

- Required
 Local
 Notice

PANDEMIC PLANNING

NOTE: NYSSBA is offering this policy for consideration in view of recent events surrounding the H1N1 virus. The Board may wish to consider including some of the language from this policy in its policy on School Safety Plans and Teams (8130), if this isn't adopted as a separate policy.

The Board of Education recognizes the public's concern over the possibility of a contagious disease outbreak and acknowledges that it is in the best interests of its students, employees and the community to prepare for such a scenario. To this end, the Board directs the Superintendent of Schools to:

1. Implement infection prevention control procedures that could help limit the spread of contagious diseases at schools in the district, including but not limited to:
 - encouraging, through classroom instruction at every grade level, good hygiene habits recommended by public health experts to help protect the school community from contagious diseases (e.g., washing hands frequently with soap and water, coughing/sneezing into the crook of the elbow instead of one's hand, utilizing alcohol-based/waterless hygiene products and avoiding shaking hands);
 - providing a description of warning signs and symptoms of contagious diseases infections and instruct parents and employees that students and staff displaying such symptoms should not report to school;
 - providing sufficient and accessible infection prevention supplies including soap, alcohol-based/waterless hygiene products, tissues and receptacles for their disposal.

2. Work with school administrators, district medical personnel, local county health representatives, teachers, guidance counselors, and other staff and parent representatives as appropriate, to prepare, as part of the district's existing emergency/safety plan, a contagious disease preparedness plan. Such plan shall include, but not be limited to:
 - Describing the potential impact of an outbreak on student learning (such as student and staff absences), school closing, and extracurricular activities based on having various levels of illness among students and staff and the alternative means of delivering education (e.g., educating students through the Internet, long-distance learning, telephone conference calls, etc.).

NYSSBA Sample Policy 8131

- Establishing procedures for caring for, isolating, and/or transporting students who become ill with contagious diseases while in school.
 - Establishing liberal, non-punitive attendance policies for students unique to an outbreak of contagious diseases.
 - Developing a process for gathering and analyzing the latest information and recommendations from health experts (for example, from the Centers for Disease Control, the New York State Health Department, etc.) which will inform district policymakers' decisions.
 - Developing a process for communicating information concerning the outbreak of contagious diseases to the school community on a continuing basis. Such efforts may include preparing an information letter for distribution to parents and guardians of students advising them of the dangers of contagious diseases and the steps that may be taken to reduce the risk of infection, and/or establishing a section on the district's website to communicate information about the district's policy concerning contagious diseases and links to relevant governmental websites.
 - Coordinating the district's plan with the local and state health departments as well as the State Education Department and area BOCES.
 - Assigning responsibility for the activities listed above to appropriate staff.
3. Facilitate discussions with all negotiating units representing employees of the district to determine whether it is appropriate to consider opening up negotiations for the limited purpose of bargaining over the inclusion in collective bargaining agreements of provisions related to sick time and absences on the part of employees, who have been either diagnosed as having contracted contagious diseases that has caused the outbreak or who have family members who have contracted the contagious diseases that has caused the outbreak.

In the event that the district implements its emergency plan in response to a pandemic, the Superintendent shall keep the Board regularly informed regarding any actions taken and information gathered.

Adoption date: