


Administrative Procedure Pandemic Preparedness	
	Department: School Operations
	Approved by: Leadership Council
	Date Approved: January 22, 2024
	Revision Date(s):
	Review Date:
	External References
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The Education Act, 1995</i> • <i>The Public Health Act, 1994</i> • <i>The Saskatchewan Employment Act</i> • Primary and Secondary Education Institution Guidelines
Internal References	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appendix A- COVID-19 Pandemic 	

Purpose

- This administrative procedure establishes a comprehensive framework for pandemic preparedness at Saskatchewan Distance Learning Centre (Sask DLC). This procedure aims to ensure the safety and well-being of our employees and students and the continued delivery of educational services during a pandemic or public health emergency.

Scope

- This procedure applies to all Sask DLC employees, learners and visitors. It covers the planning, response and recovery phase of pandemic preparedness.

Policy Statement

- Sask DLC is committed to proactively planning for and responding to pandemics and public health emergencies to protect the health and safety of our employees, students and the integrity of our educational services.
- Sask DLC will follow best practices, guidelines and recommendations from health authorities to minimize the spread of infectious diseases and ensure the continuity of our educational programs.

Procedures:

1. Sask DLC Critical Response Team will be comprised of:
 - a) Chief Executive Officer
 - b) Senior Executive Team
 - c) Director of Human Resources
 - d) Director of Policy, Planning and Privacy
 - e) Executive Assistant to the Chief Executive Officer
 - f) Identified resource people

2. Sask DLC Critical Response Team Role

a) General

- i. Coordination of Sask DLC offices and campuses influenza prevention efforts.
- ii. Educating employees and students on preventative measures.
- iii. Monitoring and tracking the health status of students and employees.
- iv. Identifying and reporting an influenza/epidemic/infectious disease outbreak in Sask DLC's offices and campuses.
- v. Coordinating liaison and communications with the Saskatchewan Health Authority (SHA).
- vi. Coordinating Sask DLC offices and campuses cleaning and sanitizing prevention efforts.
- vii. Monitor and report the status of pandemic affected essential activities and capabilities.

b) Pandemic Alert Period

- i. Implement procedures to communicate with staff to promote confidence in the workplace.
- ii. Implement procedures to minimize illness among staff and visitors, including restricting workplace entry of people with symptoms of illness, increasing social distancing (i.e., avoid face-to-face contact and management of staff who become ill at work).
- iii. Implement additional workplace cleaning measures to minimize the transmission of the virus through environmental sources, particularly hard surfaces such as sinks, handles, railings, objects and counters.
- iv. Implement procedures for ensuring the adequate supplies of hand hygiene products are available.
- v. Implement procedure for recovered staff members to return to work.
- vi. Activate liaison and communications link with the SHA.
- vii. Assess the impact and develop recommendations for:
 - o closing of buildings;
 - o implementing and communicating program cancellations;
 - o implementation of amendments to human resources benefits programs such as the definition of absenteeism, sick leave criteria, time off and vacation;
 - o changes to travel procedures; and,
 - o working collaboratively with staff to meet Sask DLC needs including changes to flexible work hours and alternate workplace procedures.
- viii. Identify core people and skills required to keep the essential activities running and ensure there are sufficient back-ups for people and skills if there is a high level of absence,
- ix. Implement procedures to communicate with staff, students and the community,
- x. Implement procedures to minimize risk of spread of illness among staff and visitors, including:
 - o restricting workplace entry of people with symptoms;
 - o social distancing; and
 - o care of staff and students who become ill at work or school.

c) Sask DLC Response When Pandemic Situation Increases

- i. Confirm the core people and skills required to keep the essential activities running and adjust staffing if there is a high level of absence.

- ii. Re-assign personnel as needed to ensure the continuation of essential activities.
 - iii. Assess the impact and develop recommendations for:
 - o closing of buildings;
 - o implementing and communicating program cancellations;
 - o implementation of amendments to human resources benefits programs such as the definition of absenteeism, sick leave criteria, time off and vacation;
 - o changes to travel procedures; and,
 - o working collaboratively with staff to meet Sask DLC needs including changes to flexible work hours and alternate workplace procedures.
 - iv. Initiate alternative education delivery solutions such as:
 - o combining similar grades, as student absenteeism will like reduce class size;
 - o providing alternate activities that can be accommodated by fewer teaching staff; and,
 - o temporarily combining campuses, if feasible.
 - v. Implement the practice of students and staff staying at home, even with minor symptoms.
 - vi. Implement measures to minimize or slow the transmission of influenzas. Examples of measures that may be introduced are:
 - o reducing visitors to the campus;
 - o reducing the number and duration of face-to-face meetings or number of persons in attendance; and,
 - o postponing events that are open to the public and/or parents, including travel for interschool activities.
 - vii. Report influenza-like illnesses and absenteeism rates to the SHA as requested.
 - viii. Communicate the notification of service reduction/cancellation to education stakeholders, employees, students, the community and the media.
 - ix. Consult, if necessary, with the SHA regarding the responsibility, authority and process for infected site inspections.
 - x. Consult with the SHA regarding the process for re-occupying infected sites.
3. Campus Level Critical Incident Team
- a) The campus level critical incident team will provide support at the campus level during a pandemic situation. This will include:
 - i. implementing school influenza prevention efforts;
 - ii. educating employees and students on preventative measure;
 - iii. monitoring and tracking the health status of students and employees;
 - iv. identifying and reporting an influenza/epidemic/infectious disease outbreak in the campus;
 - v. monitoring campus cleaning and sanitizing prevention efforts; and,
 - vi. communicating and emphasizing the need for good personal hygiene practices, such as covering the nose and mouth when sneezing and coughing, good hand washing/hand hygiene practices, and workplace cleaning habits to minimize influenza transmission.
 - b) The team will coordinate communication with students and parents regarding information about the pandemic. This will include:
 - i. reporting of staff and student absenteeism;
 - ii. reporting of staff and students becoming ill at work;


- iii. implementing procedures to communicate with staff to promote confidence in the workplace;
 - iv. implementing procedures to minimize illness among staff and visitors, including restricting workplace entry of people with symptoms, increase social distancing (i.e., avoid face-to-face contact and management of staff who become ill at work); and,
 - v. implementing additional workplace cleaning measures to minimize the transmission of the virus through environmental sources, particularly hard surfaces such as sinks, handles, railings, objects and counters.
- c) All media statements will be approved by the Chief Executive Officer.

4. Operations of Sask DLC

- a) Sask DLC Critical Incident Team will meet as necessary to review information and determine necessary course of action.
- b) 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 or action will be listed under information items.
- c) Sask DLC will send out an information update to Campus Principals, students and families and the media, as needed.
- d) Requests by the media will be referred to and received by the Director of Communications, in consultation with the Chief Executive Officer. Requests by the media for campus access will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis.
- e) In the event of an emergency situation requiring an immediate response, the Chief Executive Officer or designate shall make the necessary decision.
- f) Decisions of the Team will be recorded by the Executive Assistant and communicated to Sask DLC personnel .

5. Potential Impact on Sask DLC Operations

- a) Sask DLC's primary concern will be the health and safety of students and staff. Once a pandemic is declared and in consultation with authorities from the SHA the following may apply:
 - i. after-hour activities/access to campuses will be cancelled;
 - ii. Leadership Council meetings will be held as scheduled and more frequently if necessary;
 - iii. extra-curricular activities will be cancelled;
 - iv. there will be a moratorium on field trips/excursions;
 - v. meetings that take campus-based administrators or staff out of campus will be either cancelled or held online;
 - vi. in-person professional development activities will be cancelled; and,
 - vii. continued use of volunteers will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Appendix A: COVID-19 Pandemic	
	Department: School Operation
	Approved by:
	Adopted:
	Amended:
	External References <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The Education Act, 1995</i> • <i>The Public Health Act, 1994</i> • <i>The Saskatchewan Employment Act</i> • Primary and Secondary Education Institution Guidelines
	Internal References <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pandemic Preparedness- AP- COVID-19 Pandemic

Background

- This appendix has been created to ensure a safe return to the workplace for all staff during a COVID-19 pandemic. These guidelines will continue to be adjusted as necessary following the direction of the Chief Medical Health Officer of Saskatchewan.

Procedures:

1. General Guidelines

- a) When practical, physical distancing between individuals should be maintained. If this is not possible, other measures should be used.
- b) Proper hand washing hygiene is expected from all employees and students. Practices include using soap and water, for a minimum of 20 seconds, and using hand sanitizer when handwashing is not possible. Cough and sneeze into your elbow and avoid touching your face, mouth, nose and eyes.
- c) Employees and students are encouraged to bring their own hand sanitizer for personal use to supplement what Sask DLC will be providing.
- d) Except when in close contact with a student who is ill, masks and eye protection are not required. However, if an employee feels more comfortable wearing a mask while at work, they may bring their own.
- e) Employees and students shall limit physical contact throughout the school day and avoid close greetings such as handshakes.
- f) Employees are expected to keep desks/workspaces clean, sanitized and free from clutter.
- g) Sharing food, drinks, or other personal items is to be avoided.
- h) Employees shall not enter private residence or provide personal transportation to students.
- i) Employees shall avoid unnecessary travel.

2. Employee Illness Due to COVID-19

- a) All employees are expected to self-monitor for COVID-19 symptoms. It is recommended that employees visit the [official COVID-19 information page](#) provided by the Government of Saskatchewan.
 - b) If an employee has symptoms of COVID-19 they are to stay home. The employee must request their absence using the normal process established at Sask DLC.
 - c) If an employee has symptoms unrelated to COVID-19 they are to report to work.
 - d) If an employee develops symptoms at work they should leave immediately. If unable to leave immediately:
 - i. employees should separate themselves in an area and maintain a two-metre distance from others;
 - ii. employees should use a tissue or mask to cover their nose and mouth;
 - iii. staff responsible for facility cleaning must clean and disinfect the space where the employee was separated as well as any areas used by them (e.g., classroom, washroom, etc.); and,
 - iv. contact the local public health authority to notify them of a potential case and seek further input.
 - e) If an employee feels well but is at a high risk of severe illness from COVID-19 the employee is to contact their campus principal/supervisor and the Human Resources Manager.
3. Student Illness Due to COVID-19
- a) Parents are to ensure their child(ren) are assessed/monitored for symptoms of COVID-19. It is recommended that students/parents use the online Saskatchewan COVID-19 Self-Assessment Tool at <https://www.saskatchewan.ca/COVID19>
 - b) If a student has symptoms of COVID-19 they are to stay home until they have been assessed by a health care provider to exclude COVID-19 or other infectious diseases, and their symptoms have resolved.
 - c) Students arriving at Sask DLC campus, classroom or other in-person event with symptoms of COVID-19 will be sent home. Parents will be contacted and expected to arrange to pick up children immediately.
 - d) If a student develops symptoms at Sask DLC campus, classroom or in-person event they should be sent home as soon as possible. The student will be immediately separated from others in a supervised location and the parent/guardian will be contacted to pick them up as soon as possible.
 - i. The campus principal or designate shall call parents or caregivers to pick up their child from school and instruct them to call 811.
 - ii. Where possible, maintain a distance of two-metres. If not possible, staff and student may wear a mask and face shield.
 - iii. Provide the student with a face mask and request the student to wear it if the student is not in respiratory distress and can remove the mask themselves if respiratory distress occurs.
 - iv. Avoid contact with the student's respiratory secretions.
 - v. Once the student is picked up, hand washing should be performed.
 - vi. Staff responsible for facility cleaning must clean and disinfect the space where the student was separated as well as any areas used by them (e.g., classroom, bathroom, etc.)

- vii. Advise the Superintendent of School Operations who will contact SHA to notify them of a potential case and seek further input.
 - e) If a student feels well but is at a high risk of severe illness from COVID-19 the parent is to contact the campus principal and Sask DLC senior executive with responsibilities for school operations to discuss possible accommodations.
4. In consultation with Sask DLC senior executive with responsibilities for school operations, each campus shall:
- a) set up a designated isolation room within the campus;
 - b) ensure that face masks, face shields, and hand sanitizers are readily available in all rooms on the campus;
 - c) keep accurate and up-to-date records of attendance and seating arrangements to support public health investigation and contact tracing;
 - d) establish standardized procedures for cleaning and disinfecting classrooms and high touch surfaces and student workstations, including designating the employees who shall be responsible for these tasks, noting that all requirements associated with the increased sanitization and disinfection of facilities including common areas will be completed by custodial staff throughout the day; and,
 - e) establish standardized procedures for the disposal of personal protective equipment (PPE).
5. Online Learning Facilitators who support students in schools outside of Sask DLC campus must comply with the guidelines and instructions provided by their respective designated schools.
6. Public Health Order
- a) In the event of a public health order, it is mandatory for all employees and students to comply with the specified directives.
7. Additional Health Supports
- a) HealthLine 811 (all staff and students).
 - b) Member and Family Assistance Program (STF members) 1-833-485-4245.
 - c) Employee Family Assistance Program (CUPE Members and Out of Scope Staff) 1-866-644-0326.
8. Guidelines for Work Refusal Due to COVID-19
- a) Section 3-31 of *The Saskatchewan Employment Act* states that an employee may refuse to perform any particular act or series of acts at a place of employment if the employee has reasonable grounds to believe that the act or series of acts is unusually dangerous to the employee's health or safety or the health or safety of any other person at the placement of employment until:
 - i. sufficient steps have been taken to satisfy the employee otherwise; or,
 - ii. the Occupational Health and Safety Committee (OH&S) has investigated the matter and advised the employee otherwise.
 - b) An employee's right to refuse to perform work as a result of COVID-19 will be contingent upon factors including (but not limited to) the following:

- i. the state of the COVID-19 situation in the employee's particular community and workplace at the time the refusal to work is being exercised;
 - ii. the age and health of the specific employee;
 - iii. the type of workplace where the employee usually performs their functions;
 - iv. the specific field of work and their normal duties or tasks;
 - v. the measures adopted by Sask DLC to prevent the transmission of COVID-19, including workplace hygiene and PPE, where applicable;
 - vi. whether or not an employee has been diagnosed with COVID-19;
 - vii. whether the employee or the circumstances fall in one of the legislative exceptions to the right to refuse unsafe work; and,
 - viii. any other factually relevant considerations in assessing whether there is a hazard, a risk or a danger.
- c) If an employee has reasonable grounds to believe they have been asked to perform an unusually dangerous act, the employee shall notify their campus principal/supervisor, the applicable Superintendent of School Operations and the Human Resources Manager.
- d) Following notification, the campus OHS committee will investigate the concern and communicate the decision to the above noted Sask DLC office staff.