

SCHOOL DISTRICT#50- HAIDA GWAI

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## Pandemic Response Plan

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**March 12, 2020**

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## Introduction

A pandemic is the outbreak of an infectious disease that occurs over a large geographical area, often worldwide, affecting a large proportion of the population with elevated rates of illness.

- When viruses combine or mutate they evolve into a new virus.
- When people have little or no immunity to a new virus, it results in a greater person-to-person spread of illness.
- Wide-spread illness that affects all age groups, including young adults, may lead to a pandemic.
- The results of a pandemic can lead to more serious outcomes like hospitalization and death.

Contingency planning is essential for an effective response to a pandemic. This is a living document and as such will be periodically updated and revised on an as-need basis.

## Purpose

The purpose of School District 50's Pandemic Response Plan is to identify roles and responsibilities during the Pre-Pandemic, Pandemic, and Post-Pandemic periods. The focus of the plan is on prevention of transmission illness and the initiation of a quick response to situations that could escalate into a pandemic.

## Authority

School District 50's Pandemic Response Plan was developed to address the guidelines outlined in the Ministry of Education's *Pandemic Response Framework* dated August, 2009.

## When to Activate the Pandemic Response Plan

1. The Provincial Health Officer will direct the province when it is time to activate Pandemic Response Plans. If, to minimize the spread of infection, activation of these plans is to include school closures, the local Medical Health Officer will advise the Superintendent of Schools.
2. The decision to close schools is made between the Provincial Health Officer and the Superintendent of Schools.

## Policy on Reporting to Work

In accordance with Section 73(1)(b) of the *School Act*, a School Board may temporarily close a school if the health or safety of students and staff is likely to be endangered. A school medical officer can require a Board to close a school should the officer believe that the health or safety of students and staff is at risk (Section 90(2) *School Act*).

## Pandemic Response Planning Committee / Emergency Response Team

Under the direction and leadership of the Superintendent of Schools, School District 50- Haida Gwaii has formed a committee whose focus is planning for effective educational and operational continuity in the event of a pandemic.

This committee includes: Superintendent of Schools; Assistant Secretary-Treasurer; Manager of Facilities and Planning; Assistant Director of Human Resources; and Occupational Health and Safety Manager, Custodial Manager, Transportation Manager.

During a pandemic, the roles of the Pandemic Response Planning Committee will shift to the roles of the Emergency Response Team (ERT); as identified in the *Pandemic Period* of this response plan.

## Prevention and Continuity Planning in School District 50

Important components of this Pandemic Response Plan include the following activities:

- Planning for, and provision of, a vaccination program (if it is available).
- Education on hand-washing and cough & sneeze etiquettes (see Appendices – pages 16 & 17).
- Provision of soap in classrooms that have wash sinks.
- Increased disinfection of contact surfaces on an “as-needed” basis.
- Provision of an educational program if schools are closed.
- Maintenance of facility operations (heating, electrical, plumbing, etc.) on an “as-needed” basis.
- Implementation of an effective communication plan for the duration of the pandemic.

## Pandemic Response Plan Overview

### *Organization and Structure of the Pandemic Response Plan*

The main body of this plan is organized into four sections. The first three sections outline the key activities and role responsibilities of School District 50 in each of the three pandemic phases. The fourth section outlines School District 50’s Communication Plan.

1. **Pre-pandemic Period:** This is the critical stage for pandemic preparedness. Planning efforts need to focus on education and operational continuity as well as infection control.
2. **Pandemic Period:** The Provincial Health Officer (PHO) will declare when it is time to activate plans for the pandemic phase. Plans will need to be adapted to reflect circumstances and situations as they arise.

During this phase, the key goals will be to:

- Minimize incidents of illness; and
- Minimize educational and operational disruptions.

3. **Post-pandemic Period:** The post-pandemic period begins when the Provincial Health Officer declares that the pandemic is over. The primary focus of work at this time is to restore normal services, deactivate pandemic response activities, review their impact, and use the lessons learned to guide future planning activities.

Each period in the Pandemic Response Plan addresses the following five key components:

1. Planning and Coordination
2. Continuity of Student Learning and Core Operations

3. Infection Control Policies and Procedures
  4. Communication Planning
  5. Education of staff, students and families
4. **The Communication Plan:** The Communications Plan is specific to a pandemic outbreak on Haida Gwaii. Communications are crucial to managing either a small-scale outbreak, involving a few students, or a large-scale event that may involve school closures. This plan has been developed to address the communications guidelines outlined in the August, 2009 *Pandemic Response Framework* from the Ministry of Education.

## Pre-Pandemic Period

<i>Pre-Pandemic Activities</i>	<i>Role Responsibilities</i>
<b>1. Planning and Coordination</b>	
a. Responsibility for SD50 Pandemic Response Plan activation.	Superintendent
b. Incorporate responsibilities and authorities of Ministry of Health / Northern Health, Ministry of Education, municipalities in the development and implementation of the Pandemic Response Plan.	Superintendent → OH&S Manager
c. Update <i>Emergency Procedures Manual</i> to include a reference to the Pandemic Response Plan.	OH&S Manager
d. Advise staff of Pandemic Response Plan sent in conjunction with updated <i>Emergency Procedures Manual</i> .	Principals; Managers; OH&S Manager
e. Identify a “Medical Room” for staff and students that become ill while at work/school (See <i>Separating Ill Students and Staff</i> on page 15).	Principals; Managers
f. Educate and equip person(s) to care for ill students until parent arrives. (See <i>Separating Ill Students and Staff</i> ).	Principals; OH&S Manager
<b>2. Continuity of Student Learning and Core Operations</b>	
a. Consider impact of varying levels of student and staff absences and school closures.	Superintendent; Principals; Managers
b. Consider and develop alternative procedures to ensure continuity of education.	Superintendent; Principals
c. Develop plan for continuity of core operations:	
i) Education	Superintendent
ii) Payroll	Director of Finance
iii) Custodial	Custodial Manager
iv) Facilities	Maintenance Manager
v) Communications	Superintendent

<i><b>Pre-Pandemic Activities</b></i>	<i><b>Role Responsibilities</b></i>
vi) Transportation	Transportation Manager; Secretary-Treasurer

## Pre-Pandemic Period

<i><b>Pre-Pandemic Activities</b></i>	<i><b>Role Responsibilities</b></i>
a. Advise the Superintendent's Office when $\geq 10\%$ of school population is away ill, or when there is an increase in the number of ill students or staff from the same classroom, grade, office or other group such as school clubs or teams.	Principals; Managers
b. Ensure that schools and facilities have an adequate supply of hand soap and paper towels.	Custodial Manager
c. Order additional cleaning supplies and ensure custodial staff is trained in the appropriate cleaning procedures.	Custodial Manager
d. Where required, implement and audit infection control practices and procedures to help limit the spread of infection.	Custodial Manager
e. Educate children and staff on hand-washing and cough & sneeze etiquettes (see Appendices – pages 17 & 18).	Principals; Managers; Teachers
f. Maintain a healthy work environment by posting tips on how to stop the spread of germs.	Superintendent; Principals; Managers; Teachers
g. Advise staff and students who are showing symptoms of illness to remain at home.	Principals; Managers;
h. Be aware of students with medical alert issues such as compromised immune or respiratory systems; consult with Student Services Administration on need to contact parents.	Principals; Managers;
<b>4. Communication Planning</b>	
a. Develop and maintain contacts with Northern Health, BCCDC Ministry of Education, Municipalities	Superintendent; OH&S Manager
b. Advise Board of Education, Managers and Principals on pandemic surveillance and preventive measures.	Superintendent; OH&S Manager
c. Post relevant information for Pandemic Response Planning on the SD50 web page.	Superintendent, IT Manager
d. Advise staff, students and families of the Pandemic Response Planning on the SD50 web page.	Superintendent; Principals; Managers
e. Ensure that parents/guardians have provided up-to-date contact information to the school.	Principals
f. Establish effective communication with students and families to receive immediate information if child needs to be sent home or if school or facility is closing.	Principals
g. Discuss Pandemic Response Planning with staff including prevention, signs & symptoms and family preparedness ❖ at your health and safety meetings	Principals; Managers

<i><b>Pre-Pandemic Activities</b></i>	<i><b>Role Responsibilities</b></i>
❖ and at staff meetings	
h. Provide updates at the District Health & Safety meeting.	OH&S Manager
i. Media communications	Superintendent
<b>5. Educate staff, students and families</b>	
a. Keep staff informed using available communications.	Superintendent → Principals; Managers
b. Use school newsletter and school web page to provide information to students and families.	Principals

## Pandemic Period

<i><b>Pandemic Activities</b></i>	<i><b>Role Responsibilities</b></i>
<b>1. Planning and Coordination</b>	
a. Transportation needs may require adjustment due to driver and/or student shortages.	Secretary-Treasurer; Transportation Manager
b. Depending on staffing or student shortages, classes may need to be combined.	Principals
c. If school field trips are planned, determine how children will be isolated and sent home should they become ill. (See <i>Separating Ill Students and Staff</i> on page 16.)	Principals
d. School field trips, international travel and school evening user groups may be cancelled.	Ministry of Health → Superintendent → Principals
e. Closing of schools may be required.	Ministry of Health → Superintendent; → Principals
f. Schools may be used by officials for clinics, hospitals, daycare centres, etc.	Ministry of Health → Superintendent → Principals
<b>2. Continuity of Student Learning and Core Operations</b>	
a. Evaluate capability of student learning continuity, including specifics for special needs students. Adjust as needed.	Superintendent; Principal of Students Learning Services
b. Ensure continuity of core operations.	
i. Education	Superintendent
ii. Payroll	Director of Finance
iii. Custodial	Custodial Manager
iv. Facilities	Maintenance Manager
v. Communications	Superintendent
vi. Transportation	Director of Learning Services or designate; Secretary-Treasurer
c. School field trips or international travel may be cancelled.	Ministry of Health → Superintendent → Principals



<b><i>Pandemic Activities</i></b>	<b><i>Role Responsibilities</i></b>
d. Schools may be closed.	Principals (when advised by Superintendent, MHO or designate to close school)
<b>3. Infection Control Policies and Procedures</b>	
a. Advise the Superintendent's Office when $\geq 10\%$ of school population is away ill, or when there is an increase in the number of ill students or staff from the same classroom, grade, office or other group such as school clubs or teams	Principals; Managers
b. Ensure that schools and facilities have an adequate supply of hand soap and paper towels.	Custodial Manager

## Pandemic Period

<b><i>Pandemic Activities</i></b>	<b><i>Role Responsibilities</i></b>
<b>3. Infection Control Policies and Procedures (continued)</b>	
c. Maintain additional cleaning supplies and rigorous cleaning of schools and contact surfaces on an "as-needed" basis.	Custodial Manager
d. Continued use and auditing of infection control practices that help limit the spread of infection.	Custodial Manager
e. Ongoing education for children and staff on hand-washing and cough & sneeze etiquettes (see Appendices – pages 17 & 18).	Principals; Managers; Teachers
f. Advise staff and students who are showing symptoms of illness to remain at home.	Principals; Managers
g. Restrict community, volunteer and visitor access to schools and facilities and suspend rental contracts as necessary.	Principals; Managers
h. Keep ill students and staff in Medical Room until they can be sent home. (See <i>Separating Ill Students and Staff</i> on page 16.)	Principals; Managers
<b>4. Communication Planning</b>	
a. Continue to work closely with NH, MHO, Child Youth Program Leaders, Ministry of Education, Municipalities	Emergency Response Team (also known as Pandemic Response Planning Team)
b. Continue to provide the Board of Education, Managers and Principals with information on pandemic surveillance and preventive measures.	Superintendent; OH&S Manager
c. Evaluate and maintain the Pandemic Response information on the SD50 web page.	Superintendent, IT Manager
d. Remind staff, students, volunteers and families of the SD50 web page Pandemic Response information.	Superintendent; Principals; Managers
e. Provide information in school newsletters, on school web page and on school voicemail.	Principals

<i><b>Pandemic Activities</b></i>	<i><b>Role Responsibilities</b></i>
f. Maintain effective communication with students and families to receive immediate information if child needs to be sent home or if school or facility is closing.	Principals (when advised by Superintendent, MHO or designate to close school)
g. Media communications.	Superintendent
<b>5. Educate staff, students and families</b>	
a. Keep staff informed using available communications.	Superintendent; Principals; Managers
b. Increase staff, students, volunteers, DPAC and community awareness through school bulletins or newsletter, school web page, etc. Advise them of the SD50 web page.	Principals

## Post-Pandemic Period

<i><b>Post-Pandemic Activities</b></i>	<i><b>Role Responsibilities</b></i>
<b>1. Planning and Coordination</b>	
a. If school closures have occurred, give official notice to reopen these schools.	Ministry of Health → Superintendent → Principals
b. Resumption of school classes and operational activities.	Superintendent → Principals & Managers
c. Depending on staffing shortages, classes may need to be combined.	Principals
d. Transportation needs may require adjustment due to driver and/or student shortages.	Secretary-Treasurer → Transportation Manager
<b>2. Continuity of Student Learning and Core Operations</b>	
a. Evaluate capability of student learning continuity and adjust as needed. May take some time for schools to be re-opened.	Superintendent; Principals
b. Communications	Superintendent
c. Resumption of school classes and operational activities.	Superintendent; Principals; Managers
<b>3. Infection Control Policies and Procedures</b>	
a. Advise the Superintendent's Office when ≥10% of school population is away ill, or when there is an increase in the number of ill students or staff from the same classroom, grade, office or other group such as school clubs or teams	Principals; Managers
b. Ensure that schools and facilities have an adequate supply of hand soap and paper towels.	Custodial Manager
c. Continued use and auditing of infection control practices and procedures that help limit the spread of infection on an "as-needed" basis.	Custodial Manager
d. Ongoing education for children and staff on hand-washing and cough & sneeze etiquettes (see Appendices – pages 17 & 18).	Principals; Managers; Teachers

<b><i>Post-Pandemic Activities</i></b>	<b><i>Role Responsibilities</i></b>
e. Advise staff and students who are showing symptoms of illness to remain at home.	Principals; Managers
f. Keep ill students and staff in Medical Room until they can be sent home. (See <i>Separating Ill Students and Staff on page 16.</i> )	Principals; Managers
<b>4. Communication Planning</b>	
a. Continue to work closely with NH, MHO, Child Youth Program Leaders, Ministry of Education, Municipalities	Superintendent; OH&S Manager
b. Evaluate and maintain the Post-Pandemic Recovery Phase information on the SD50 web page.	Superintendent

## Post-Pandemic Period

<b><i>Post-Pandemic Activities</i></b>	<b><i>Role Responsibilities</i></b>
<b>4. Communication Planning (continued)</b>	
c. Remind staff, students, volunteers and families of the SD50 web page Pandemic Recovery information.	Superintendent; Principals; Managers
d. Maintain effective communication with students and families to receive immediate information if child needs to be sent home or if school or facility is closing.	Principals (when advised by Superintendent, MHO or Health Officer to close school)
e. Prepare for Critical Incident Response if there has been an illness-related death.	Superintendent; Safe Schools Coordinator; Principals; Managers
f. Media communications.	Superintendent
<b>5. Educate staff, students and families</b>	
a. Keep staff informed using available communications.	Superintendent; Principals; Managers
b. Increase staff, students, volunteers, DPAC and family awareness through school bulletins or newsletter, school web page, etc. Advise them of the SD50 web page.	Principals

## The Communication Plan

At the first occurrence of an illness outbreak, and its subsequent spread to “Pandemic” status, there is heightened public concern for the possibility of future outbreaks, particularly among children involved in the school environment. As a result, public expectations for clear communications and direction both to *avoid* a future crisis and to *deal with* any outbreak as it might arise, is very high. Knowing this, communications planning and follow-through is essential to assist in managing any pandemic outbreak in the School District.

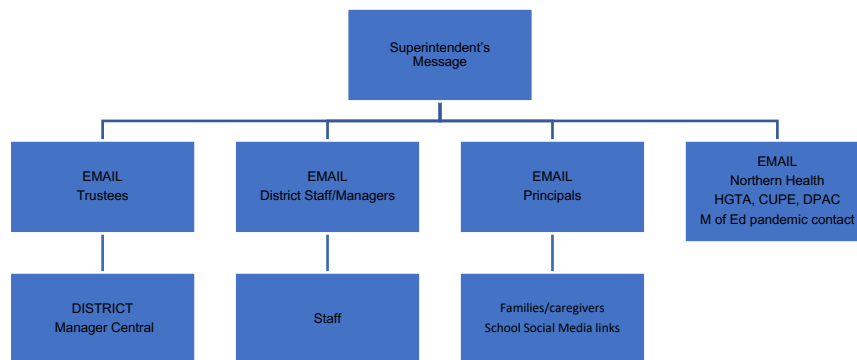
SD50 has a school population with varied access to stable internet. As such, we will do our best to accommodate students online and/or via paper-based work packages where needed.

### Objectives

1. To reduce anxiety amongst staff, students and families through clear, directional information appropriate for the pre-pandemic period, the pandemic period and the post-pandemic period.
2. To ensure awareness and understanding of proper procedures and protocols allowing staff to manage operations through a pandemic outbreak.
3. To address media inquiries with factual information.
4. To identify key connections and communications roles in the pre-pandemic period.

### Communications Tree

This communications tree addresses the flow and direction of broad-based communications to the whole School District. It is designed for a message of high importance to the whole community. Smaller-scale (i.e., school-based, or classroom based) communication will follow the standard communications tree models used by the school, or department, as appropriate to the situation.



### Key Messages

Key messages to include in “Pandemic” communications should address the situation factually and repeat reminders for the encouragement of good hygiene practices to discourage spread of the virus.

### Roles and responsibilities

An extensive list of communication tasks, specific to each of the three pandemic phases, is included in this document. In addition, the following is provided to clarify roles and responsibilities as suggested in the Ministry of Education’s *Pandemic Response Framework*.

Communications Activity	Purpose	Audience	Phase(s)	Role responsible
Media spokesperson	To provide responsive, factual information to the media.	Media	Pandemic and post-pandemic	Superintendent

<b>Draft messaging</b>	To research and write appropriate organizational messaging including media releases, FAQs, telephone scripting, web updates and letters home to parents.	Various	All phases	Superintendent Communications Manager
<b>Updates</b>	To maintain updated Pandemic information on SD50 web page.	General	All phases	Superintendent's Office
<b>Contact communications with unions</b>	To maintain information flow and ensure the unions are aware of procedures that may be invoked.	CUPE HGTA	All phases	Director of Human Resources, Superintendent's Office

### Communications Tactics

The primary focus of the communications tactics is to provide consistent, accurate and up-to-date information to all stakeholders during the pandemic phase. Ensuring these tactics are implemented is the responsibility of the communications manager and/or delegates. The full use of all channels would be required in a school(s) closure situation, while a lesser degree of magnitude will employ fewer, more targeted channels, with the emphasis being on school-based and principal-to-parent communications. English will be the language used to circulate all communications.

#### *Channels to be supported:*

- School District website [www.sd50.bc.ca](http://www.sd50.bc.ca)
- Principal-to-parent school-based communication

#### *Scripting*

Additionally, the following key contacts will be provided with scripting to respond to inquiries and to redirect people to information sources during a pandemic phase:

- Trustees
- SD50 Reception
- Senior Administrative Assistants
- Principal and/or Superintendent

## Roles and Responsibilities

### Superintendent of Schools

1. Leads SD50 Pandemic Response Plan Team.
2. Activates SD50's District Pandemic Response Plan.
3. Directs school closures.
4. Assumes role as key spokesperson for school-related issues associated with the pandemic.
5. Implements MyEd as communication system.
6. Provides schools with educational materials and updated information for school newsletters, staff and student education.
7. Informs schools when vaccine has been made available by Northern Health.
8. Develops and maintains education plans for implementation if schools are closed and/or teaching or support staff, critical to program delivery, are away due to illness related to the pandemic.
9. Develops Communication Plan and tactics identified in this Pandemic Response Plan.

10. Drafts organizational communications on pandemic planning, response and recovery issues, in conjunction with Superintendent's Office, as identified in the Pandemic Communications Plan.

#### **Manager of Operations**

Ensures a continuation of core building functions on an "as-needed" basis.

#### **Director of Finance/Assistant Secretary Treasurer**

Develops and implements a plan to continue key financial functions.

#### **Assistant Director of Human Resources**

1. Provides workforce resources to ensure, as best as possible, a continuity of core operations.
2. Develops and implements specific employee work policies during a pandemic outbreak.

#### **Principal of Learning Services**

Reviews and adjusts transportation plans to maintain special needs student learning continuity.

#### **Principal and Manager**

1. Reports to the Superintendent's Office when  $\geq 10\%$  of school population is away ill, or when there is an increase in the number of ill students or staff from the same classroom, grade, office or other group such as school clubs or teams.
2. Educates all staff about hand-washing and cough & sneeze etiquettes (see Appendices – pages 17 & 18). Resources also available on SD50 web page.
3. Discusses Pandemic Response Planning with staff on an "as-needed" basis.
4. Advises DPAC and parents about the SD50's District Pandemic Response Plan, including web page communications.
5. Ensures that rigorous cleaning and infection control practices occur.
6. Ensures that parents/guardians have provided up-to-date contact information to the school.
7. Advises staff and students that they are not to attend work or school when they are showing symptoms of illness.
8. Keeps students and staff that become ill at school in dedicated Medical Room, until they can be sent home. (See *Separating Ill Students and Staff on page 15*).

#### **Custodial Manager**

1. Ensures custodial staff is trained in the safety requirements and the contact disinfection techniques for all three pandemic phases.
2. Ensures custodial staff has personal protective equipment and cleaning supplies to prevent self-infection and cross contamination during all three phases of a response to a pandemic outbreak.
3. Ensures adequate supply of soap and paper towels for increased hand-washing vigilance during all three pandemic phases.
4. Develops, implements and audits infection control plan.

### **Maintenance Manager**

Ensures back up personnel in case of absence of key building system operators (HVAC, Electrical, Plumbing and Security).

### **Information Technology Manager**

Maintains continuity of service for electronic communications.

### **Occupational Health & Safety Manager**

1. Develops and maintains the Pandemic Response Plan with input from the Pandemic Response Planning Committee and key stakeholders.
2. Provides key information on the Pandemic Response Plan to the Board of Education.
3. Provides district-wide educational support, advice and expertise to schools and facilities.
4. Maintains liaisons with other school districts, Health Authorities, Municipalities.
5. Reports on pandemic plans and preparedness to the District Health and Safety Committee.

### **Teacher**

1. Educates students about hand-washing and cough & sneeze etiquettes (see Appendices – pages 17 & 18). Resources also available on SD50 web page.
2. Maintains a healthy classroom environment by educating students on how to stop the spread of germs.

### **District Critical Incident Response Team**

Provides assistance and resources to support students and staff in the event of a critical incident.

## **School District 50 Reporting Requirements**

Principals and Managers are to advise the Superintendent's Office when  $\geq 10\%$  of school population is away ill, or when there is an increase in the number of ill students or staff from the same classroom, grade, office or other group such as school clubs or teams

### **Separating ill students and staff (Medical Room)**

1. Recognizing that space is often in short supply, early planning on the location for a designated "Medical Room" is essential. The Medical Room should not be one commonly used for other purposes (i.e., the lunchroom during non-meal times). The Medical Room should not be a space through which others regularly pass. It is not necessary for the Medical Room to have a separate air supply (HVAC) system. Ill persons should be placed in well-ventilated areas and placed in areas where at least 2 metres of distance can be maintained between the ill person and others.
2. Schools should regularly update contact information for parents so that they can be contacted more easily if they need to pick up their ill child.
3. Sick students and staff should stay home. Students and staff who are showing symptoms of illness upon arrival at school or become ill during the day must be promptly separated from other students and

staff. Sick students and staff should be sent home or kept in designated Medical Room until they can be sent home.

4. A limited number of staff should be designated to supervise and monitor ill persons until they can be sent home. Supervising staff should not be persons who are at increased risk of contracting the illness (for example, persons who have a chronic or respiratory illness). Supervising staff should be familiar with, and follow, the required infection control measures.
5. Staff members who act in this capacity are likely to come into close contact with the students and staff who are showing the symptoms of the illness. The BC CDC recommends that staff members who provide care for persons with the suspected illness should follow good hand-washing practices and be vaccinated (if vaccine is available).

### **School Closure Decision Making Process**

The legal authority to close a school for public health reasons falls under the purview of the local Medical Health Officer and the Provincial Health Officer. The Medical Health Officer must consult the Board of Education and the Provincial Health Officer.

A Board of Education has the authority to close a school if it believes the health or safety of students is endangered.

The Minister of Education may direct a board to close a school through an administrative directive.

A superintendent or principal may suspend an employee or student from a school for public health reasons subject to review by a school Medical Health Officer when the superintendent or principal believes the presence of the employee or student poses a danger or risk.



## Appendix I – Hand-washing Etiquette

# Handwashing with Soap and Water

Protect Yourself and others from influenza

Viruses can live on hard surfaces for up to 2 days, and on hands for up to 5 minutes.  
Wash your hands often to keep yourself and others healthy.



Hands should be washed for a minimum of 10-20 seconds.  
To help children wash long enough, say the ABC's or sing "Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star."

For more information, visit  
[www.health.gov.bc.ca/pho/influenza.html](http://www.health.gov.bc.ca/pho/influenza.html)



## Appendix II – Cough & Sneeze Etiquette

This page shows the proper practice for effectively containing a cough or sneeze.



Ministry  
of Health

For more information, visit  
[www.health.gov.bc.ca/  
pho/influenza.html](http://www.health.gov.bc.ca/pho/influenza.html)