

BRISTOL VIRGINIA PUBLIC SCHOOLS

PANDEMIC FLU RESPONSE PLAN

PURPOSE

In the event of an influenza pandemic, operations of the Bristol Virginia Public Schools may/will be significantly changed. Delivery of information to families and instruction to students will need to flow in unconventional channels because schools may be closed pursuant to orders of public health officials and the superintendent of schools.

BACKGROUND

National public health authorities conclude that the probability of an influenza pandemic has increased markedly 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, begins to cause serious illness and then spreads easily person-to-person worldwide.

ACTION

The action required by this Response Plan falls into three categories:

- Preparation
- Response to Outbreak of Pandemic in Region
- Resumption of Normal Operations

Preparation

1. The Superintendent of Schools and the Pandemic Preparedness Committee will coordinate activity to ensure faculty and staff are kept current on the provision of this Pandemic Response Plan.
2. The current edition of the Pandemic Response Plan is posted on the Bristol Virginia Public Schools website – www.bvps.org
3. The Director of Student Services and Special Education in conjunction with the school division nurse shall manage the instruction of students on methods important to prevent the spread of flu. The school division shall coordinate appropriate lesson plans for use in the classrooms to improve the hygiene of students. Emphasis will be placed on the use of 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.
4. The Director of Student Services in conjunction with the school division nurse will coordinate clinic nursing staff to focus on flu-symptom recognition. The school division nurse will coordinate implementation of standard surveillance/disease recognition procedures in all classrooms, work areas, and offices throughout Bristol Virginia Public Schools.
5. School clinic staff and administrators will review the health needs of students in each school and identify those students who may have a greater risk of infections. The Office of Student Services and Special Education will prepare a standard text for use by administrators to encourage those families to talk to their health care provider. Administrators will send home a 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 pandemic outbreak.
6. The Assistant Superintendent’s Office will develop alternative learning strategies by which the program of instruction can be delivered to students via the internet, mail service, telephone and/or public access television. Such channels of communication would become the primary channels of instruction should the Superintendent of Schools in conjunction with the Director of the Bristol Virginia Health Department determine to close schools due to a pandemic outbreak.
7. The Superintendent of Schools and the Pandemic Preparedness Committee will develop a communications plan to inform staff, students, and parents about: the differences between seasonal flu, bird flu, and pandemic flu; best hygienic practices to prevent any sort of flu; what could occur in a pandemic.

Outbreak of Flu Within the Region

This phase of the response plan begins when the Director of the Bristol Virginia Health Department notifies Bristol Virginia Public Schools' staff that confirmed cases of pandemic flu are being treated in the region.

1. School administrators and clinic staff will begin surveillance reporting to designated public health officials.
2. The Superintendent of Schools shall inform all parents by means of PhoneMaster, the division website, radio/television announcements, the Information Line (276-821-5999), and/or written correspondence of the information received from the public health official and apprise parents of the intended course of action in Bristol Virginia Public Schools.
3. The Superintendent of Schools will coordinate with Bristol Virginia Health Department regarding a press release announcing plans for schools to remain open and providing parents information on the contingency of closing schools.
4. The Superintendent of Schools and the Critical Incident Team will prepare plans for reopening schools should the contingency of school closure materialize.
5. The Coordinator of Support Services, if so requested by public health officials, will commence planning for use of school buildings by public health officials while schools are closed to students.
6. The Superintendent of Schools shall provide to parents and staff periodic updates by means of PhoneMaster, the division website, radio/television announcements, the Information Line (276-821-5999), and/or written correspondence on planned action in the Bristol Virginia Public Schools as the pandemic passes through the area. These messages shall also include flu prevention tips and related health information when appropriate.
7. While schools are closed, **NO** school related activities will be authorized for School Board employees and Bristol Virginia Public School students.

Resumption of Normal Operations

1. The Superintendent of Schools in conjunction with the Director of Bristol Virginia Health Department will decide when classes may be resumed with minimal threat to public health.
2. Upon ascertaining that sufficient resources and personnel are available to resume classes in schools, the Superintendent shall inform parents and staff by means of PhoneMaster, the division website, radio/television announcements, the Information Line (276-821-5999), and/or written correspondence of the time and date that schools will reopen. The Bristol Virginia School Board may authorize a complete reopening of Bristol Virginia Public Schools or only a reopening of some schools as permitted by conditions at the time.

Ms. Ina Danko, Acting Superintendent