

Forestville Central School District
District Pandemic Plan



Revised August 2016

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Introduction

The purpose of school health emergency and communicable disease plans/protocols is to identify students, school personnel or visitors with health care needs that require emergency care and/or follow up care by a licensed health care provider and to prevent the transmission of communicable diseases in schools and at school sponsored events. These guidelines address two common issues that occur in school health services: emergency health care and communicable disease. Although these two issues are not the same, there are commonalities in how they are addressed in a school setting.

Schools tend to be affected by infectious disease outbreaks more than other settings. Children easily transmit illnesses to one another as a result of their close proximity, their inefficiency at containing respiratory droplets and their ineffective hand washing. As a school district, we play an important role in protecting the health of our students and staff from contagious diseases.

This pandemic or infectious disease plan provides guidance for reducing illness at school on a regular basis as well as procedures during infectious disease outbreaks and pandemic periods.

Notification of **confirmed** pandemic or infectious disease threats to the district will come from the Chautauqua County Health Department.

- The Chautauqua County Health Department will notify the Forestville Central Schools (FCS) Superintendent in the event that the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) declares a pandemic event or an infectious disease threat to the district.
- The Superintendent will notify the Board of Education, Building Principals, the School Nurses, and the remaining Administrative Team.
- The Superintendent will work with the Building Principals and Administrative Team to initiate the FCS Pandemic or Infectious Disease Plan.

The plan includes the following:

1. Three stages of outbreak and list of key actions.
2. Strategies to prevent and reduce the spread of infectious diseases in our schools.
3. Procedures for canceling school due to an infectious disease outbreak.
4. Considerations for reopening schools.

THREE STAGES - KEY ACTIONS

Stage One - This stage will be initiated if/when a pathogen mutates from person-to-person transmission and arrives in New York State.

- Custodians change cleaning duties to emphasize classroom disinfecting.
- Teachers begin working to develop web-based instructional assignments and other assignments for students without Internet access (hardcopy packets, where necessary).
- The Technology Director reviews 1 to 1 Chromebooks for students.
- The Buildings and Grounds and Food Service departments will review inventory of essential items and identify key supplies that may be needed.
- Communication specialist (Superintendent) issues press releases of district preparedness. Points public to district webpage dedicated to pandemic virus.
- Director of Special Education reviews the needs of medically frail students to determine if there are any concerns/issues if school is closed.
- Director of Special Education reviews IEP and 504 students to determine if there are any concerns/issues if school is closed.
- Main Office Administrative Assistant Staff collects educational/informational materials for staff and students.
- Superintendent will ask all staff to report any student trips planned and when they are to take place. The Superintendent's Secretary will organize this information and share with Building Principals.
- School nurses establish system for keeping track of quarantined students and shares with the Superintendent and the Building Principals.
- Director of Transportation develops a plan as directed by the Superintendent.
- In the case of a School-wide or Building Outbreak, Principals and School Nurses will identify an additional "sick area" in each building that ill students can occupy.

Stage Two - This stage would be initiated when the communicable disease enters Western New York.

- Begin “Social Distancing” between people.
- Cancel all assemblies and events with 50 or more people, not including staff and students.
- Buildings and Grounds and Food Service will work with the Business Office to order key supplies.
- The Director of Facilities will verify key cleaning supplies are in a secured area.
- The Superintendent will issue statements in conjunction with guidance from the Chautauqua County Department of Health.
- Cook Manager ensures sufficient inventory of viral protection gear for food servers.
- The district web page will be updated with any additional guidance from the state government, federal government, and/or local health department.
- Director of Special Education contacts families of medically frail students to inform them of what would happen if school was closed for an extended period of time.
- Building principals share educational directives with staff.
- Building principals ensure there are materials that could be sent home with students in the event of an extended closing.
- Building principals will advise students/teachers of the possibility of trips being cancelled.
- Building principals advise their staff of the possibility of an extended school closure and to plan on advising their students what to do for course work over such a closure.
- The Head Bus Driver and building principals set potential dates for the distribution of educational packets and food to students.
- Teachers need to be aware of the symptoms of student illness and appropriately send them to the Health Office.
- Students who exhibit an illness need to be sent home.
- Superintendent may cancel student trips for a set length of time.

Stage Three - This stage would be initiated when either the Health Department instructs school districts to close.

- School building(s) or the district will be closed.
- District emergency command center will be activated.
- The Superintendent and Chautauqua County Health Department will collectively determine the specific conditions that have to exist in order for the district/building(s) to reopen.
- Teachers continue developing web-based educational activities or hardcopy educational packets.
- Buildings and Grounds will execute its plan to deep clean all affected buildings.
- Food Service will execute breakfast and lunch plan for students:
 - A central pickup point will be established for families to pick up food
- The Superintendent will develop messages to the community and staff. A public message with updates will be provided on an as-needed basis.
- The district website will be updated to include information pertinent to the school closing and how students can access services.
- Director of Special Education contacts families of medically frail students to ensure they are getting necessary services.
- Principals will review the conditions required to reopen their building and verify when such conditions are met.
- Superintendent cancels all student trips for a set length of time.

Recovery Stage - This stage initiates when a school or district is reopened.

- Superintendent and Director of Health Department validate conditions for reopening have been met.
- Building Principals create a plan for how students will re-engage the curriculum.
- The Superintendent and Director of Facilities will monitor and advise when each building has met its reopening conditions.
- The District Administration Team will validate administrative services have met criteria for reopening.

This initial plan will be reviewed and modified as new information and guidelines become available. Agencies and circumstances beyond the District's control will determine many of the District's responses.

STRATEGIES TO PREVENT AND REDUCE THE SPREAD OF INFECTIOUS DISEASES

How Germs Spread:

Infectious diseases such as the flu (influenza), Norovirus (sudden and violent nausea, vomiting and diarrhea), and colds are caused by viruses that infect the nose, throat, lungs and gastrointestinal tract. Other communicable diseases are caused by bacteria, such as pertussis (whooping cough). These illnesses usually spread from person to person when an infected person coughs or sneezes and the pathogen is inhaled by another person. Norovirus is spread by infected persons passing germs through food or ineffective hand washing. Germs are also spread by droplets when a person touches something that is contaminated with a pathogen and then touches their eyes, nose, or mouth. The length of time pathogens can live on certain surfaces depends on the type.

Disease Prevention and Education:

To help prevent the spread of any infectious disease, schools have an opportunity to educate students, staff, and the community on social etiquette, good health and hygiene habits, and disease prevention. FCS will provide education and reminders on handwashing, coughing, and sneezing any time there is a suspected outbreak and during the school year as requested by staff. During times of suspected or identified infectious disease outbreaks, the school district will coordinate with the Chautauqua County Health Department to address the outbreak.

Our basic educational message is:

1. Cover your cough with your upper sleeve
2. Wash your hands often for at least 20 seconds
3. Stay home if you're sick

1. Cover Your Cough: Teach students coughing and sneezing etiquette in classrooms and hang instructional posters in the school buildings. Have an ample supply of tissues available in each classroom and school area.

- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze.
- Cough or sneeze into your upper sleeve, not your hands.
- Wash your hands after you cough or sneeze, or use hand sanitizer.

2. Wash Your Hands Often: Handwashing with soap and warm water is the best option. Hand sanitizers can be effective when there is no access to water, they are most effective if they have at least 60% alcohol in them. Staff are encouraged to provide time and opportunity each day for students to practice washing their hands with soap and water upon arrival at school, after coughing and/or sneezing in hands, at the beginning of the lunch line before eating, after bathroom use, and after recess.

- Wet hands with water, apply soap and scrub hands together for at least 20 seconds.
- Thoroughly rinse under warm, running water.
- Dry hands completely with a paper towel. Use a paper towel to turn off faucet handles and open restroom doors.

Hand sanitizer will be provided to students and staff. Parents/guardians may opt their child out of using hand sanitizer by sending written notice to the school.

3. Stay Home if You're Sick: A primary strategy against the spread of illness is for sick people to stay home from school. This includes students, staff and volunteers. In times of suspected or identified infectious disease outbreaks, sick leave policies for staff and students will be reviewed, modified (if needed), clearly communicated, and consistently enforced.

Phase 1 Prevention:

- School nurses will provide education to students, staff, and teachers about proper hand washing techniques, use of hand sanitizers with at least 60% alcohol if soap and water are unavailable, and measures to limit contact with potentially contaminated materials such as coughing/sneezing into your elbow or a tissue. Prevention and stopping the transmission of any communicable disease through everyday practices is the best way to keep people healthy and protected.
- School nurses and principals will encourage students, staff, and teachers to stay home when they are sick. School nurses will also monitor absenteeism and communicate appropriately.
- School nurses and Health Education staff will hang up posters in bathrooms and common areas about hand washing and staying home when ill.
- School staff will routinely clean and disinfect (at least daily) surfaces that are frequently touched (door handles, toilet handles, handrails, faucets, drinking fountains, bus seats, etc.) in their work areas. This includes the main office, health office, cafeteria and lunch rooms, and athletic rooms.
- School nurses will clean and disinfect health office cots after each student use, cover cots and treatment tables and pillows with protectors or table paper. Coverings will be discarded after each use.
- Health services staff will provide information for the school district to post about hand washing, staying home when ill, disinfecting surfaces and information on the FCS website.
- Restricting travel or movement to areas with community involvement of a communicable disease need to be considered. Health services staff need to communicate any concerns about students and/or staff traveling for athletics, band, field trips, etc. School health staff should also consult with state and local health officials.
- The school nurses will keep administration up to date on changes related to NYSDOH and CDC recommendations on a daily basis, if needed.

Illness/Disease Monitoring and Tracking:

During times of a potential infectious disease outbreak, the school nurse will inform the Superintendent of an increase in absenteeism due to illness. Examples of symptoms include fever, frequent cough and/or sneezing, sore throat, and vomiting/diarrhea. Symptomatic students need to be sent to the health office for evaluation.

During periods of suspected or identified infectious disease outbreaks.

- Health office staff (nurses and secretaries) should protect themselves by wearing appropriate personal protective equipment.
- Students who have a cough/sneezing with a fever will stay in the health office and will be reasonably distanced from healthy students until parents arrive. Having an ill person distanced can help to slow or prevent the spread of disease.

Phase 2 Suspected Case (Protection):

- School nurses will assess students and staff for symptoms and follow criteria developed by the NYSDOH and CDC on the particular communicable disease in question.
- The symptomatic student or staff member will be advised to leave the school grounds and seek medical care, and the local health department (LHD) may be notified. Keep symptomatic students and staff separate from well students and staff as much as possible. For respiratory illnesses, a mask should be placed on the symptomatic individual.
- Quarantine or isolation according to CDC and NYSDOH guidelines will be enforced, if recommended. Large event cancellations or school dismissals may be recommended. (For COVID-19, quarantine for 14 days, or possibly longer, may be recommended if advised by local health officials. The nature of these actions - e.g., geographic scope, duration-may change as the local outbreak situation evolves).
- Health services staff will follow recommendations of the LHD on the identification and notification of potential exposures to the communicable disease.
- The symptomatic student or staff member may be excluded or suspended pending a medical evaluation and required to show proof of such medical examination.
- Options for remotely evaluating and treating staff and/or students may be considered.

Phase 3 Confirmed Case (Mitigation, Response and Recovery):

- Health Services staff will follow recommendations from the LHD and medical provider regarding return to school recommendations and restrictions.
- Health services staff may be asked to address staff and student placements to reduce exposure to confirmed cases, as well as visitor management in the schools. Screenings by the school nurse may be considered.
- Health services staff will assess personal protective equipment (PPE) supplies and take steps to conserve if needed.
- Health services staff may be asked to provide input on addressing staffing shortages due to illness or absenteeism secondary to caring for ill family members.

Disinfection and Cleaning Procedures:

Keep commonly touched surfaces such as stairway railings, door handles, computer keyboards, bathroom faucets, and surfaces, drinking fountains, telephones, and elevator buttons clean by wiping down with a disinfectant. During an infectious disease outbreak, consideration will be given to increasing the frequency of cleaning these commonly touched surfaces and areas based on the nature of the disease. In addition, the district will consult with the Chautauqua County Health Department for guidance on any necessary operational procedures that need to be enacted. When an employee or student with a suspected infectious disease is identified and has left the building, it is important that their work area, along with any other known places they have been, are thoroughly cleaned and disinfected. Clean the surface to remove dirt and soil with a cleaning agent, if needed, and disinfect following manufacturers' recommendations, paying particular attention to dwell time requirements. The person cleaning and disinfecting (usually a custodian/cleaner) should wear appropriate personal protective equipment. Hands must be washed or sanitized at the completion of the procedure. During times of a specifically known or suspected disease outbreak, the school district will consult with the Chautauqua County Health Department for guidance.

Specific high-risk locations within a school warrant cleaning and disinfection before a confirmed case of communicable disease occurs in a school or the district:

Health Office

- Clean and disinfect health cots regularly (after each student use).
- Cover treatment tables and use pillow protectors.
- Discard or launder coverings after each use.

Lunchrooms

- Clean and disinfect lunch tables/desks regularly (after each lunch period).

Athletic Rooms

- Establish a regular cleaning schedule for shared environmental surfaces such as exercise mats or strength-training equipment,
- Disinfect mats and other high-use equipment at least daily.

Computer Labs and Shared Devices

- In computer labs and devices (iPads, Androids, Chromebooks) that may be shared among students, clean and disinfect keyboard, mice, and touch-screen displays at least once daily using a 50 percent isopropyl alcohol wipe. Be sure that devices are powered off before cleaning. Do not use bleach and avoid getting moisture into any opening.

Other Frequently Touched Surfaces

- Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces at least once daily after students have left for the day

Buses:

During periods of suspected or confirmed infectious disease outbreak, consideration will be given to increasing the frequency of cleaning schedules based on the nature and spread of the disease and guidance from our Public Health Department. Additional airflow can be forced on the buses by opening selected windows and the top hatches on the buses if outside temperatures (45 degrees+) can allow cooler air to flow through the buses without causing additional harm.

- Strengthened cleaning on high touch point areas:
 - Doors
 - Seats
 - Handrails
 - Windows

Food Services Safety/Sanitation Protocols:

The Food Service Department follows safe food handling and storage practices from receiving through meal service. Food service staff are not allowed to come to work if they have a COVID-19 symptoms, fever, diarrhea, jaundice, or vomiting. During periods of suspected or confirmed infectious disease outbreak, modifications will be considered to services based on the severity and nature of the outbreak. This could include discontinuing the use of self-serve salad bars, serving sack lunches instead of cafeteria-style lunches, and having more stringent sick employee policies.

Social Distancing:

During suspected or identified infectious disease outbreaks, several social distancing measures can be taken to reduce the spread of an infectious disease. Discourage handshaking. Discourage the sharing of drinks or food. Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth. Avoid face-to-face meetings, however, if unavoidable, maintain a distance between individuals. Cancel or postpone non-essential meetings, gatherings, assemblies, field trips, workshops, or training as deemed necessary by the Superintendent. Consider having flexible hours and attendance policies to maintain social distancing and reduce illness in district office facilities.

CANCELLING SCHOOL DUE TO AN INFECTIOUS DISEASE OUTBREAK

The district will collaborate with the Chautauqua County Health Department to monitor disease outbreaks in our schools and to determine if and when school should be closed. The information provided by the Chautauqua County Health Department will also guide the district's decisions on the length of time for a school closure and the extent of the closure (single school closure, neighboring schools, partial district, entire district, etc.), taking into consideration the mixing of students/staff across schools, geographic proximity, outbreaks at neighboring school districts, etc.

Legal Authorities for Cancellation of a School or the District:

The Superintendent has the authority to cancel classes when it is deemed necessary for the health and safety of students and staff. In the Superintendent's absence, his/her designee also carries that authority.

If a school or the district is canceled due to an infectious disease outbreak, all other school-related or district-related gatherings (athletic events, concerts, after school activities, field trips, meetings, etc.) will also be canceled. In some cases, non-academic events may be canceled even if classes are not.

Communicating with Stakeholders during an Infectious Disease Outbreak:

The district will attempt to provide accurate, consistent, and timely communication with staff, students, and parents. We will coordinate with the health department, to develop and deliver common health messages and educational materials to families as information is received.

Dissemination of Information:

- The district will work directly with Chautauqua County Department of Health & Human Services to disseminate any information about public health concerns or communicable diseases.
- All inquiries about public health concerns should be directed to the Chautauqua County Department of Health & Human Services until information is released and we are notified that the district can comment.
- All media inquiries about public health concerns in the district are to be referred to the Superintendent. Any district comment on a public health concern should only be made by the Superintendent or the Board of Education President (or their designee). All press releases will come from the Superintendent.

Press Conferences:

- If a press conference is called by the Superintendent or Board of Education, the Superintendent will contact the media, set-up the day/time of the conference and any needed audio or visual components.
- District press conferences will be held in an appropriate location that is intended for the size of the audience.

Information will be disseminated via our normal emergency mass communication methods.

Dissemination of Information to Staff, Students, Families & Community:

- Once a statement is released by the district, various modes of communication can be used to disseminate info to intended audience – staff, students, parents/guardians and general community:
 - All Call, letters home to families, district website.

Continuity of Operations Plan:

Certain essential district-level functions will need to continue even during a school closure situation.

Essential services may include, but are not limited to:

- Payroll, Accounts Payable
- Communications, Technology
- Grounds and Facilities, Maintenance, Custodial
- Cafeteria Personnel
- Transportation Personnel

Home Instruction:

To help students stay educationally engaged if classes are canceled, the district may provide a variety of instructional resources for students to continue learning at home. While not mandatory, we encourage parents and students to utilize these resources which would be provided in the event of a school cancellation. In addition, the district has some online learning capabilities that can be initiated in the event of extended school closures.

School Closure or District Closure:

- Schools will post instructional resources by grade-level that students can access from home with proper internet connection and device.
- Teachers may create or add to their existing Google Classroom so that students can access class curriculum from home with proper internet connection and device.
- For students without access to the internet, learning packets may be sent home with students if a school or district closing is planned.

Students in Quarantine (no School or District Closure):

- For individual students who are required by the Chautauqua County Health Department to remain in quarantine, the district will arrange for a distance learning connection so that students may participate in home instruction or will provide a hard copy educational packet. Requests for home instruction will be coordinated by the building level principals, who will collaborate with Director of Technology Services to arrange for the appropriate technology and instructional delivery method.

Food Service:

In the event of a school or district closure, district officials will coordinate distribution of meals to students.

- Food will be offered to all students in the district through a central pickup point where families will collect their food.
- A deep cleaning of the school's kitchen's will be performed at the end of each day.
- Surpluses of food (as needed) will be ordered and frozen for lengthy school or district closings.

REOPENING SCHOOLS

Our primary objective in the recovery phase is to restore the learning environment as soon as possible. Issues to consider include determining if schools need disinfection measures before reopening, staffing levels, and grief/mental health issues. The Superintendent's office may also need to develop a plan for students/staff to make up for lost school days.

As the district resumes normal operation, it will remain in contact with the Chautauqua County Health Department regarding disease surveillance. An infectious disease outbreak often comes in waves and the response and recovery process may be repeated several times.

Disinfection:

Disinfection needs will depend primarily on the severity, type, and duration of the pandemic. Pathogens can live an extended time outside the human body on nonporous surfaces such as plastic, metal or wood (depending on the type). Guidance will be obtained from Chautauqua County Health Department regarding our cleaning policies and practices.

Personnel:

If there are multiple staff absences due to an infectious disease outbreak, a plan will be formulated to continue instructional programs and operations within the district.

- Building principals will restructure the schedule and classroom coverage based on staffing needs.

Mental health issues:

Depending on the severity of the outbreak, we will collaborate with local mental health partners to assist with providing students and staff with the appropriate support.

- Below are resources that address mental health needs of students and communities during an infectious disease outbreak:
 - School Mental Health and Training Center
<https://mhanys.org/programs/schools/NYS>
 - Office of Mental Health <https://omh.ny.gov/>

Making up school days:

The Superintendent's office will collaborate with the NYS Department of Education to develop a plan for making up lost school days, if needed.