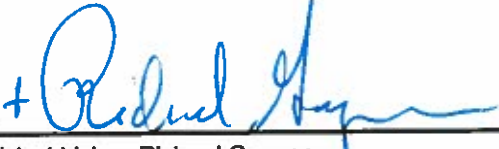
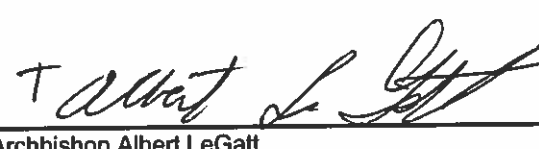




<b>DIRECTIVE</b>	<b>PANDEMIC PLANNING AND RESPONSE</b>

Implemented	2020	Updated	
Date Created	February 21/2020	Dates of Amendment	March 10/2020
Cross Reference	School Business Continuity Plan		
Date Approved by Board of Consultors	March 10/2020		
 +Archbishop Richard Gagnon Archdiocese of Winnipeg		 +Archbishop Albert LeGat Archdiocese of Saint Boniface	

**GUIDELINE STATEMENT:**

Manitoba Catholic Schools need to be prepared for and know how to respond if a pandemic arrives in Manitoba.

A pandemic means an epidemic of any virus over a wide geographic area affecting a large proportion of the population. A pandemic is caused by an infection that is highly contagious and can spread very quickly through the population. It is a serious public health concern; a pandemic could cause a great deal of illness and death. A pandemic is declared by the World Health Organization at the global level and by the Government of Canada at the national level

A pandemic would affect much more than just the health-care system. It is a crisis that will affect all aspects of society and may include the closure of schools. It must be managed by the coordinated participation and cooperation of governments, businesses, educational organizations and citizens.

Vaccination is the most effective way to protect the public from a pandemic. However, vaccines will not be available for the early months of a pandemic and will affect the planning and response to a pandemic.

## **PANDEMIC CYCLE**

The World Health Organization identifies the following pandemic cycle:

<b>Period</b>	<b>Phase</b>	<b>Characteristics/Response</b>
Interpandemic	Phase 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- No new virus subtypes have been detected in humans</li> <li>- A virus subtype that has caused human infection may be present in animals</li> <li>- If present in animals risk* of human infection or disease is considered to be low</li> <li>- Strengthening pandemic preparedness at the global, national, provincial, and regional levels.</li> </ul>
	Phase 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- No new virus subtypes have been detected in humans</li> <li>- However, a circulating animal virus subtype poses a substantial risk* of human disease</li> <li>- Minimize the risk of transmissions to humans, and report such transmissions rapidly if it occurs</li> </ul>
Pandemic Alert Period	Phase 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Human infection(s) with a new subtype, but no human-to-human spread, or at most, rare instances of spread to a close contact**.</li> <li>- Ensure rapid characterization of the new virus subtype and early detection, notification and response to additional cases.</li> </ul>
	Phase 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Small cluster(s), with limited human-to-human transmission but spread is highly localized, suggesting the virus is not well adapted to humans**.</li> <li>- Contain the new virus within the limited foci or delay spread to gain time to implement preparedness measure, including vaccine development.</li> </ul>
	Phase 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Larger cluster(s), but human-to-human spread still localized, suggesting that the virus is becoming increasingly better adapted to humans, but may not yet be fully transmissible. (Substantial pandemic risk)</li> <li>- Maximize efforts to contain or delay spread, to possibly avert a pandemic, and to gain time to implement pandemic response measures.</li> </ul>
Pandemic	Phase 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Increased and sustained transmission in general population**.</li> </ul>
Post-Pandemic Period	Phase 7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Return to Interpandemic period.</li> </ul>

*\*The distinction between phase 1 and phase 2 is based on the risk of human infection or disease resulting from circulating strains in animals. The distinction is based on various factors and their relative importance according to current scientific knowledge.*

*\*\* The distinction between phase 3, phase 4 and phase 5 is based on an assessment of the risk of a pandemic. Various factors and their relative importance according to current scientific knowledge may be considered. Factors may include rate of transmission, geographical location and spread, severity of illness, presence of genes from human strains (if derived from an animal strain), and/or other scientific parameters.*

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## GOAL

The goal of this policy is to provide a framework to guide appropriate planning, decision-making and action.

The health and safety of staff and students will be closely monitored. If health and safety becomes a concern, individual schools may close. It is also possible that Manitoba Education and Training or the Winnipeg Regional Health Authority may make recommendations/requirements regarding the closure of individual schools, or all schools.

Manitoba Catholic Schools are committed to working closely with the Government of Manitoba especially MET and WRHA during a pandemic and will rely on their expertise.

It should be noted that while the schools may be open during a declared pandemic, normal program expectations and service levels may not always be met.

## ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

In the event of a pandemic being declared, the Manitoba Catholic Schools Office (Superintendent and Administrative Coordinator to Catholic Schools) will act as a support network to individual school communities. The MCS office must be informed of any situations that may arise in individual Catholic schools. They will be responsible for coordinating efforts between schools, providing advice and support, and be the communication link with public school divisions, Government of Canada, Government of Manitoba, and the archdioceses.

Each Catholic school will have a pandemic planning team composed of the principal and or president and other administrative, teaching, support staff, board chair/board member, and pastor and/or parish staff. This team will have sufficient numbers to operate even if members of the team become ill during a pandemic. All key decision makers and staff filling key roles must designate back-up to fulfill their duties if they become ill. During a pandemic, they will meet daily to review staff and student absences, review information and determine necessary courses of action. Actions may include, but are not limited to, school closure and/or cancellation of extra-curricular activity or other events or services. Other potential courses of action are listed further in this document under Potential Impact on School Operations. The team should reference their Business Continuity plan if one has been developed.

Decisions on day to day instructional matters will be the responsibility of the principal or designate. The principal, president or designate will be the communications spokesperson for the individual school following the advice of the Superintendent. The Superintendent will be the spokesperson for all Catholic schools in the event of a system closure. The principal or designate will keep employees apprised of changes to operations within the school and disseminate critical information on the pandemic.

Schools will provide students and parents/guardians with timely communications regarding the school's plans and expectations for continued instruction. Where possible, continuation of course work and assignments may be facilitated through independent course work and electronic instruction. In the event of closure, the school will provide parents with as much

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lead time as possible, the reasons for the closure and a realistic estimate of the duration of the closure.

## **EMERGENT ILLNESS AMONG STUDENTS WHILE AT SCHOOL**

Schools will identify an area where children who become ill at school can be accommodated until their parents can be contacted to take them home.

Ill students will stay in a separated area and be kept 2 metres apart even if they are not displaying characteristic symptoms. This serves to minimize the likelihood of transmission between students.

Schools will communicate Manitoba Health advice on return-to-school timelines to students and parents.

## **POTENTIAL SPREAD OF INFECTION AT SCHOOL**

Measures to reduce interpersonal exposure in schools will be balanced with the need to maintain normal routines, school operations and societal functioning. Schools will establish a clear and well-communicated message that stresses the need for students and staff to stay home if they are displaying any symptoms.

## **POTENTIAL IMPACT ON SCHOOL OPERATIONS**

During a pandemic, every effort will be made to continue to offer school services as normally as possible. The primary concern is the health and safety of our staff and students.

Once a pandemic is declared by the Government of Canada (Phase 6, World Health Organization pandemic cycle), and in consultation with authorities, each school's pandemic planning team should consider the potential impact on the following areas, depending on absenteeism and the severity of the pandemic:

1. **After-hours activities/Access to schools** – may be cancelled.
2. **Board meetings** – board meetings will be held as scheduled and more frequently if necessary. They may be held via conference call.
3. **Extracurricular activities** – may be cancelled.
4. **Facility rentals** – existing/new permits for school facility use may be cancelled/not issued.
5. **Field trips/excursions** – there may be a moratorium on field trips/excursions.
6. **Cafeteria/food services/special lunches** – may or may not continue.
7. **Instruction/Evaluation/Reporting** – where possible, the regular in-school instruction program and those activities related to instruction, evaluation and reporting will continue.

8. **Maintenance** - where possible, the normal procedures will continue.
9. **Meetings** - meetings that take administrators or staff out of school may be cancelled or held by teleconference.
10. **Parent-teacher interviews/conferences** - may be cancelled or postponed.
- 11: **Professional development activities** - all professional development activities and attendance at conferences may be cancelled.
12. **Parent Advisory Councils** - principals will have a plan for ongoing communication with the chair of their school community council. Parent Advisory council meetings may be cancelled.
13. **Staff placement and reassignment** - staff may be reassigned to perform alternate duties in order to meet needs.
14. **Student transportation** - where possible and subject to daily review, students buses will maintain regular schedules while schools remain open.
15. **Substitute teachers, casual service and support staff** - where possible, normal procedures will continue.
16. **Tragic event response** - tragic event support will be provided through clinician agreements, coordinated Catholic school staff and or local parish/school teams.
17. **Volunteers** - continued use of volunteers will be considered on a case-by-case basis.
18. **School Liturgies/Celebrations/Events** - may or may not take place

## **SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS - PREPARATION**

- Distribute memos developed by MET for parents and staff.
- Inventory lists of current staff with interchangeable skills according to the following groupings:
  - Teaching Staff
  - Operations/Maintenance/Cleaning/Transportation
  - Clerical & Secretarial
  - Education Assistants
  - Student Services
  - Administration
  -
- Consult with technology support personnel regarding the establishment and maintenance of web sites and email addresses for the purposes of continued communication with homebound students as well as for communication purposes with staff and the community as a whole.
- Ensure students are receiving regular briefings regarding preventative measures.

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- Provide government information on the illness of concern to staff, students and parents.
  - Inventory lists of possible community based volunteers, including retired staff, who may be able to assist in the continued provision of school services.
  - Inventory list of spare support staff, including bus drivers, cleaners, maintenance, clerical staff, etc.
  - Inventory lists of home study materials available for students of differing grade, subject and skill levels.
  - Have electronic and/or paper backup of current student and staff contact information
  - Notify local Public Health Nurse assigned to the school of any reported cases or absenteeism above 10%.
  - Notify MET of outbreak or reported cases (Education Administration Services 945-6899).

## **PREPARING FOR A PANDEMIC – SCHOOLS**

Schools can implement effective health practices and inform parents and others how to do so.

Schools can lessen potential societal disruption by continuing their operation as smoothly and as normally as possible (if community members feel confident in sending their children to school, they will be able to carry on with their own work). The working expectation is that schools will continue to operate and provide an environment that is safe as possible during a pandemic.

### **A. Possible Impact on Schools**

- Employee absenteeism
- Student absenteeism
- Interruption of services and supplies and a reduction of outside supports
- Potential school closures
- Financial losses or incremental costs
- Potential spread of infection at school
- Staff and students becoming ill at school

### **B. Preventative Steps**

- Washing your hands often and teaching others to do the same
- Keeping your hands away from your mouth, nose, and eyes
- Not sharing eating utensils or drinks, or school supplies such as pencils or rulers, or musical instruments with mouthpieces
- Covering your cough
- Getting a vaccine (when available)
- Staying home if you are sick
- Self-quarantining as required

## **PREPARING FOR A PANDEMIC – PARENTS**

Manitoba Catholic Schools will continue to operate as normally as possible in order to lessen potential disruption to society at large.

Schools will remind students and staff to take precautions to improve general hygiene in order to prevent becoming infected and from spreading infection to others. At the same time we would also advise parents to take steps at home to limit the spreading of infection.

These include:

- Washing your hands often and teaching others to do the same
- Keeping your hands away from your mouth, nose, and eyes
- Not sharing eating utensils or drinks, or school supplies such as pencils, rulers or musical instruments with mouthpieces
- Covering your cough or coughing into your elbow
- Getting a vaccine (when available)
- Staying home if you are sick
- Self-quarantining as required

