

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS AND MANAGEMENT

The board of education is committed to ensuring that the District is prepared to address potential emergencies and to ensure that it can address emergencies in the most appropriate and efficient manner to provide a safe and healthy school environment.

The purpose of this policy is to address emergency preparedness and management. In the event of an emergency situation (including but not limited to fire, natural disasters, severe weather, acts of terror, health emergencies, and any other emergency situation) the superintendent is responsible for developing specific plans and procedures in accordance with this policy.

This policy is not intended to replace any current safety plans as related to evacuation procedures for fires, or severe weather sheltering

Definitions

“Prevention” means the capabilities necessary to avoid, deter, or stop an imminent crime or threatened or actual mass casualty incident. It refers to the actions the District and schools will take to prevent a threatened or actual incident from occurring.

“Protection” means the capabilities to secure the District and its schools against acts of violence and man-made or natural disasters. It focuses on ongoing actions that protect students, teachers, staff, visitors, networks, and property from a threat or hazard.

“Mitigation” means the capabilities necessary to eliminate or reduce the loss of life and property damage by lessening the impact of an event or emergency. It also means reducing the likelihood that threats and hazards will happen.

“Response” means the capabilities necessary to stabilize an emergency once it has already happened or is certain to happen in an unpreventable way, to establish a safe and secure environment, to save lives and property, and to facilitate the transition to recovery.

“Recovery” means the capabilities necessary to assist the District and schools affected by an event or emergency in restoring the learning environment.

General Emergency Preparedness

In the event an emergency arises that is not otherwise specifically covered in this policy, the District will follow the general procedures outlined below, leaving discretion to the

superintendent or the superintendent's designee(s) to address specific situations against the backdrop of this and other applicable board policies.

Decision-Making Authority

The board of education grants the superintendent the authority to decide when an emergency exists and to communicate that emergency to employees, students, and appropriate stakeholders by the means appropriate to the nature of the emergency. Depending upon the type and severity of the emergency, the superintendent and District administrators may implement the following responses: Shelter in Place, Lockdown, Evacuation, School Closure, and any other response the superintendent and/or administrators deem appropriate under the circumstances. The superintendent may appoint or meet with a committee to discuss the needs of the District and to implement appropriate steps recommended by the committee to plan for and respond to emergencies. The board of education grants the superintendent the authority to delegate appropriate tasks to members of a committee and administrators in planning for and responding to emergencies.

After an emergency arises, the board of education may convene, pursuant to procedures provided in the Open Meeting Act, to discuss any necessary topic relevant to the District's handling of the situation as soon as practicable, including calling either a special or emergency meeting if necessary. The board of education shall convene under this provision in any situation that the superintendent believes a school closure of more than **Five (5)** days is required. In that meeting, the superintendent shall report on the emergency, including any steps taken. The board grants the superintendent the authority to take any necessary actions, delegate authority, and implement any necessary responses, including temporary school closures, prior to meeting with the board. Thereafter, the board will take further appropriate action.

Actions to be Taken

Any action taken under this policy by the board of education or the superintendent will be made in accordance with applicable state and federal laws, regulations, and guidance; and recommendations from emergency management officials, law enforcement, health authorities, and other appropriate agencies and resources. Actions will be based upon sound information and data, and any plans and procedures that are developed will be evaluated and updated as new information becomes available.

Communication

Throughout every phase of emergency preparedness and management, clear, accurate, and timely communication with employees, students, and (as appropriate) with stakeholders will be accomplished by designated personnel.

School Closure/Evacuation

When responding to an emergency, if the superintendent or board of education determines that it is in the best interest of the District that schools should be closed and/or evacuated, appropriate measures shall be designed and implemented to ensure the safety and transportation of students; essential functions of the District shall continue to the extent

practicable. In the event of a long-term closure of schools [for more than five days], the measures shall address the following topics: continuity of instruction, school lunch programs, access to student records, purchasing services, payroll/benefits administration, maintenance, and health services. Furthermore, the superintendent shall ensure that all stakeholders are adequately informed through appropriate communications.

Nondiscrimination

In addressing emergency preparedness and management, the District will be mindful of its obligation to protect the rights of its students and employees, particularly in regard to Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, and Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. The District will respond appropriately to allegations of discrimination regarding emergency preparedness and management.

HEALTH EMERGENCIES

The board of education seeks to provide an environment which is safe for all students and employees, while maintaining the dignity and privacy of individuals infected with contagious health conditions which constitute a health emergency.

This policy outlines the procedures the District will utilize to address health emergencies. The superintendent, after consultation with state and federal authorities, the State Board of Education, as well as appropriate guidance from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), the Oklahoma Department of Health, and the County Health Department, is authorized to take any other action the superintendent deems necessary to address a health emergency. Ongoing research regarding contagious health conditions may require modification of this policy and procedures to meet a health emergency.

For purposes of this policy, “contagious health conditions” are serious illnesses that are capable of being transmitted to others via the air or casual physical contact between persons or contaminated surfaces.

Prevention

The District will be proactive in preventing the spread of contagious health conditions and educate students, employees and appropriate stakeholders on their responsibility to prevent the transmission of these conditions. The board of education encourages all its employees and students to protect their personal health.

In consultation with appropriate health guidance and authorities, the following preventative measures will be implemented and communicated to students, employees and stakeholders:

1. Handwashing – The CDC recommends that every person wash their hands with clean, running water and soap; lather their hands by rubbing them together with soap (including the backs of the hands, under fingernails, and between fingers) for at least 20 seconds; rinse their hands well under clean, running water; and dry their hands using a clean towel or air drying them. If no soap and water is available, hand sanitizers may be used, but these do not remove all types of contaminants. If hand sanitizer is used, it should

be rubbed all over the surface of ones' hands until dry. Students and employees shall be encouraged to wash their hands in compliance with CDC guidelines.

2. Cough and Sneeze Hygiene – Students and employees should use a tissue to cover their mouths and noses when they sneeze or cough. Used tissues should be promptly discarded in a wastebasket, and hands should be washed with soap and water or hand sanitizer. Where tissues are unavailable, persons should sneeze or cough into their elbow and should not use their hands. If hands become contaminated due to sneezing or coughing, appropriate handwashing should promptly follow. Additionally, the touching of eyes, noses, or mouths should be avoided.
3. Masks – Employees, students and stakeholders shall wear a face mask at all times directed by the superintendent. In determining whether cloth face masks or other masks are permissive or required, the superintendent shall consider state and local COVID-19 conditions and requirements, guidance of the local health department, school instruction cohorts, and the ability to utilize social distancing, as well as other relevant considerations.
4. Vaccines – Vaccinations are a primary way to prevent disease and the spread of contagious health conditions. School officials shall comply with all state and federal requirements concerning vaccinations, and shall communicate the importance of vaccinations to parents and guardians.
5. Cleaning and Disinfecting – District employees shall clean and disinfect surfaces and objects that are frequently touched in school buildings and buses using appropriate materials and techniques. The District shall ensure that it has adequate supplies to support its cleaning and disinfection practices. School employees are required to follow the District's Bloodborne Pathogen Exposure Control Plan at all times when there is potential for exposure to any bodily fluid.
6. Community Education – The District shall educate students, employees and appropriate stakeholders to help them understand their role in preventing the spread of contagious health conditions, which may include language-appropriate signage, posters, emails, meetings, training, literature, and health curriculum components.

Protection/Mitigation

In addition to the above prevention measures, to protect and mitigate against the spread of contagious health conditions, the following measures may be implemented: updating all contact information for students and employees; encouraging or requiring students and employees to remain home if they are sick; encouraging students and employees to practice social distancing; sending students home if they are sick; and educating stakeholders in preventing and identifying a contagious health condition.

Response

In the event of a health emergency, the following procedures may be utilized:

1. Students and employees may be required to stay home if they are ill with a contagious health condition and may be sent home if school officials determine that they are exhibiting symptoms consistent with a contagious health condition. Students and employees will not be allowed to return to school until a health officer or official health department (the CDC, County Health Board, licensed physician, licensed physician's assistant, health department official, school nurse, etc.) has determined that the individual is free of the condition or that there is no danger of the condition spreading to others.
2. At the sole discretion of the administration, individuals who have been exposed to a contagious health condition may be separated from healthy persons or sent home to avoid spreading the condition to others. These determinations will be done on a case-by-case basis and will be done after the consideration of guidance issued by health officials. Any action taken in accordance with this paragraph will be done, to the extent possible, in a manner that avoids embarrassment or disclosure of protected information.
3. The District shall communicate information necessary to keep stakeholders informed about any health emergency, provide stigma-mitigating information, and educate them on their roles in preventing further transmission of the contagious health condition.
4. The District shall coordinate with appropriate health agencies to appropriately report absences and seek guidance in responding to a health emergency.
5. The District shall increase its cleaning and disinfection efforts.
6. The superintendent or board of education may cancel or reschedule extracurricular activities, close schools and/or evacuate students and employees from school sites. Should this become necessary, the superintendent shall implement the School Closure/Evacuation procedures found under General Emergency Preparedness.
7. Students may receive exemptions from other board policies due to excessive absences caused by a contagious health condition.

Recovery

In recovering from a health emergency, the following procedures may be utilized as determined necessary by the superintendent: rigorous cleaning and disinfection of school facilities and buses; the provision of crisis management resources to address mental health needs; and other procedures deemed necessary. The superintendent shall communicate with appropriate stakeholders, debriefing and informing them of the District's recovery efforts. The District shall continue appropriate prevention, protection, mitigation, and response procedures listed above in

preparation for potential resurgence of the health emergency. The superintendent shall also evaluate the effectiveness of the District's response to the emergency and recommend appropriate changes to this policy or the procedures used and report the results of this evaluation to the board of education.

PANDEMIC HEALTH EMERGENCIES

A "pandemic" is a serious disease that spreads over a wide geographic area where a significant portion of the population becomes infected. The District recognizes its responsibility in working together with all stakeholders to slow the spread of pandemics.

In the event of a pandemic, the District shall comply with any and all relevant directives from federal and state officials, particularly the State Board of Education concerning the pandemic. At all times the superintendent shall keep the board of education and all appropriate stakeholders informed concerning the District's response to a pandemic. Efforts shall be made to keep the community calm and reduce panic or stigma.

Prevention

1. The superintendent shall, at least annually, coordinate with state and local health departments when reviewing and updating this policy and associated procedures.
2. The superintendent shall monitor appropriate health resources such as those of the CDC and State Department of Health for reports of pandemics, as well as coordinate with local health departments to identify and prepare strategies for addressing likely pandemics.
3. The District shall circulate materials that educate students, employees, and appropriate stakeholders concerning the signs and symptoms of a likely pandemic. It shall also teach and reinforce to students and employees the importance of following the prevention procedures listed in the Health Emergencies section above.
4. The District shall obtain materials necessary to address a pandemic outbreak and shall intensify its cleaning and disinfecting process.

District administrators shall train employees regarding identifying the symptoms of a likely pandemic and reinforce prior training on employees' responsibilities concerning isolation of students or employees in the event of a pandemic. Should a pandemic be reported in the community, in addition to the above procedures addressing health emergencies, the superintendent shall coordinate with state and local health departments to make informed decisions, monitor and report absenteeism to those departments, communicate with stakeholders, and prepare for possible extracurricular activity cancellations, school closures, and school evacuations.

1. The superintendent shall monitor reports of illness from within the District.

2. The District shall communicate to students, employees, and appropriate stakeholders to keep them informed about developments concerning the pandemic, providing stigma-mitigating information, and informing them of their roles in preventing further transmission of the pandemic disease.
3. Students and employees shall stay home if they exhibit symptoms consistent with the pandemic illness and shall be sent home if they exhibit symptoms consistent with the pandemic illness while at school. Parents and guardians of ill students shall be immediately informed and required to pick up their student(s). Students and employees will not be allowed to return until a health officer or official health department (e.g., the CDC, County, Health Board, licensed physician, licensed physician's assistant, health department official, school nurse, etc.) has determined that the individual is free of the condition or that there is no danger of the condition spreading to others in the school environment. Depending upon the guidance issued by health authorities, students and employees may be prohibited from entering school facilities or participating in school events until a period of self-quarantine has expired.
4. Individuals who have been exposed to a pandemic disease shall be separated/isolated from healthy persons in a manner that addresses symptoms and avoids embarrassment or disclosure of protected health information. Parents and guardians of students who have been exposed to a pandemic disease shall be immediately informed and required to pick up their student(s). Depending upon the guidance issued by health authorities, students and employees may be prohibited from entering school facilities or participating in school events until a period of self-quarantine has expired.
5. If the District believes that school employees or students have been exposed to a person who has been confirmed to be infected with the pandemic disease or to a person subject to self-quarantine procedures by health officials, the District will, to the extent possible, communicate that exposure to affected individuals in a way intended to protect the privacy of the affected individual.
6. If any school employee, student, or school patron is confirmed to have been infected with the pandemic disease and has attended school within the previous two-week period, they should notify school officials as soon as possible.
7. The District shall communicate and coordinate with appropriate federal and state authorities, as well as local health agencies, to report absences and seek guidance in responding to the pandemic.
8. The District shall further intensify its cleaning and disinfection efforts.
9. The superintendent or board of education shall cancel or reschedule extracurricular activities as necessary.
10. If appropriate, the superintendent or board of education may close schools and/or evacuate students and employees from school sites. Should this become necessary, the superintendent shall implement the School Closure/Evacuation Procedures found in the General Emergency Preparedness section above.

11. In the event of a school closure due to a pandemic disease, the superintendent shall cause all affected areas of the District to be closed off and be thoroughly cleaned and disinfected, focusing on frequently-touched surfaces and using products approved by the EPA to kill the disease associated with the pandemic. Guidance on cleaning and disinfection from the CDC shall be consulted and adhered to.
12. The superintendent shall seek the guidance of local health agencies and follow all directives from the State Department of Education regarding when District school sites shall be reopened.

References: The Readiness and Emergency Management for Schools Technical Assistance Center (REMS): *The Role of Districts in Developing High-Quality School Emergency Operations Plans*; REMS: *The Guide for Developing High-Quality School Emergency Operations Plans*; The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC): *Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) Guidance for School Settings*; CDC: *Handwashing: Clean Hands Save Lives*; CDC: *Environmental Cleaning and Disinfection Recommendations*; OKLA. STAT. tit. 63, §§ 638.1–683.24.