

Burch Charter School of Excellence



**Highly Infectious Disease
Preparedness Plan**

SY 2019 -2020

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Introduction:

The purpose of this highly infectious disease preparedness plan is to increase the communication to our staff and students in the event of an outbreak. The plan would serve as a resource guide for planning and responding to a sudden pandemic within our organization. Highly infectious illnesses may have a short incubation period, spread easily, and cause severe illness or possible death, and may have no possible existing vaccine or treatment.

The purpose of this plan is to achieve the following goals:

- Maximize the protection of lives while minimizing educational and social disruption while reducing morbidity and mortality.
- Enable Burch Charter School of Excellence to continue to operate and provide services as normally and effectively as possible in the event of a highly infectious disease outbreak with minimal academic and economic losses.
- Burch Charter School's response will be directed by Irvington Public Health Department or NJ Department of Health. This plan coordinates federal, state, and local agencies.
- Continue the essential core operations of Burch Charter School in the event of increased staff/student absences due to a highly infectious outbreak.
- Establish and maintain a coordinated command system with the Department of Health Services and NJDOE. Effective, timely, and sensitive decision making regarding continuity of student learning needs to remain the core value and focal point.
- Develop a communications plan to ensure that students, parents, and staff receive timely and accurate information regarding disease prevention strategies and infection control strategies.
- Develop home instruction plan to ensure students are engage in rigorous academic program in case of school closure.
- Coordinate the use of Burch Charter School facilities for the use of vaccination sites, temporary clinics/health areas, or other needs when appropriate.
- Coordinate with the Department of Agriculture to serve meals to eligible students during the period of school closure.

Differences between seasonal influenza and pandemic influenza:

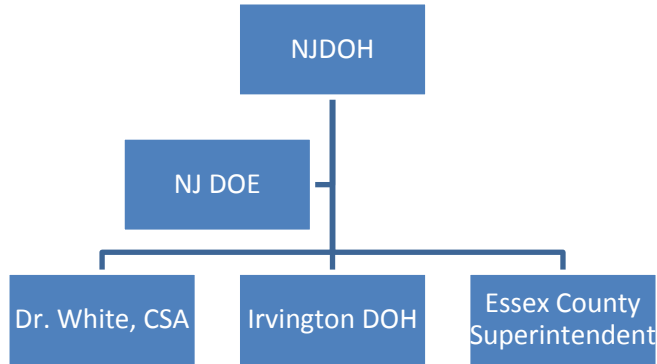
| Seasonal Flu: | Pandemic Flu: |
|--|--|
| Happens annually and peaks between December and February | Rarely happens: 3 times in 20 th century |
| Usually there is some immunity from previous exposures and influenza vaccines | Most people have little or no immunity because they have no previous exposure to the virus or similar viruses |
| Certain people are at risk for flu complications – elderly, infants, people with chronic health conditions | Even healthy people are at risk for serious complications |
| Health care providers can meet the needs of patients easily | Health care providers and hospitals are overwhelmed and it is very difficult to meet the needs of the exposed public |
| Vaccines are updated annually and one dose is sufficient | Although the US government maintains a stockpile of pandemic vaccines, the overwhelming need of vaccines may not be available, and may require 2 doses |
| Usually cause minor impact on schools and the public. Sick people should stay home | May cause major impact on the general public. May cause travel restrictions, school and business closings |
| Antiviral drugs are readily available and help within the first 48 hours of presenting symptoms | Antiviral drugs will still be prescribed, but will be less readily available and more difficult to come by. Symptoms will also be more severe and antivirals may not be as helpful |

Treatments for pandemic flu include antiviral drugs and non-pharmaceutical interventions (NPIs). These actions do not include medications or vaccinations. NPIs will be the only early intervention tools that will most likely mitigate the quick transmission from person to person. See more about mitigation strategies in the later section, Prepare – Prevent - Protect.

COVID-19 (Coronoavirus) - Symptoms of COVID-19 have reportedly had mild to severe respiratory illness accompanied with fever, cough, and shortness of breath. The 2020 outbreak originated in the Wuhan province of China. Symptoms may appear 2-14 days after exposure. The virus is spread person-to-person between people within close contact (about 6 feet), via respiratory droplets produced when an infected person sneezes or coughs, and these droplets can land in the mouths or noses of people who are nearby where the droplets are inhaled into the lungs. Transmission may also be possible through contact with contaminated surfaces, but this is not thought to be the main way of transmission. People at risk are those who have recently traveled to/from China or those in close contact to positively diagnosed individuals.

Roles & Responsibilities:

During an Infection Diseases Pandemic the following graph displays the authorities within New Jersey that have oversight over operational planning for schools' response.



The New Jersey Department of Health (NJDOH) in collaboration with the NJ DOE have natural leadership and advocacy in highly infectious illness preparedness and response efforts for all NJ schools. In cooperation with Irvington Department of Health, Burch Charter School of Excellence cooperates in efforts to raise awareness and actions that are necessary in response to the severity of the phase of reported illness. The risks and potential health consequences are taken into consideration and assist Burch Charter School in the following:

- Provide reliable information on the risk, severity, and progression of the outbreak and the effectiveness of interventions used during the outbreak.
- Prioritize and continue the provision of health-care during a highly infectious outbreak. Maintain situational awareness by monitoring the highly infectious illness.
- Enact steps to reduce the spread of the infection in the community.
- Notify the local health departments if social distancing and community mitigation is needed, such as closing schools, travel restrictions, cancellation of local, public events, isolation and/or quarantine may be required to slow the spread of the illness.

Burch Charter School of Excellence response to an infectious illness is as follows:

- The school administration works closely NJDOE, NJDOH and Irvington Department of Health to communicate to district employees, students, families and community members an operational plan for the school.
- Maintain school staying in session until notified by local authorities for the need to close.
- School Nurse continues to educate school communities on prevention of illness: vaccinations, proper hand washing techniques, community mitigation, and social mitigation for prevention of transmission. Prepare the school communities to minimize health risks. Train all staff and students on these measures.
- School Nurse and school administration will develop plans with families in the event their child must be sent home due to illness or if schools are closed.
- School administration will document a response plan to the Essex County Superintendent of Schools.

- The Department of Health will provide the school with updates on the potential changes that may take place and information on the extent of the spread of the illness.

Prepare – Prevent – Protect:

Preparedness refers to those actions and measures taken before an event in order to better handle the emergency when it arises.

CDC plays a prevalent role in making sure states and local health departments are prepared for public health emergencies. NJDOE and NJ DOH prepares Burch Charter School of Excellence before, during, and after an exposure to a highly infectious illness.

Public health officials recommend prior to and in the early phases of a pandemic or outbreak, to practice every day good health habits and to non-pharmaceutical interventions (NPIs) to prevent and protect the human population from the spread of a highly infectious illness. Everyday good health habits include the following:

- Avoid close contact with people who are sick. When you are sick, stay away from others to prevent passing on your illness to others.
- Stay home when you are sick so you prevent passing your illness on to others.
- Cover your mouth and nose when sneezing or coughing with a tissue and then throw away the tissue.
- Wash your hands after coughing or sneezing and often throughout the day. Washing the germs is always best and the preferred method. If soap and water is not available, hand sanitizer will kill the viruses, but not wash them away.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth. Germs are often spread touching these body parts.
- Practice other good health strategies – clean and disinfect surfaces in your home, especially when someone is ill. Get plenty of sleep, manage your stress, and be physically active.

Other than everyday good health habits, other NPIs are thoughtful mitigation strategies to protect the community and are consistent of:

- Social distancing – create ways to provide distance between people in close contact areas including work and school.
- Closures – possible closures of non-urgent/mandated events – not necessary to hold extra community events during an outbreak or pandemic.
- Be prepared and informed, take an active participation in the event of an outbreak or pandemic.
- Communicate with other employees, students, and community members by using educational materials to inform on updates of the outbreak or pandemic, good hygiene methods including hand washing protocol, hang posters, send email reminders, and face to face trainings/presentations.
- Continue communicating surveillance and monitoring the outbreak or pandemic.
- Maintain a clean environment.
- Educate the community on when to stay home when you are sick.

Response:

In case the NJDOE or NJDOH determines that Burch Charter School **must** close, the Board of Trustees will be provided with a written directive to close the school. Burch Charter School of Excellence will provide home instruction services to all our students as per the home instruction provision N.J.A.C 6A:16-10.1.

During a school closure Burch Charter Schools will continue to provide meals to eligible students in non-congregate settings; Our Food Services Department will provide a “Go Bag” to eligible families within Irvington Township.

Staff Roles during School Closure

| | |
|---------------------------------|--|
| CSA, Dr. White | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Determine when to close school. Disseminate information internally to students and staff.• Communicate with parents, media, and the larger school community.• Secure and provide needed personnel, equipment, supplies and resources for continued operation of Food Services. |
| Vice Principal, Mr. Simmons | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ensures systems are in place for continued home instruction.• Brief and train staff of their responsibilities during crises. |
| Head Custodian, Mr. Fitzpatrick | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ensures effective intensive sanitization of the school during school closure. |
| School Nurse, Ms. Gaymes | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Work with the local department of Health to determine when it is safe for students to return to the school. |
| Executive Secretary, Ms. Irby | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ensure payroll, purchasing, accounting functions are continuous. |
| Teachers | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Prepare lesson plans to ensure continuous learning opportunities for students: online instruction and work packets. Work will be accessible from the school website, ClassDojo and/ or Google Classroom. |

Appendices

- A. Surveillance**
- B. Daily Pandemic Attendance Log**
- C. Communications/ Letters**

Appendix A: Surveillance Pandemic Surveillance and Reporting

During all stages of a pandemic flu outbreak, it will be essential to monitor and document the number of students and faculty who are absent and meet the definition of influenza- like illness. Keeping track of these numbers will help health officials determine when and whether to close schools, whether the epidemic is increasing in scope and whether to declare an epidemic, making schools eligible to apply for reimbursement of ADA funds during increased absenteeism.

Schools are provided with the following information for ongoing monitoring of the illness rate and potential epidemic:

- Basic surveillance instructions and definitions of surveillance levels
- Case definition to assist in determining whether the ill student and/or faculty is suffering from an influenza-like illness
- Reporting form(s) to submit to the Burch Charter School's Nurse.
- Sample Attendance Log to document flu-related absences.

Appendix B

Heightened Surveillance

Influenza related cases reported in Essex County. Less than 10% absenteeism due to influenza-like illness reported at Burch.

- Monitor daily attendance for influenza-like illness/absences
- Begin morning 'flu check' first hour of school – screen those who report positive for symptoms
- Log absences due to flu-like illness
- Send **weekly** absence report (via fax) to the District School Nurse

Intensive Surveillance

High number of influenza cases in Essex County. More than 10% absenteeism due to influenza-like illness reported at Burch.

- Monitor daily attendance and log absences on log sheet
- Continue morning 'flu check'
- Send **daily** absence report (via fax) to the District School Nurse
- Begin preparation for potential school closure

Heightened Surveillance:

- Develop Alternative Staffing
- Develop Alternative Delivery of Instruction Plan
- Practice social distancing
- Limit group activities
- Limit access to essential staff only
- Pandemic follow-up

Intense Surveillance:

- Parent letter #1
- Parent letter #2
- School closing
- Implement Alternative Staffing
- Implement Alternative Delivery of Instruction Plan
- Limit access to common areas
- Pandemic follow-up

* The District Office and Irvington Health Department will determine whether increased sanitation is needed and to what extent.

Appendix C

Pandemic Surveillance Breakdown

| <i>Prior to Outbreak</i> | <i>Pre-Pandemic</i> | <i>Pandemic (less than 10%)</i> |
|---|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve hygiene of staff and students • Decide roles of school staff to prevent the flu • Require children to stay home if they are infected with the influenza virus | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Standard surveillance | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Heightened surveillance • Post flu prevention signs in the school • Limit group activities |

| <i>Pandemic (less than 30% of students)</i> | <i>Pandemic (more than 30% of students)</i> | <i>Pandemic Follow-up</i> |
|--|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local Health Officer issues ADA Support letter to schools/Epidemic Declaration • Begin intensive surveillance reporting • Limit group activities | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Irvington Health Officer issues Declaration and press release closing school(s) • Close school(s) • Limit group activities • Cancel any non-academic events | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Irvington Health Department issues declaration and press release that schools can open • Continue communications with Health Department • Return to heightened surveillance reporting |

* School administration will have letters prepared for printing that will be sent home to parents at different stages

Appendix E: Communication

SAMPLE LETTER TO PARENTS

Initial Pandemic Flu Outbreak #1: Use this letter to let parents know schools are open

Dear Parents,

There is an Influenza (flu) Pandemic outbreak in Essex County. This letter is intended to provide you with important information about the outbreak. Every year, some people get sick with the flu during the fall and winter months. This year, there is a new flu virus that is making many people in Essex County sick. Because so many people are sick in Burch and throughout the United States, health officials are calling it a “pandemic”.

Currently, there are many students and teachers in our schools who are sick with the flu. We hope they will all get better quickly.

At this time, the City of Irvington Health Department tells us that students who are not ill can safely come to school. The schools will remain open. We will keep you updated with any important information.

To keep the flu from spreading to more people, we ask you to keep sick children home. Any children who are sick and in school will be sent home. Please, make sure that your school has appropriate contact information to reach you in the event your child becomes ill at school.

Public health officials want you to protect yourself and your family against the pandemic flu. Here are some ways to stop the spread of germs and sickness:

- **Keep children who are sick at home. Don't send them to school.**
- Teach your children to wash their hands often with soap and water for 20 seconds. Be sure to set a good example by doing this yourself.
- Teach your children to cover coughs and sneezes with tissues or by coughing into the inside of the elbow. Be sure to set a good example by doing this yourself.
- Teach your children to stay away at least three feet away from people who are sick.
- Stay home from work or school if you are sick and stay away from other people until you are better.

- Stay away from shopping malls, movie theaters or other places where there are large groups of people.

If you have questions, please contact your School Nurse.

If the pandemic flu continues to spread and more students become ill, schools may close for days or weeks. The purpose of closing schools will be to keep children from getting sick. If schools are closed, children should stay at home. Begin planning now for childcare in your home.

Recommendations may change during the course of a pandemic flu outbreak.

SAMPLE

**SAMPLE LETTER TO PARENTS #2 Expanded Outbreak:
Use this letter to let parents know schools are open and urge ill children to stay home**

Dear Parents,

We recently sent you a letter to tell you about an Influenza (flu) Pandemic in our community. Here is some new information:

We have additional cases of Influenza diagnosed in Burch Charter School. However, the Irvington Health Department tells us that students who are not ill can continue to attend school. The schools will remain open. We will keep you updated with any new and important information.

To keep the flu from spreading to more people, we ask you to keep sick children home. Any children who are sick and in school will be sent home.

Public health officials want you to protect yourself and your family against pandemic flu. Here are some ways to stop the spread of germs and sickness and take care of your family:

- Keep children who are sick at home. Don't send them to school.
- Be sure everyone in your home washes hands frequently.
- If people in your home are sick with the flu, keep them away from the people who are not sick.
- If some of the people in your home are sick with the flu and you cannot see a health provider, some things you can do to help them are:
 - o Have them drink plenty of fluids: water, juice, soup, etc.
 - o Keep the ill person as comfortable as possible. Rest is important.
 - o For fever, sore throat and muscle aches, in adults, use Ibuprofen (Motrin) or Acetaminophen (Tylenol). The American Academy of Pediatrics advises parents not use Aspirin with children or teenagers; it can cause Reye's syndrome, a life- threatening illness.
 - o Keep tissues and a trash bag within reach of the sick person.

- Contact a healthcare provider for further advice. If the ill person is having difficulty breathing or is getting worse, contact the healthcare provider right away.

If the pandemic flu continues to spread and more students become ill, schools may be required to close for days or weeks. The purpose of closing schools would be to keep more children from getting sick. If schools are closed, public health officials recommend that children should stay at home. Please, begin planning now for childcare in your home.

SAMPLE

**SAMPLE LETER TO PARENTS School closure #3:
Use this letter to inform parents schools are closed**

Dear Parents,

Irvington Public Health officials have ordered Burch Charter Schools to close. This order is because of the pandemic flu situation in Essex County. The school is immediately closed until further notice and children should stay home. We know that many students and their families are very sick. We also know that this is a hard time for our community and our hearts go out to those who are ill.

Schools may be closed for days or even weeks to reduce contact among children and help stop the spread of the flu.

The flu is easily spread from person-to-person, making it unsafe for large groups of people to gather. During this time, both children and adults should stay away from other people and groups as much as possible. They should not gather in public or crowded locations such as shopping malls, movie theaters or community centers.

We know that it may be hard to get a doctor's appointment, go to a clinic or even be seen in a hospital emergency room. Here are some tips for helping those who are sick with the flu:

- Be sure everyone in your home washes hands frequently.
- Have them drink plenty of fluids: juice, water, soups, etc.
- Keep the sick person as comfortable as possible. Rest is important.
- For fever, sore throat and muscle aches use Ibuprofen (Motrin) or Acetaminophen (Tylenol). The American Academy of Pediatrics advises parents not use Aspirin with children or teenagers; it can cause Reye's syndrome, a life-threatening illness.
- Keep tissues and a trash bag within reach of the sick person.
- Keep the people who are sick with the flu away from the people who are not sick.

We will contact you as soon as we have information about when school will reopen.

**SAMPLE LETER TO PARENTS School Re-Opens #4:
Use this letter to inform parents schools are re-opened.**

Dear Parents,

City of Irvington Department of Health officials have declared that the Pandemic influenza (flu) cases are declining. Burch Charter Schools will open again on_____. At this time, we are advised to allow healthy individuals back into our schools and students who are in good health conditions may safely return to class.

Even though school is opening, there will still be some people sick from the flu virus. Public Health officials say that it is typical for Pandemic flu outbreaks to happen in waves. This means that we have to continue to be vigilant and monitor the situation closely because more people could become sick again. If more people get sick, schools may need to close again. We will continue to provide you with any new and important information.

Reminder: The flu can still be spread from person-to-person, so we ask that you please keep children who are sick at home. Don't send ill children to school.

We are looking forward to seeing your children again at school.