

# PANDEMIC FLU RESPONSE PLAN

## Goochland County Public Schools

### PURPOSE

In the event of an influenza pandemic, the operations of the Goochland County Public Schools (GCPS) will be altered. Delivery of instruction to students will need to be ensured through unconventional methods as schools will be closed pursuant to the Chickahominy District Health Director. This Superintendent's regulation outlines the specific procedures that GCPS staff will implement in preparation for this eventuality.

### BACKGROUND

- National public health authorities indicate that the probability of an influenza pandemic has increased significantly in recent years. A pandemic is a global disease outbreak. An influenza pandemic occurs when a new influenza virus emerges for which there is little or no immunity in the human population. The virus begins to cause serious illness and spreads easily from person-to-person worldwide.
- There have been three pandemics of influenza in the 20<sup>th</sup> century:
  - 1918: approximately 500,000 U.S. deaths & 50 million deaths worldwide
  - 1957: approximately 70,000 U.S. deaths & 1-2 million deaths worldwide
  - 1968: approximately 34,000 U.S. deaths & 700,000 deaths worldwide
- Public Health authorities have identified the following as the characteristics & challenges in a pandemic:
  - **There Will Be Rapid Worldwide Spread**
    - Global spread is inevitable in a pandemic
    - Preparedness activities should assume that entire world population is susceptible
    - Countries may delay the spread across borders, but cannot stop it
  - **Health Care Systems Will Become Overloaded**
    - Most people have little or no immunity to the new virus
    - Substantial part of population will require medical care
    - Past pandemics have spread globally in two or three waves
  - **Medical Supplies Will Be Inadequate**
    - Need for vaccine and antiviral drugs is likely to outstrip supply
    - Pandemic can create shortage of hospital beds, ventilators & other supplies
    - Difficult choices need to be made regarding who receives treatments available
  - **There Will be Economic & Social Disruption**
    - There will be travel bans, closings of school, businesses & events
    - Care for family members & fear of infection can cause severe absenteeism from work and school

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### ACTION

#### Overview

The action required in this response Plan is subdivided into three categories:

1. Preparation
2. Response to outbreak of pandemic in Virginia
3. Resumption of standard operations

Because a pandemic is a medical crisis and because public health officials are tasked with coordinating the public response to such a crisis, initiation of action under any of the categories listed above will be dependent upon advice received from any official designated by the Governor of Virginia. The goal in each phase of the plan will be to provide continuity in the delivery of instruction and to provide support to other public agencies directly charged with responding to a pandemic crisis.

#### Preparation

1. The Superintendent and Assistant Superintendent will coordinate activities to ensure faculty and staff are kept current regarding the provisions of this response Plan.
2. The Director of Technology will ensure a current copy of the plan is posted on the GCPS website.
3. The Superintendent will work with local health officials and emergency preparedness officials and update this plan accordingly as those officials develop regional plans for a flu pandemic.
4. For planning of communication with the public, the Research and Information Services Analyst will work with regional officials to prepare the action to be taken by GCPS to implement the regional communications plan.
5. Staff development necessary to implementation of regional plans in GCPS will be managed by the Assistant Superintendent. This staff development will include:
  - a. clinic staff on topics identified by the appropriate public health officials;
  - b. clinic staff's completing and filing of regional health monitoring reports;
  - c. general staff development on preventing the spread of flu and training on flu symptom recognition;
  - d. information to increase awareness that a person who is infected does not show symptoms right away; but children who are getting ill may show different behavior than usual, such as eating less or being irritable;
  - e. personal hygiene techniques appropriate for minimizing the potential spread of the flu. Emphasis will be placed on the use simple non-medical ways to reduce the spread of flu by using "cough and sneeze etiquette," frequent hands washing, and clean desk and work areas.

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6. The Director of Secondary Instruction and Director of Elementary Instruction shall manage the instruction of students on methods important to prevent the spread of flu and shall coordinate appropriate lesson plans for use in the class rooms to improve the hygiene of students. Emphasis will be placed on the use simple non-medical ways to reduce the spread of flu by using “cough and sneeze etiquette,” frequent hand washing, and clean desk and work areas.
7. The Director of Student Services shall coordinate clinics with staff to focus on flu-symptom recognition and on filing regional health monitoring reports when so directed by the appropriate public health official. The Director of Student Services will coordinate implementation of standard surveillance/disease recognition procedures in all classrooms, work areas and offices throughout GCPS.
8. The Maintenance Supervisor will determine whether the cleaning protocols for schools should be changed when advised by the Superintendent in the context of confirmed flu outbreaks.
9. The Assistant Superintendent will develop recommended guidelines to be used to encourage or require children and staff to stay home when they are mildly ill, in the context of confirmed flu outbreaks.
10. The Director of Students Services will provide guidance to schools on identifying students who are most vulnerable to serious illness (immune compromised, chronic illness, etc.) and work with Technology Department to ensure appropriate data collection for such students. This data must be available in the Welligent system.
11. School clinic staff and school administrators will review the health needs of students in each school and identify those students who may have a greater risk of infections. The Superintendent and the Research and Information Services Analyst will prepare a standard text for use by administrators to encourage those families to talk to their care provider. Administrators will send home the letter to alert these parents that they may need to be more cautious in keeping their children out of school in the context of a confirmed flu outbreak.
12. The Director of Secondary Instruction and Director of Elementary Instruction will develop alternative learning strategies by which the program of instruction can be delivered to students via:
  - a. Newspapers (*Goochland Gazette, Central Virginian, Richmond Times-Dispatch*)
  - b. Internet
  - c. Telephone (*School Messenger*)
  - d. Radio
  - e. Television
13. Such channels of communication would become the primary channels of instruction should the Chickahominy District Health Director direct the closure of public schools in Goochland in a flu outbreak.

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14. The Research and Information Services Analyst will develop a communications plan to inform staff, students and parents about: the differences between seasonal flu, other strains, and pandemic flu; best hygiene practices to prevent any sort of flu; what could occur in a pandemic. Such plan will be implemented when media reports an officially confirmed human-to-human transmission of flu anywhere in the world.

### **Outbreak of Flu in Virginia**

This phase of the response plan begins when the Chickahominy District Health Director notifies GCPS staff that confirmed cases of flu are being treated in Virginia.

1. School administrators and clinic staff will begin Heightened Surveillance Reporting to designated public health officials.
2. The Superintendent and Research and Information Services Analyst shall inform all parents telephonically, via School Messenger, of the information received from the public health official and apprise parents of the intended course of action in GCPS.
3. The Superintendent will send a follow-up letter informing parents that some students are sick but schools remain open. This letter shall include tip sheets and an information resource list as appropriate.
4. The Research and Information Services Analyst will coordinate with the Superintendent regarding a press release announcing plans for schools to remain open and providing parents with information on the contingency of closing schools.
5. Staff shall post flu prevention signs in schools and on campus upon receipt from public health officials.
6. GCPS staff shall coordinate responses to an expanding public health crisis with the Chickahominy District Health Director. GCPS staff will operate in concert with public health authorities.
7. The Superintendent and the Research and Information Services Analyst will prepare briefings for employees in anticipation of schools being closed by public health officials. These briefings will include planned activities to be conducted in GCPS should schools be closed for public health reasons. The briefings shall also include means to provide employees with updates of GCPS activities and plans for pay or non-pay status of employees while schools are closed.
8. The Director of Finance will coordinate payroll activities for employees who continue to work while schools are closed.

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9. The Assistant Superintendent will prepare plans for reopening schools should the contingency of school shutdown materialize.
10. The Maintenance Supervisor, if so requested by public health officials and directed by the Superintendent, will commence planning for use of school buildings by public health officials while schools are closed to students.
11. The Superintendent or Research and Information Services Analyst shall provide to parents periodic updates, via School Messenger, on planned action in the GCPS as the pandemic passes through the area. These messages shall also include flu prevention tips and related health information when appropriate.
12. The Research and Information Services Analyst will prepare appropriate updates to be posted on the GCPS Web site, radio and television stations as the pandemic passes through the area.
13. In the event the Chickahominy District Health Director gives a direction and the Goochland County School Board affirms such recommendation as to the closing of schools, the Superintendent or Research and Information Services Analyst shall inform parents of the decision via School Messenger. Concurrently, information will be posted on the GCPS Web site, each school's Web site and on radio and television stations.
14. With the closure of schools by the Chickahominy District Health Director, the staff of Goochland County Public Schools will implement the previously-prepared contingency plans.
15. While schools are closed at the direction of the Chickahominy District Health Director, no school-related activities will be authorized for GCPS students and staff.

### **Resumption of Normal Operations**

The Chickahominy District Health Director will decide when classes may be resumed with minimal threat to public health.

1. Upon notification that classes may resume, the Superintendent shall direct GCPS staff to commence the restart plans prepared prior to the closure of schools for public health reasons.
2. The Supervisor of Transportation and Assistant Superintendent will ascertain the availability of bus drivers, custodians and food service staff. Each school principal will report to the Superintendent on the availability of their faculty.
3. Upon determining that sufficient resources are available to resume classes in schools, the Superintendent or Research and Information Services Analyst shall inform parents telephonically via School Messenger of the time and date that schools will reopen. The School Board may authorize a complete reopening of GCPS or only a reopening of some schools as permitted by conditions at the time.

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4. Upon the reopening of schools, monitoring reports shall be filed by each school as directed by Superintendent.