.				
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	e. When appropriate, include basic information about pandemic influenza in public meetings (e.g., sermons, classes, trainings, small group meetings and announcements).				
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	f. Share information about your pandemic preparedness and response plan with staff, members, and persons in the communities that you serve.				
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	g. Consider your faith community's unique contribution to addressing rumors, misinformation, fear and anxiety.				
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	h. Ensure what you communicate is appropriate for the cultures, languages and reading levels of your staff, members, and persons in the communities that you serve.				
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	i. Work with the local health department to implement effective infection prevention policies and procedures that help limit the spread of influenza at schools in the Diocese (e.g., promotion of hand hygiene, cough/sneeze etiquette). Make good hygiene a habit now in order to help protect children from many infectious diseases such as flu.				
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	j. Provide sufficient and accessible infection prevention supplies (e.g., soap, alcohol-based/waterless hand hygiene products, tissues and receptacles for their disposal). Store the supplies in easy-to-find places.				

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<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	k. Establish sick leave policies and procedures for staff and students suspected to be ill or who become ill at school/parish programs. Staff and students with known or suspected pandemic influenza should not remain at school and should return only after their symptoms resolve and they are physically ready to return to school. (e.g., non-punitive, liberal leave). Staff members or volunteers and students are required to stay home if they think they might be sick.				
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	l. Set up policies for flexible work hours and working from home.				
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	m. Have a plan for keeping children who become sick at your program isolated from other children until the family arrives, such as a fixed place for a sick room. (See http://nrc.uchsc.edu/CFOC/XMLVersion/Chapter_3.xml .)				
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	n. Establish policies for transporting ill students and/or staff.				
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	o. Give special attention to teaching staff, children, and their parents on how to limit the spread of infection. (For example, use good hand washing; cover the mouth when coughing or sneezing; clean toys frequently.) Programs should already be teaching these things to build habits that protect children from disease. (See www.cdc.gov/flu/school/and www.healthykids.us/cleanliness.htm).				
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	p. Tell families that experts recommend yearly flu shots for all children 6 months to 5 years old and for anyone who cares for children in that age range. (See www.cdc.gov/od/oc/media/pressrel/r060223.htm .)				
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	q. Encourage staff to get flu shots each year. (See www.cdc.gov/flu/protect/preventing/htm .)				
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	r. Tell parents to let your school/program know if their children are sick. Keep accurate records of when children or staff are absent. Include a record of the kind of illness that caused the absence (e.g., diarrhea/vomiting, coughing/breathing problems, rash, or other). See http://nrc.uchsc.edu/CFOC/XMLVersion/Chapter_3.xml				
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	s. Teach staff a standard set of steps for checking children and adults each day as they arrive to see if they are sick. Make it clear that any child or adult who is ill will not be admitted. (See www.healthykids.us/chapters/sick_main.htm .)				

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<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	t. Know how to check up-to-date CDC recommendations http://www.cdc.gov/				
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	u. Evaluate your school/parish usual activities and services (including rites and religious practices if applicable) to identify those that may facilitate virus spread from person to person. Set up policies to modify these activities to prevent the spread of pandemic influenza (e.g., guidance for respiratory hygiene and cough etiquette, and instructions for persons with influenza symptoms to stay home rather than visit in person.) See that the Diocesan Liturgical Plan is followed.				
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	v. Follow CDC (www.cdc.gov) travel recommendations during an influenza pandemic. Recommendations may include restricting travel to affected domestic and international sites, class trips, possible local field trips and recalling non-essential staff working in or near an affected site when an outbreak begins, and distributing health information to persons who are returning from affected areas.				
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	w. Plan for staff absence during a pandemic due to personal and/or family illness, quarantines, and school, business, and public transportation closures. Staff may include full-time, part-time and volunteer personnel.				
5. Communications Planning:							
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	a. Identify persons with special needs (e.g., elderly, disabled, limited English speakers) and be sure to include their needs in your response and preparedness plan. Establish relationships with them in advance so they will expect and trust your presence during a crisis.				
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	b. Develop and test platforms/procedures (e.g., hotlines, telephone trees, dedicated websites, and local radio or TV stations) for communicating pandemic status and actions to school/parish staff, students, and families.				
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	c. Make sure staff and families have seen and understand your flu pandemic plan. Explain why you need to have a plan. Give them a chance to ask questions. Give staff and students' families reliable information on the issues.				

Information taken from and modified:

Iowa Department of Public Health Division of Acute Disease Prevention and Emergency Response.

www.pandemicflu.gov/plan/schoolchecklist.html

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) offer this checklist to help programs prepare for the effects of a flu pandemic. (checklists for schools, child care and preschool, faith-based and community organizations)