

Pittsfield School District

**PANDEMIC / EPIDEMIC EMERGENCIES**

The Board recognizes that a pandemic / epidemic is a serious threat that stands to affect students, staff, and the community as a whole. The Board establishes this policy in the event that the town or district is affected by a pandemic or epidemic. At all times, the health, safety, and welfare of the students shall be the first priority. The district shall follow the advice and recommendations of the appropriate state authorities, such as the Department of Health and Human Services.

Planning and Coordination. Planning for pandemic requires a multi-faceted effort, and school preparedness should include input from a team of individuals to address their specific areas of expertise.

The superintendent shall designate one or more employees to serve as liaisons between the district and regional and state health officials. This designee is responsible for communicating with health officials to identify local hazards, determine what crisis plans exist in the district and community, and establish procedures to account for student wellbeing and safety during such a crisis. The designee shall work with regional and state health officials to coordinate their pandemic / epidemic plans with that of the district.

The dean of instruction and/or school nurse and/or other designee shall develop a curriculum component to health classes that is designed to teach students about preventing or limiting the spread of communicable diseases.

Response. In the event that anyone within the district is discovered or suspected to have a communicable disease that may result in transmission to others, the school nurse shall follow procedures established by the district or regional or state authorities for response.

Infection Control. Any student or staff member found to be infected with a communicable disease that may bear risk of transmission will be excluded from school in accordance with guidelines established by the district or regional or state authorities, or until the individual's physician or other care provider indicates that the individual no longer bears the risk of transmitting the communicable disease.

Students with excessive absences due to a communicable disease may be given a reprieve from other Board policies relative to excessive student absences. Efforts will be made by the staff to determine what, if any, schoolwork the student can complete while absent.

Staff members who are forced to miss excessive days of work shall first use any leave to which they are entitled through the Family and Medical Leave Act and accrued sick leave.

Continuance of Education. The superintendent or designee will develop a plan of alternate means of educating students in the event of prolonged school closings and/or extended absences. Such a plan may include providing students with assignments via mail or electronic means.

The superintendent may recommend to the Board amendment to the traditional class schedule and schedule of days in the event of a pandemic / epidemic. Such a plan may include extending the school day, having school days held on Saturdays, using previously scheduled vacation days, and/or extending the school year beyond the previously established end of the school year.

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