

Pandemic Plan
Allandale School / Te Kura o Motueka
Developed: March 2020



BACKGROUND

Why do education agencies and providers need a pandemic plan?

1. Size of the sector

More than a quarter of New Zealanders are directly involved in the combined education sectors. Because a key response to pandemic influenza will be to minimise social gatherings, education providers need to be prepared for enforced and sustained regional or national closures of their facilities to students by health authorities. Pandemic modelling strongly suggests that education environments – especially those dealing with young people – provide a very fertile ground for spreading viruses.

At this planning stage, ECE/Schools/TEOs can play a key role in contributing to cultural change around good personal hygiene practices (such as cough and sneeze etiquette, hand washing and drying etc).

2. Need for cohesive response

Boards, Chief Executives, Boards of trustees, principals and management will need to take direction from health authorities regarding any enforced closures. Health authorities will ensure they use their powers of closure in ways that would be helpful to a cohesive national response. For example, cluster control of a pandemic in Auckland may not trigger closures elsewhere in the country. An important consideration is that the types of response to a pandemic as it progresses will change, and circumstances will vary in different parts of the country.

3. Role of education sector in recovery

Education agencies and providers will be central to social recovery when a pandemic abates. Planning should anticipate psychosocial pressures at this stage.

LEGISLATIVE POWERS

The Education Act 1989 gives principals and boards powers to exclude particular students and staff or to close their school in certain circumstances:

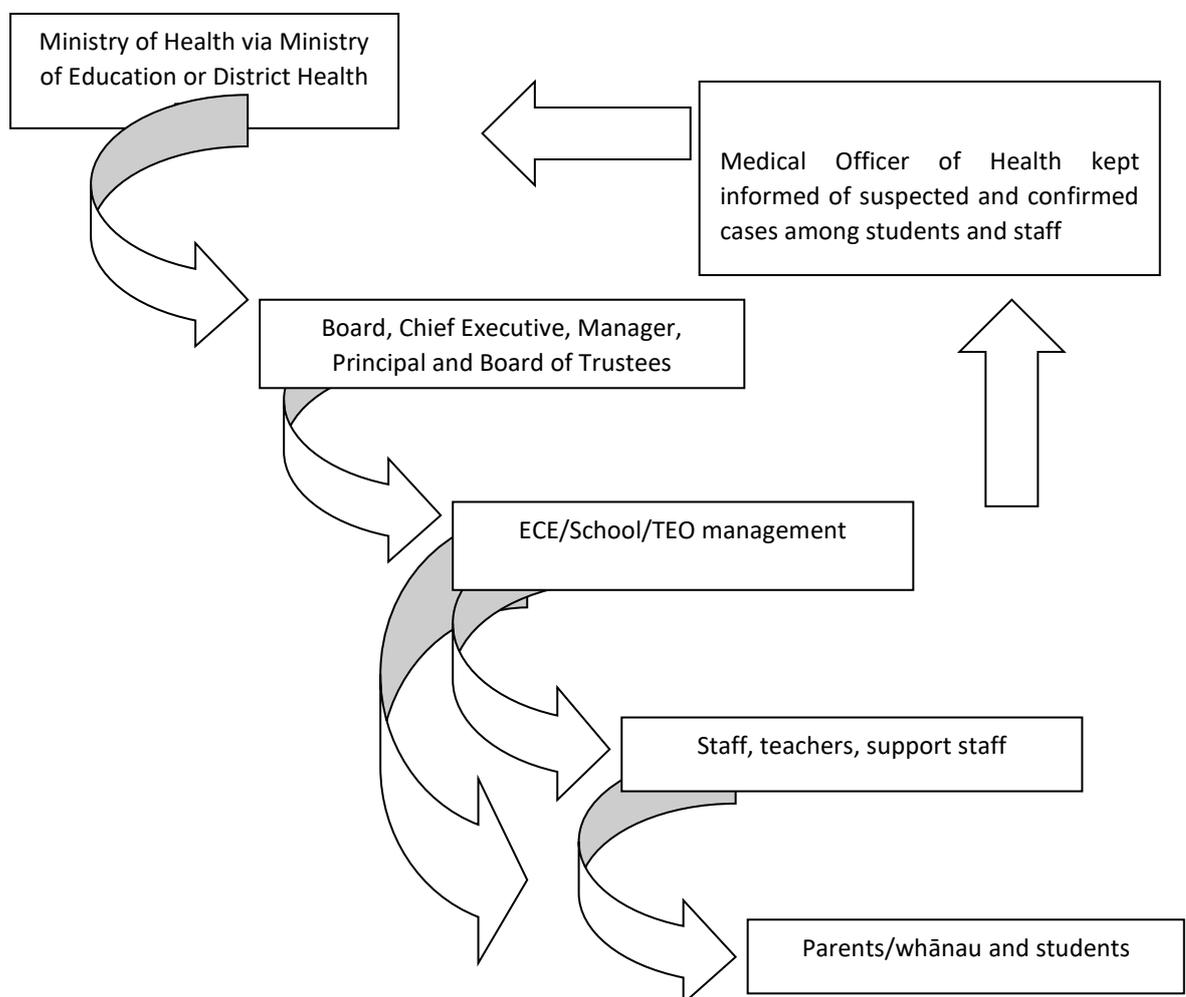
- *Section 19* provides that a principal may exclude a student who may have a communicable disease (communicable diseases are specified in the Schedule to the Act. Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza or 'bird flu' (HPAI subtype H5N1) was added

on 12 February 2004. In practice, schools would generally proceed subject to advice received from health authorities.

- *Section 65E* provides that a board may close a school in an emergency such as an epidemic.
- *The Health (Infectious and Notifiable Diseases) Regulations* place duties on schools, teachers and parents in the case of a pandemic.
- *Regulation 14* provides that schools must exclude teachers and students who have an infectious disease.

However, any decision by the board chair, chief executive, principal or management to close the School should be based on advice or direction from health authorities.

Pandemic planning – decision making and communication process for schools



LEGISLATION

Compliance with the Health and Safety in Employment Act 1992

In addition to requirements under the Civil Defence Emergency Management Act, pandemic planning will help ECE/Schools/TEOs ensure they meet their obligations under the Health and Safety in Employment Act, including:

- *Section 6: All practicable steps*
“Every employer shall take all practicable steps to ensure the safety of employees while at work; and in particular shall take all practicable steps to:
 - provide and maintain for employees a safe working environment
 - provide and maintain for employees while they are at work facilities for their safety and health...”
- *Section 28: Employees may refuse to perform work likely to cause serious harm*
“An employee may refuse to do work if the employee believes that the work that the employee is required to perform is likely to cause serious harm to him or her....”

DELEGATIONS

The BOT appoints the Principal as the Pandemic Manager. The Board Chair will support the principal to ensure the plan is executed and to respond to help decide the best response should new information become available.

MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH CONTACTS

The number for the duty Medical Officer of Health is Phil Shoemack: 021 228 5534.
Phil.Shoemack@bopdhb.govt.nz

SUPPLIES

Emergency Pandemic supplies are located at the school office and include:

- Disinfectant
- Paper towels/Tissues
- Bleach
- Disposable Gloves
- Breathing Masks
- Hand Sanitizer

ISOLATION AREA

The isolation area is: The Sick Bay.

STAGE 1: Risk Management

Notification: Ministry of Health announces escalated risk of a pandemic

The Pandemic manager will ensure:

1. Parents, caregivers and guardians are informed that the pandemic plan is activated.
2. Regular contact is made with the Medical Officer of Health
3. All contact details for students are up to date – this will be provided to the local Ministry of Education office if requested.
4. Parents, caregivers and guardians are kept updated on their tasks and responsibilities which will include how to manage sick children and adults and what happens in the event of closure.
5. Parents, caregivers and guardians are aware of ways to limit spread of the pandemic including staying at home when sick, cough and sneeze control, hand washing etc.
6. Resources are reviewed to ensure that there are sufficient supplies of cleaning materials. In the event of low supplies we will talk with staff about how to minimise but still use resources appropriately.
7. Extra cleaning is conducted in line with recommendations by the Ministry of Health. We will we delegate specific people to undertake this if it is needed.
8. Staff are encouraged to get vaccinated for influenza as early if possible.
9. Additional relief options are investigated in the case of staff absences – for all staff including teachers, teacher aides and cleaning staff.
10. Its behaviour management plan is followed and is vigilant and restorative towards any xenophobic or racist behaviour during a pandemic.
11. Students are provided support through its pastoral system (Senior Leadership/ Team Leaders/SENCO).
12. Discussions are initiated with staff of the possible health and safety issues, and leave arrangements for them if they are ill or need to look after dependents.
13. Key operating and emergency management information is stored in known, accessible and shared locations. Preferably these should not rely on electronic storage only, and be backed up off site.
14. A Continuation of Learning plan is developed to give as much access as possible to children and whānau for electronic/digital learning (e.g. using Chromebooks and Google Classroom).
15. A communication plan is developed to provide clear, timely and proactive communications to your board, staff, students, parents and whānau explaining how you are managing the situation. Consider how you might maintain communication with:
 - board, staff, student, parents and whānau
 - other ECE/Schools/TEOs in your area/cluster
 - relevant agencies and community support networks
 - key suppliers and contractors.

Staff will:

1. Check enrolment records for accuracy.
2. Become familiar with disease control and management of illness
3. Take care of any student showing the pandemic symptoms.
4. Report to the pandemic manager whether the person or child has any of the following:
 - High fever (or feel feverish or hot)
 - Headache, fatigue and weakness
 - Sore throat, cough, chest discomfort, difficulty in breathing
 - Muscle aches and pains
 - Been overseas recently to an affected country
 - Been in contact with someone diagnosed with the pandemic.
5. In consultation with the Pandemic Manager, arrange to send the student home immediately, or isolate in the isolation room if not possible.
6. Call their own doctor by telephone to advise that they have been in contact with a possible pandemic case.
7. Consider getting influenza vaccines early
8. Develop plans for how they and their whānau will manage in the event of a pandemic.
9. Be vigilant and report any xenophobic or racist behaviour during a pandemic.
10. provide student support through its pastoral system (Senior Leadership/ Team Leaders/SENCO).
11. Familiarise themselves with the Continuation of Learning plan and their role within it to enable electronic/digital learning (e.g. using Chromebooks and Google Classroom) in the instance of a closure.

STAGE 2: Cluster Control

Trigger: Ministry of Health announces human pandemic strain case(s) found in separate locations in New Zealand.

Goals

- Students at and outside school area are on heightened alert
- Parents, caregivers and guardians are informed, understand their roles and responsibilities, and have confidence in our preparedness.

The Pandemic Manager will:

1. Restrict entry of people with the pandemic symptoms. Students who are unwell will remain at home and parents, caregivers and guardians and

whānau should be advised not to come into the school when they are feeling unwell, particularly if they are exhibiting the pandemic symptoms. Unwell student's families/whānau, should be advised to contact a doctor by phone and stay at home until symptoms resolve.

2. Communicate the decision to the Allandale School community members through established protocols.
3. Notify any cases to health authorities as required
4. Establish a system to monitor families who are ill or suspected of being ill including contacting families who are unexpectedly absent.
5. Notify the local DHB if more than 30% of the roll is absent.
6. Follow the advice of the Ministry of Health in regard to all extracurricular activities and planned school trips.
7. Seek advice from the Ministry of Health about what details they need about any suspected case (e.g. names and details of close contacts).
8. Establish a process for ensuring that ill students and staff have completed any required quarantine period and *are healthy* before allowing them to return.
9. Organise removal and cleaning of materials that could act as vectors for the virus, such as books, magazines, electronic items and papers from common areas. Consider ways of cleaning and/or restricting communal use of some play, physical education equipment or office equipment.
10. Implement Pandemic Cleaning Procedure. The procedures in such an event will be to use detergent and/or bleach on all surfaces as advised by the Ministry of Health.
11. Identify essential activities and the core people and skills to keep them running.
12. Establish a system to monitor staff who are ill or suspected of being ill, including contacting staff who are unexpectedly absent from work – has their doctor been notified of their illness? Have they been in contact with anyone? Have “contact” issues been addressed? Is someone able to care for them? How do staff want the school to communicate with them?
13. Communicate and implement social distancing strategies, e.g.
 - Avoid any unnecessary travel and cancel or postpone non-essential meetings, gatherings, workshops or training sessions.
 - Avoid public transport: walk, cycle, drive a car or go early or late to avoid rush hour crowding on public transport.
 - Bring lunch and eat away from others (avoid the staffroom and crowded cafes). Introduce staggered lunchtimes and morning teas to reduce numbers in the staffroom. Consider how the school cafeteria or tuck shop should be managed.
 - Do not congregate in staff rooms or other areas where people socialise. Do what needs to be done and then leave the area.
 - If a face-to-face meeting with people is unavoidable, minimise the meeting time, choose a large meeting room and sit at least one metre away from each other if possible. Avoid shaking hands or hugging. Consider holding meetings via conference call or outside.
 - Set up systems where families and staff can request information via phone, email or fax and have information ready for fast pick-up or delivery.

- Encourage students and staff to avoid recreational or other leisure classes or meetings where they might come into contact with infectious people.
14. Ensure the Continuation of Learning Plan is up to date, resources have been produced and teachers, students and whānau understand how it works.

Allandale staff will:

1. Take care of any student showing the pandemic symptoms.
2. Report to the pandemic manager whether the person or child has any of the following:
 - High fever (or feel feverish or hot)
 - Headache, fatigue and weakness
 - Sore throat, cough, chest discomfort, difficulty in breathing
 - Muscle aches and pains
 - Been overseas recently to an affected country
 - Been in contact with someone diagnosed with the pandemic.
3. In consultation with the Pandemic Manager, arrange to send the student home immediately, or isolate in the isolation room if not possible.
4. Call their own doctor by telephone to advise that they have been in contact with a possible pandemic case and seek advice.
5. Be vigilant and report and xenophobic or racist behaviour during a pandemic.
6. provide student support through our pastoral system (Senior Leadership/ Team Leaders/SENCO).
7. Ensure familiarity with the school's Continuation of Learning Plan and progress actions to make sure it is ready to implement.

STAGE 3: Pandemic Management

Trigger: Ministry of Health announces significant number of pandemic outbreaks at separate locations, or outbreaks spreading out of control.

Goal: Allandale School successfully activates closure procedures in response to multiple cluster or national outbreak with immediate involvement of the Ministry of Education.

Pandemic Manager will:

1. Through consultation with the DHB Emergency Planner and the Ministry of Education and Health make the decision to close the school as required.
2. Advise all parents, caregivers and guardians and other stakeholders (e.g. bus companies).
3. Post notices of closure on entry points.
4. Collaborate with local agencies in making the school facilities available in pandemic response efforts.

Allandale staff will:

5. Undertake agreed roles for continuity of care and learning during the closure.
6. Advise the Pandemic Manager if you become unwell

STAGE 4: Recovery

Trigger: Population affected by vaccination/or pandemic abated in New Zealand.

Goal: Allandale School ensures continuing wellbeing of parents, caregivers and guardians and students, and education services are fully restored.

Pandemic Manager will:

1. Advise that Allandale School is reopened through telephone, email and social media.
2. Arrange for trauma/grief counselling as necessary.
3. Undertake debrief of procedures used with current members.
4. Review the importance of keeping safe guidelines with children.
5. Continue to communicate preventative measures and to require anyone with symptoms not to come to school

APPENDIX 1: ADDITIONAL BACKGROUND ON PANDEMICS

Pandemic characteristics and impact

A pandemic has unique characteristics when compared with a more “typical” disaster. For example:

- **Widespread impact**

The impact of a pandemic would likely be widespread, even nation-wide, not localised to a single area and there may be little outside assistance. Many business continuity plans assume some part of an organisation is unaffected and can take up the required capacity.
- **Not a physical disaster**

A pandemic is not a physical disaster. It has some unique characteristics that require measures to limit contact, restrict movement, introduce quarantine and ban public gatherings.
- **Duration**

A pandemic would not be a short, sharp event leading immediately to the start of a recovery stage. A pandemic emergency may last several weeks or months. Plans need to take this into account.
- **Notice**

Some advance warning is likely if a pandemic develops overseas, but that warning period may be very short. Should pandemic influenza spread within New Zealand the education sector would most probably be one of the first sectors to be closed and closures sustained
- **Primary effect is on staffing levels**

Unlike natural disasters where disruption to infrastructure and service delivery is likely to be related to hardware, a pandemic is more of a threat to staff. Employers will need to plan for the scenario of up to 50% staff absences at the height of a severe pandemic. Ministry of Health modelling shows that two weeks leave is the average amount of leave required for sickness and recovery of a staff member. Overall, a pandemic wave may last about eight weeks, though the pandemic may come in several waves of varying severity over time.

Staff absences can be expected for many reasons, including:

- illness or incapacity (suspected or actual)
- their need to stay at home to care for sick dependents
- they may feel safer working from home (for example, to keep out of crowded places such as public transport – public transport may cease)
- some people may be assigned to ‘alternative duties’ for their employer or another agency (such as health or welfare roles)

- others may need to stay at home to look after pre-school and school-aged students (as early childhood education services and schools may be closed).

A pandemic may have other impacts on services, for example:

- supplies of materials needed for ongoing activity may be disrupted when, for example, supplies are normally imported across borders that have been closed or are being tightly controlled
- services from subcontractors may be affected (impacting maintenance of key equipment and this issue merits close planning attention)
- demand for infrastructure services may be affected – demand for some services may increase (internet access is a possible example); while demand for others may fall (for example, types of travel activity may reduce)
- education delivery is not expected to continue during a pandemic. In a pandemic early and enforced sustained closure of education facilities to children and students is the most likely scenario.