

PANDEMIC/EPIDEMIC EMERGENCIES

The Board of Education recognizes that a pandemic or epidemic is a serious threat that can affect students, staff, and the entire community. The Board establishes this policy in the event that Nashua School District is affected by a pandemic or epidemic. The health, safety and welfare of the students shall be the first priority.

Extraordinary Measures

Some infectious diseases, viruses, etc., may be so dangerous and the risk of casual transmission so great, that effective response will require broader measures. Based upon specific recommendations of local, state and/or federal health authorities, the Superintendent is authorized to implement such additional, extraordinary emergency measures as may be necessary and appropriate to address the health risk: e.g., school closure, population exclusion (stay-at-home type instructions), mandatory screenings, mandatory use of personal protective equipment (PPE's), social distancing orders, administrative leaves or temporary adjustments in duties. Such measures should be taken with prior notice to the Board, if practicable, or as soon as possible thereafter. All long term planning necessary for managing the pandemic/epidemic impacts and its aftermath require collaboration and approval of the Board.

Planning and Coordination

Planning for a pandemic requires a multi-faceted effort, and school preparedness should include input from a team of individuals to address their specific areas of expertise.

The Superintendent shall designate one or more employees to serve as a liaison between the District and local and State health officials. This designee is responsible for communicating with health officials to identify local hazards, determine what crisis plans exist in the District and community, and to establish procedures to account for student and staff well-being and safety during such a crisis. The designee shall work with local and state health officials to coordinate the District's plan.

The District and/or school nurse or other designee shall develop a curriculum component to health classes that is designed to teach students about preventing or limiting the spread of communicable diseases.

The District may purchase and store supplies necessary for an epidemic/pandemic response, including but not limited to disinfectant products, face masks, water, examination gloves, hand sanitizer, and other supplies as recommended by the school nurse.

The Superintendent shall develop procedures and plans for the transportation of students in the event students are released from school early.

Response

In the event that anyone within the school district is discovered or suspected to have a communicable disease that local health officials have deemed to require extraordinary measures, that person shall be immediately isolated and local and state officials shall be notified immediately. If the individual is a student, the District shall notify the student's parents or/guardians as soon as possible.

The Superintendent shall consult with State and local health officials to determine an appropriate response. The Superintendent or designee shall provide information to staff, parents/guardians, and the school community in compliance with FERPA or any other privacy laws that may apply.

Infection Control

Students or staff who exhibit symptoms of a communicable disease that may result in an epidemic/pandemic or that puts others in the school at risk shall be sent home.

The student or staff member will not be allowed to return until that individual’s primary care physician or other medical personnel provides medical clearance that the individual does not bear the risk of transmitting the communicable disease.

If a staff member has still not received medical clearance to resume their work duties, then their absence will adhere to federal and state leave laws and applicable articles in collective bargaining agreements.

Continuance of Education

The Superintendent will develop a plan of alternate means of educating students in the event of prolonged school closings and/or extended absences. Such a plan may include but is not limited to providing students with assignments via mail, local access cable television, or the school district's website and is subject to board approval prior to implementation.

The Superintendent can amend the traditional class schedule and schedule of days subject to State law and any collective bargaining agreements. Such a plan may include but is not limited to extending the school day, having school days held on Saturdays, the use of previously scheduled vacation days, and/or extending the school year beyond the previously established end of school year. Calendar changes are subject to board approval prior to implementation.

Legal References:

Influenza Pandemic Public Health Preparedness & Response Plan, New Hampshire
Department of Health & Human Services

Board Approved: 03/29/2021