

## **MSAD #4 Pandemic Flu Plan**

SAD #4 recognizes the possibility of a Pandemic Flu Virus, or other pandemic event, to cause a major disruption in the educational process and everyday way of life with our students, staff, and their families.

**There are three basic concepts that are the core to this plan:**

- 1. “Prevention” This is crucial – individuals and families should practice and good personal hygiene – frequent washing of hands and controlling the spread of germs is critical.**
- 2. “Normalcy” Every effort will be made to operate our schools in the fashion most close to “normal” as often as possible.**
- 3. “Planning” We all need to step back and plan for the worst. “What would I do if school was closed for two months?”... While it is not productive to dwell on the possibilities of a disaster that may or may not occur, it is important for parents and families to say “What if...?” and develop appropriate strategies.**

This plan has been developed to provide a continuity of learning in the worst possible circumstances. While it impossible to plan for every detail of an event that is unknown and unpredictable, it is our hope to provide important information to assist families in their individual planning and decision making. This Pandemic Flu Plan will constitute a section of the SAD #4 comprehensive Emergency Plan

At the end of this plan, you will notice that there are valuable electronic links to information that you may find to be useful in the areas of disease prevention, strategies for coping with a pandemic flu if it hits your family, and for continued learning by students in the event that schools may need to be closed for an extended period of time.

A hard copy of the SAD #4 Pandemic Flu Plan is available upon request, and will be widely distributed if it appears that a pandemic situation is imminent.

### **Planning and Coordination**

- \* The Superintendent of Schools will be responsible for declaring that a public health emergency exists within SAD #4. This will be done after consultation with school officials, regional health officials, the SAD #4 Board of directors, regional emergency management officials, and state health and epidemiology officials. Appropriate regional and state agencies will be furnished with a copy of the SAD #4 Pandemic Flu Plan.
- \* The SAD #4 Central Office will serve as a central communication/operations center in the event of a public health emergency.
- \* Arrangements have been made with hospital, police, and emergency management officials to designate Piscataquis Community High School as an emergency shelter in the event that a pandemic event hits the area and causes school to be closed for an extended period.

- \* District planning for a pandemic event is being done through the district Safety Committee.
- \* SAD #4 will cooperate with other regional and state agencies and participate in exercises or drills that might be applicable.
- \* In addition to standard tracking of illnesses that is standard operating procedure within the district, the School Nurse will establish communication with area health agencies, hospitals, clinics, and Dr's offices in order to have access to reliable data regarding infection rates and trends.

### **Continuity of Student Learning and Core Operations**

Scenarios that are being used by state health officials describe a situation where high percentages of the population will be affected by illness and there will be a significant mortality rate. Many of the day-to-day things that we take for granted will be changed. It is possible that electronic communication systems will not be available, if the network of individuals required to support the systems fall victim to the flu.

**It is suggested that the possibility exists for school closures to take place for extended periods of time – up to two months – as the flu runs its cycle**

While it would be comforting to think that, if schools were closed, many of us could go about our business working and studying from home using our Internet connections that may very well not be the case. The Safety Committee recognizes this, and has asked teachers and administrators to furnish lists of ideas, activities, and resources that families should think about in the event of extended school closing. Families should approach the situation with the idea of “What would I do if I had to home-school my children – on short notice – for an extended period of time”? While it would be impossible to replicate the curriculum and program of the school district, it is certainly possible for families to provide good quality learning opportunities. A list of suggested activities and strategies can be found in the “*home section*” of the Pandemic Plan located on our local website [www.sad4.com](http://www.sad4.com).

**Every effort will be made to operate school in a fashion as close to “normal” as possible.**

- \* Teachers will post assignments on websites or First Class folders if possible. E-mail connections will be used to communicate between students, families and school.
- \* In the event that electronic systems fail, teachers and administrators will make every effort to contact students and families via the telephone to check in on the students and to offer educational advice on an individual basis.
- \* In the event that the Flu has affected the teaching staff and families to such a degree that even telephone communication and support is impossible, students and families will need to rely on their own resources and planning.
- \* Grading and promotion decisions will be made with the student's best interest in mind, and with the understanding that the situation is both dire and unique.
- \* Arrangements with the payroll software provider – ADS –and several area payroll personnel, have been made in order to keep this critical component operational

## **Infection Control Policies and Procedures**

- \* Continue to practice and promote existing procedures and policies regarding the spread of germs
- \* In the event of prolonged absence/closings the district will work pro-actively with the state DOE commissioner's office for relief from statutory requirements if in the best interest of students and staff
- \* Increase communication efforts with students, families and staff regarding prevention and control procedures
- \* Information regarding routine infection control, pandemic flu fundamentals, personal and family protocols, and at home care strategies will be posted as links on the SAD #4 website, available in hard copy on request, and distributed via hard copy to all stakeholders if it appears that a pandemic is imminent.

## **Communications**

SAD #4 has redundant channels and levels of communication that will be utilized in each appropriate situation and as physical/technical abilities allow. They consist of:

- \* Telephone trees are established in each building for staff
- \* Radio system is in place for administration/transportation
- \* Cell phone "Walkie Talkie" and regular service is in place for administration in order to free up phone lines
- \* SAD #4 website is used regularly for parent/student/family communication
- \* Powerschool is used regularly for electronic communication between school and home
- \* The district has established communication links with local radio and television stations.
- \* Teachers are provided with home and emergency contact information for their students.
- \* The district has established communication links with area newspapers.
- \* Up to date telephone systems in each building allow for informational messages to be available to callers
- \* Phone trees and administrative communications are tested periodically.
- \* Copies of this plan will be forwarded to area health officials, emergency planning agencies, police, fire and rescue, and municipal officials, as well as available on our district website: [sad4.com](http://sad4.com)

Informational Links: [www.pandemicflu.gov](http://www.pandemicflu.gov)  
[www.redcross.org](http://www.redcross.org)  
[www.pinetreeredcross.org](http://www.pinetreeredcross.org)  
[www.pandemicflu.gov](http://www.pandemicflu.gov)  
[www.avianflu.gov](http://www.avianflu.gov)  
[www.maineflu.gov](http://www.maineflu.gov)  
[www.mainebirdflu.org](http://www.mainebirdflu.org)