

Utah Department of Health and Utah State Office of Education School Recommendations for Pandemic Influenza Planning

School Pandemic Planning

Children play a critical role in the transmission of influenza because they are infectious for a longer period of time, they secrete more virus, and they have limited hygiene. Additionally, influenza is transmitted very efficiently in school settings because of high contact rates and close proximity. Children infected with influenza at school can then introduce the virus to their household and the community at large. Therefore, school pandemic planning is a critical component of effective pandemic influenza planning.

Pre-pandemic Planning

- Collaborate closely with your local health department in all aspects of pandemic influenza planning and preparations.
- Develop a pandemic influenza preparedness plan.
- Educate staff, students, and parents about pandemic influenza and the school's plan
- Establish lenient work-leave policies for staff to comply with isolation and quarantine suggestions.
- Enhance hygiene and sanitization policies and begin to stockpile necessary supplies.
- Develop methods for alternative student learning and remotely accessing information.
- Develop consistent and reliable methods for communicating with staff, students, and parents before, during, and after a pandemic.
- Develop methods to efficiently and immediately communicate with your local health department.

Utah Pandemic Response Levels

Actions taken in the state of Utah will be specific to pandemic influenza activity in the state and the surrounding region. Depending on how the pandemic spreads, different states and regions in the US may be at different stages in the activation of pandemic influenza control measures. Utah-specific response levels have been created to describe the threat of pandemic influenza to Utah in relation to pandemic influenza activity outside of Utah and to aid in Utah-specific communications and responses.

Level A: Widespread transmission in humans outside of North America.

Level B: Detection of human case(s) in North America, without detection in Utah.

Level C: Detection of human case(s) in Utah.

Level D: Established epidemic(s) in Utah.

Level E: Period after an initial wave in Utah.

Implementing Pandemic Plans

In general, the first documented case of pandemic influenza in Utah will trigger student dismissal. However, for student dismissal to be effectively and quickly implemented, a method to prepare and notify prior to the dismissal order is necessary. Public health in Utah will use the *Utah Pandemic Response Levels* to trigger specific communications and actions. The following details what actions will occur and when during a pandemic.

Level A: Widespread transmission in humans outside of North America.

- Utah Department of Health and local health departments will discuss the extent of student dismissal and childcare closure to be enacted once a case is detected in Utah.

Level B: Detection of human case(s) in North America, without detection in Utah.

- Local health departments will communicate with school officials what is expected to happen once a case is detected in Utah.
- Schools will notify staff, students, and parents regarding what is expected to happen once a case is detected in Utah.
- Schools will initiate pandemic influenza infection control policies.

Level C: Detection of human case(s) in Utah.

- Local health departments will issue student dismissal and childcare closure orders within their jurisdiction.
- Schools will notify staff, students, and parents of closure orders.

Level D: Established epidemic(s) in Utah.

- Local health departments and schools will issue weekly updates on the status of the pandemic and school closures to staff, students, and parents.
- Utah Department of Health and local health departments will meet to discuss the length of student dismissal and childcare closures in Utah.

Level E: Period after an initial wave in Utah.

- Local health departments will lift student dismissal and childcare closure orders within their jurisdiction.
- Schools will notify staff, students, and parents of school reopening.