

# **MONROE #1 BOCES**



# **PANDEMIC PLAN**

**(Revised 2020)**

## **I. Definition of Pandemic**

According to the World Health Organization (WHO) a pandemic is a worldwide spread of a new disease. An influenza pandemic occurs when a new influenza virus emerges and spreads around the world, and most people do not have immunity.

Three criteria determine a pandemic:

A new infectious agent emerges to which humans have no immunity

Humans are infected and become sick (or die)

Is contagious and spreads from person to person efficiently

## **II. Purpose of the Plan**

The purpose of the plan is to assist in managing the impact of a pandemic, if one should occur, that would affect Monroe One BOCES and its ability to provide services to the children and districts that it serves daily.

This plan focuses on two main strategies, which include:

- Sustaining educational/department functions to the maximum extent possible
- Reducing the spread of the virus within Monroe One BOCES facilities

## **III. Communication**

The Monroe One BOCES has aligned its pandemic plan with the Monroe County Health Department, as well as the Federal and NYS DOH and the Centers for Disease Control. Monroe One BOCES' guidance will be consistent with these agencies recommendations in order to coordinate appropriate response and to avoid causing unnecessary concern. Key features include working closely with the Monroe County Health Department and establishing communication mechanisms among school personnel and with the community at large.

- To Monroe One BOCES from external sources
- From Monroe One BOCES to external sources  
Monroe One BOCES website

- Internally within Monroe One BOCES

Parents/guardians, students, staff  
Electronic mass notification system  
Online News Sources  
Flyers/Written Communication to Parents/Guardians  
website  
Local Radio/Television Stations  
E-mail

- The primary communication channel will be the Monroe County Public Health Website located at <http://www.monroecounty.gov/health-index.php>. Specific information for schools will also be made available both through the Monroe One BOCES website at [www.monroe.edu](http://www.monroe.edu).
- The Superintendent of Schools and/or the Coordinator of School-Community Relations will act as spokesperson(s) for Monroe One BOCES. Communication channels will be used according to the nuances of the Pandemic which may include website information, school and district newsletters, e-mail and the district's electronic mass media messaging system. All staff will be advised to refer outside media inquiries directly to central office. Scripts for building office staff, nursing staff, and teaching staff will be provided when appropriate for consistent messaging.
- Communications to employees will generally be done through employee email. The building principal or department supervisor will advise the employees in advance where to find up-to-date and reliable information. While efforts will be made to inform staff in a timely fashion of all new developments, during actual outbreaks and especially during high district level problem-solving that may take time, minor communication delays may occur. Building principals and supervisors will remind staff that they should only regard official district communication as valid and that patience by all may be required.
- Upon authorization of the Superintendent, communications will be made via the district's automated mass media messaging system, e-mail, and/or Monroe One BOCES website.
- The Coordinator of School-Community Relations will provide links to the Monroe County Health Department website, the Federal and the New York State Department of Health and Human Services, and the Centers for Disease Control or the Monroe One BOCES website.
- The District Physician and Coordinator of Health Services will provide educational communications regarding best health care practices

- to encourage employees to acquire and maintain personal, regular health-care services that address any pandemic event that may occur.
- The Director of Human Resources will provide communications regarding school policies for employee's compensation and sick leave absences, mandatory exclusions, and enforcement that may be unique to a pandemic.
- Medical assessment and medically appropriate decisions may be made at a program or classroom level taking into consideration the safety of students.

#### **IV. Components of the Plan**

To provide guidance on procedures and practices in the following areas:

- **Maintaining School/Department Functions**
  - Identify essential staff and school functions
  - Plan for absenteeism of students and/or staff
- **Preparedness Activities**
  - Guidance on hygiene posted throughout BOCES
  - Essential supplies such as, but not limited to N-95 surgical masks for nursing staff, hand sanitizing gels and soap for all staff and students use and appropriate cleaning supplies for staff
  - Distribution of a pandemic virus fact sheet containing information to help stop the spread of the virus to staff, students and parents/guardians
  - Updated vaccine information as available
  - Public Health guidelines as provided by government agencies
  - If necessary, the District Superintendent may initiate an Incident Command Center at the district office to manage the pandemic plan. The command center will collaborate with the District Physician, the Monroe County Health Department and other local, county and state agencies.
- **Development of a Management/Response Structure**
  - Monroe One BOCES has a District-Wide Health and Safety Team, and Building-Level School Safety Teams that share responsibility for emergency management and response to emergency situations.
  - The District-Wide and Building Safety Teams are comprised of staff members who use the Incident Command System to perform the following roles:  
Incident Commander  
Logistics

Team Leader  
Operations/Maintenance  
Safety/Security  
Communications  
Medical  
Parent Liaison  
Mental Health  
Student/Staff Liaison

- In the event of a pandemic, the District Superintendent or District/Building Incident Commanders will activate School Safety Teams as necessary to assist in carrying out the components of the pandemic plan. Members of the Monroe One BOCES Pandemic Committee will also be asked to participate as needed.
- An incident command center may also be established and located in either the Safety and Security Office (Building 7), the District Superintendent's conference room or other designated location.
- Scheduled briefings by the team to assess status of pandemic and M1B's status. This may include additional staff beyond the original committee membership as necessary.
- Review of present communicable disease policies and procedures

o **Procedure for attendance**

- Staff assigned in a program/department to receive absence calls will use the script provided for eliciting information from parents and staff. Information will be recorded on forms provided which will be sent to the nurse's office in the building or to the Nurse Manager if a nurse is not assigned to program/department, by noon each day.
- All students who become ill during the school day must be seen in the Health Office prior to dismissal from school.
- All staff who become ill during the day must sign out in the Health Office prior to leaving the building.

## **V. Reduce the Spread of Virus**

o **Student Spacing (Social Distancing)**

Student spacing refers to use of physical distance among students and exposure time among individuals to reduce the spread of virus between people. In the event of a pandemic, the Office of Student Services will distribute education and guidance on student spacing to all staff, students and parents.

Where possible, please consider the following student spacing strategies:

- Spacing students' desks three (3) feet apart
- Shortening passing periods
- Sending students to eat lunch at their desks

- Limited group activities and interaction between classes
  - Creating a quarantine area to group people with respiratory symptoms together and apart from others who are not displaying symptoms of illness.
- **School Cleaning**
- Frequent and routine cleaning will remain a best practice. Monroe One BOCES will follow the local, state, and federal guidelines for cleaning practices during a pandemic outbreak. Specialized cleaning solutions may not be necessary. Therefore, standard cleaning products and soap and water may be adequate manufacturer's instructions to ensure adequate amounts and appropriate drying periods are followed.
  - The building ventilation system will provide a continual exchange of fresh air. If concerns arise regarding ventilation, Operations and Maintenance should be contacted immediately.
  - To the greatest extent possible, staff will be advised not to share telephones, keyboards, etc. If it is essential that they are shared, they should be cleaned, and good hand hygiene observed following use. Other areas where hygiene practices are important would be frequently used equipment or fixtures i.e. doorknobs, hand railings, light switches, etc.
  - Details regarding cleaning solutions can be found located on the fact sheets at the Monroe County Department of Health Website.
- **Educating Students/Staff/Parents to Eliminate Concern**
- It is likely there will be anxiety regarding the Pandemic, and this may contribute to increased absenteeism and/or increased distress to students, parents and staff. Suggested methods to address this include:
- Continually educating those involved in the district's preparedness and ongoing management efforts.
  - Provide timely updates to staff, students, parents, teachers and other relevant parties.
  - During a pandemic, continue to educate staff, students and parents regarding the progress of the pandemic, its avoidance, and its effects.
  - As needed, work with local resources and local public health officials to assure support mechanisms are readily available. (For example: district counselors, mental health, social services and faith-based resources.)
- **Managing Illness in Staff, Students and Visitors**
- The Coordinator of Health Services, based on central office guidance, will post information on what to do if people get sick while at school.
  - The Coordinator of Health Services, in conjunction with the Community Relations Manager will inform staff and students regarding symptoms of the illness.

- The District Physician will provide nursing staff with medical orders for managing suspected or confirmed illness, including identification criteria, infection control, personal protective devices, and exclusion criteria.
- Within school programs, if a person becomes ill or if someone observes that another person is exhibiting symptoms of the virus at school, staff should alert the building principal who will direct the person to the health office for evaluation and, when indicated by the school nurse, ensure that the ill person leave the school as soon as possible, and does not return until the exclusion period has been met. In matters of school sheltering appropriate placement of the ill individual in a safe and comfortable setting will be a priority.
- To the greatest extent possible, the transportation of ill students will be done by parents and/or guardians.
- Students or staff members will be directed to seek medical care and report back to their respective school nurse, when applicable, if the virus is likely. The District Physician and Coordinator of Health Services will advise nursing staff on complicated cases.
- Parents and/or students, as well as staff members, will adhere to guidelines set forth by the Monroe County Health Department regarding standard baselines for staying home and when they may return to school. Supervisors and building principals working in cooperation with teaching and nursing staff will enforce mandatory exclusions.

## **VI. Alternative Educational Methods**

Monroe One BOCES reserves the right to educate children based on the details of the pandemic. Procedures to assure continuity of instruction will depend on the variables of the pandemic-event.

Alternative modes of education may be delivered by web-based learning, e-mail, television/radio broadcasts and/or U.S. Postal Service. Alternatively, postponement of instruction with make-up sessions over previously planned vacations may be required based on local, state, and federal guidance, as well as feasibility of extended out-of-school instruction.

## **VII. Continuity of Operations and Required Personnel**

The Emergency Response Team will ensure that core functions, people and skills have been identified and that strategies are in place to manage these prior to a pandemic emergency. This includes budget, payroll, and on-going communications with parents and students. Each department supervisor will provide the District Superintendent, in advance, minimum staffing, program

equipment and facility needs in order to maintain essential operations. Each supervisor will advise the District Superintendent if they have fallen below those minimum standards and can no longer function safely or properly.

Decisions on how and when to operate the school system with a significant shortage of staff and students will be made by the Monroe One BOCES District Superintendent of Schools. Such a decision will be made in conjunction with the Monroe County Health Department, the NYS DOH, and the Centers for Disease Control. These decisions may also consider alternatives such as staggered school times, changes to busing and telecommunications. Criteria for implementing containment measures such as, but not limited to, cancelling community classes and other mass gatherings, will be determined by the District Superintendent of Schools in collaboration with local, state, and federal guidelines.

- All district level administrators – will assist with communication, work with other agencies and plan accordingly to assist with communication, building guidance and enforcement
- All secretarial staff – to assist in carrying out the plan of action as directed by the district office and building administrator
- All custodial staff members – to ensure a safe, clean environment
- All nursing staff members – to assist in planning and promoting safe and healthy environments; to identify and manage staff and student illness; to assess, stabilize, and triage individuals with influenza like illness, and to assist the principal in enforcement of mandatory exclusions.
- All Business, Payroll, Human Resource, and Security staff – to address all issues that arise due to pandemic, will be decided in accordance with state and federal law, school district policy and the idiosyncrasies of the pandemic.