

Riverside School Board

# **PANDEMIC RESPONSE PLAN**

**Adopted by Resolution of Council  
2009-10-20**



# Table of Contents

|  | <b>Page</b> |
|--|-------------|
| <b>DEFINITIONS</b>   | <b>3</b>    |
| <b>ACRONYMS / INITIALISMS</b>  | <b>3</b>    |
| <b>PANDEMIC INFORMATION WEB LINKS</b>  | <b>3</b>    |
| <b>INTRODUCTION</b>  | <b>4</b>    |
| <b>CHAIN OF COMMUNICATION</b>  | <b>6</b>    |
| <b>PHASE 1: PREPARATION AND PREVENTION</b>   | <b>7</b>    |
| <b>PHASE 2: PANDEMIC DECLARED – SCHOOLS OPEN</b>                                       | <b>10</b>   |
| <b>PHASE 3: PANDEMIC DECLARED – SCHOOLS CLOSED</b>                                     | <b>13</b>   |
| <b>PHASE 4: RECOVERY – SCHOOLS RE-OPEN</b>   | <b>15</b>   |
| <b>APPENDIX 1</b> <b>Protect Yourself Against the Flu Virus</b>                        | <b>17</b>   |
| <b>APPENDIX 2</b> <b>Checklist for School Administrators &amp; the Centre Director</b> | <b>18</b>   |
| <b>APPENDIX 3</b> <b>Telephone Chain/Emergency Contact Info for Administrators</b>     | <b>19</b>   |
| <b>APPENDIX 4</b> <b>List of Media Contacts</b>  | <b>20</b>   |
| <b>APPENDIX 5</b> <b>Emergency: Recorded Message for 450-672-4010</b>                  | <b>21</b>   |
| <b>APPENDIX 6</b> <b>Communiqués: Closing of Schools/Reopening of Schools</b>          | <b>22</b>   |

## DEFINITIONS

**Epidemic:** Affecting or tending to affect a disproportionately large number of individuals within a population, community or region at the same time.

**Pandemic:** Occurring over a widespread geographic area and affecting an exceptionally high proportion of the population.

**Casual employees:** Individuals who may replace regular School Board staff in the event of prolonged absences or high absenteeism.

**Flu symptoms:** Fever, cough, headache, achiness and stiffness, intense fatigue, nausea and vomiting, nasal congestion and runny nose, sneezing, sore throat and chest pain.

## ACRONYMS / INITIALISMS

|      |   |  |
|------|---|--|
| RSB  | - | Riverside School Board                       |
| CERT | - | Central Emergency Response Team              |
| QPH  | - | Quebec Public Health                         |
| MELS | - | Ministry of Education, Recreation and Sports |
| HSS  | - | Health and Social Services                   |

## PANDEMIC INFORMATION WEB LINKS

<http://www.pandemiequebec.ca/en/news/news.shtml>

<http://www.who.int/en/>

<http://www.phac-aspc.qc.ca/influenza/pandemic-eng.php>

# INTRODUCTION

Riverside School Board will follow the lead of Quebec Public Health (QPH) authorities and the Ministry of Education, Recreation and Sports (MELS) with regard to the declaration of a pandemic (e.g. influenza A H1N1, SARS, H5N1 bird flu). It is appropriate that Riverside School Board update its pandemic response plan and ensure that staff and students are prepared in the event of a pandemic.

Riverside School Board expects that all of its employees will cooperate with MELS and the health and social services sector in particular.

This plan makes a strong case for prevention by reinforcing good hygiene habits (i.e. frequent hand washing, coughing and/or sneezing into a tissue or shirt sleeve).

The Riverside School Board Pandemic Response Plan is organized in four phases:

- prevention (pre-pandemic);
- early response with schools open (human-to-human infection confirmed);
- response with schools closed (widespread human-to-human infection);
- recovery and school re-openings.

The Quebec Pandemic Plan identifies three rules of governance that should guide all stake holders who assume one or more roles during an influenza pandemic:

- Protection  
Our first concern is protection: faced with a risk, real or perceived, current or potential, stakeholders must protect themselves and encourage others to do the same.
- Solidarity  
The second concern is solidarity: in an emergency situation, stakeholders must assist others, ask for help if the situation requires it and encourage others to help, for the purposes of the common good.
- Responsibility and Sound Management  
The third concern is that of responsibility: in the event of an emergency, stakeholders continue in their essential activities or try to find a replacement solution, seek out information on the status of the situation as it relates to them, and follow instructions and notices that concern them.

Finally, it is important to remember the importance of responsible administration. The implementation of action plans to deal with an influenza pandemic will involve major costs, particularly for preparation and response.

Accordingly, the priorities of this action plan, besides prevention, are the following:

- coordination of communication;
- assurance of adequate human resources;
- assurance of cleanliness and security of buildings.

## **Central Emergency Response Team**

As stated in the Quebec government's pandemic literature, a "top-down approach" will be the most effective in the eventuality of an actual outbreak.

A Riverside School Board "Central Emergency Response Team" (CERT), is formed. The CERT will make recommendations to the Council of Commissioners. The committee will include:

- Chairman of the Council of Commissioners
- Director General
- Assistant Director General
- Secretary General
- Director of Complementary Services
- Director of Human Resources
- Director of Elementary Schools
- Director of Material Resources/Technology
- Ad Hoc Members (depending on their expertise, will be added as needed)

During a pandemic outbreak, QPH and MELS will be in direct communication with a contact person (Director of Human Resources) or in his absence, with the Office of the Secretary General.

Principals and the centre director will share the information from this plan with their staff and Governing Boards.

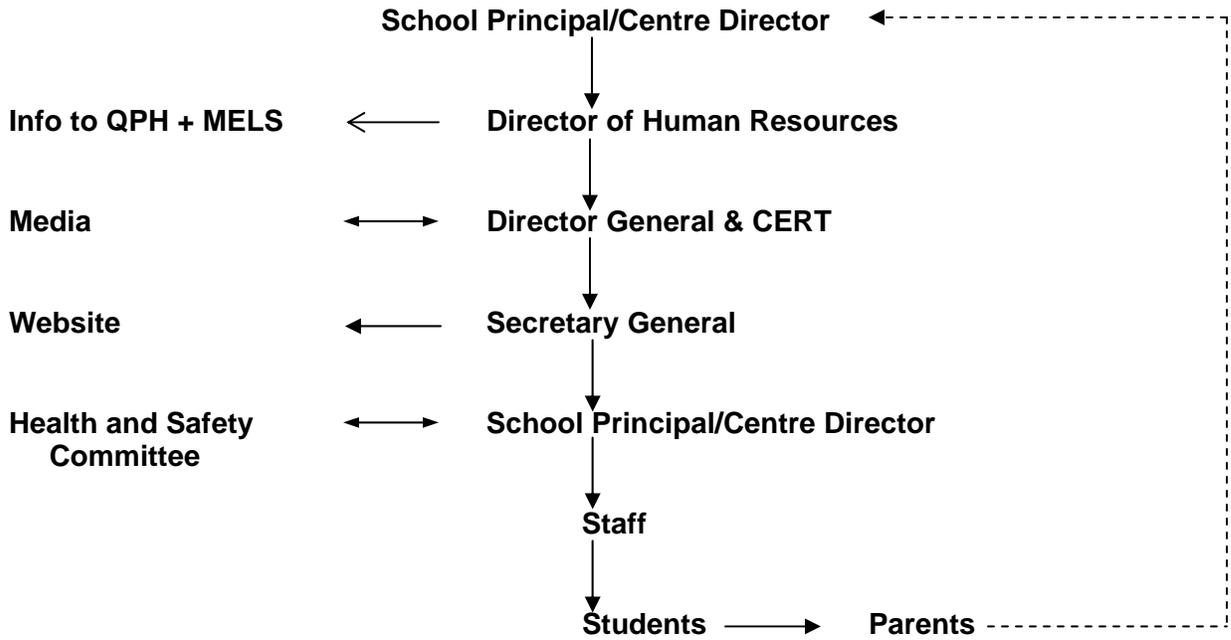
## **School/Centre Plans**

It is essential that each school and center develop its own internal plan of pandemic preparedness, based on the Board plan. (See Appendix 1 for the Pandemic Plan Checklist for School Administrators & the Centre Director)

Communication with Principals and the Centre Director will be ongoing:

- The school/centre Health & Safety Committee will be mandated to act as the school emergency response team. However, CERT will be in direct communication with the Principal or his/her delegate.
- School response plans must meet the needs of individual schools and their communities and respect the guidelines of the Riverside School Board plan.

# CHAIN OF COMMUNICATION



# PHASE 1: PREPARATION & PREVENTION

As outlined in the introduction, a rigorous disease prevention protocol will reduce the incidence of illness in both the pre-pandemic stage (normal viruses and colds), and during a pandemic outbreak.

## **(Refer to “Protect Yourself Against the Flu Virus”)**

The most effective approach to reducing the person-to-person transmission of illness features:

- Primarily, hand washing with soap and water, as well as
- Respiratory hygiene procedures for coughs and sneezes.
- Also, the use of a hand sanitizer product that contains at least 60% alcohol.

The goal in Phase 1 is to provide information to all Riverside School Board staff so that they may implement good hygiene protocols in all schools, the board office and centre buildings.

Identification of essential personnel, as well as the training of back-up personnel, will also be necessary in preparation for an eventual pandemic situation.

## Recommendations:

- That Riverside School Board continue to implement educational and practical components of the hand washing, cough and sneeze protocol currently in place in all schools, the board office and in the centre buildings.
- That particular attention also be given to the cleaning of desks, washrooms, cafeteria tables, telephones, doorknobs, railings, banisters, locker doors, etc.
- That all principals and the centre director meet regularly with caretaking staff to review cleaning needs and protocols.
- That all Riverside School Board staff receives ongoing information on the pandemic situation.

## **HUMAN RESOURCES – Phase 1**

### **Actions**

- All staff receives initial awareness and prevention instructions.
- In conjunction with Material Resources, maintenance/cleaning employees will receive specific instructions on cleaning procedures.
- Board office staff must maintain essential operations in the event of a pandemic; therefore departments will be requested to evaluate their essential services and, where necessary, train sufficient staff to ensure the maintenance of essential services.
- Instructional material will be introduced and incorporated into the classroom for intensification of the educational and practical components of a hand washing and respiratory hygiene (cough and sneeze) protocol.

## **CURRICULUM SERVICES – Phase 1**

When necessary, Curriculum Services may be required to ensure that the delivery of quality educational content is maintained during the period of a pandemic.

## **COMPLEMENTARY SERVICES – Phase 1**

Complementary Services will be involved in supporting the implementation of prevention methods in all schools. Complementary Services staff will be available to provide reassurance and support to students and staff.

During this phase, Complementary Services staff will review information and materials and maintain a current knowledge of the situation in the schools and centre.

## **MATERIAL RESOURCES – Phase 1**

The goals of the Material Resources Department are prevention and the instruction of maintenance staff in the area of cleaning. This should help reduce the spread of an eventual pandemic virus.

### **Actions**

- Ensure that all the washrooms in all schools, the board office and centre buildings have the appropriate tools for proper hand washing.
- Install hand sanitizer dispensers in all of our schools, the board office and centre buildings.
- Provide schools with laminated colour hand washing instruction posters.
- Stockpile of some materials may be necessary.
- Remind caretaking staff of proper cleaning techniques especially in high risk areas.
- Develop protocols for the clean-up of body fluids such as vomit, blood, etc.

## **TRANSPORTATION – Phase 1**

School buses are the first and last contact students have with our school system each and every day, it is important that we take steps to minimize the possibility of the transmission of viruses.

### **Actions**

- Ensure that transportation companies that transport Riverside students be aware of hygiene techniques with respect to the transmission of viruses.
- Request that bus contractors post respiratory hygiene posters visibly in their buses.
- Ensure that bus contractors equip their buses with first aid kits.
- Recommend that the handrail be disinfected as regularly as possible.

## **TECHNOLOGY (ICT) – Phase 1**

The maintenance of communication systems during a pandemic is essential. For Riverside School Board, this will represent the continual functioning of our internet service and phone lines.

## **SECRETARY GENERAL (Communication to Parents and Students) – Phase 1**

In all stages of the pandemic plan, accurate and timely communication with students, parents and communities is essential. Communication is critical to ensure that the desired preventative measures are being applied in schools, the board office and centre buildings.

### **Actions**

- Information letters to parents and employees will be developed and distributed to all schools, the board office and the centre.
- Communication tools and messages must be consistent throughout the board with the same message being given at all levels and in all schools, the board office and centre buildings.
- Communication tools that may be used are the Riverside School Board website, e-mails, newsletters, emergency telephone chains, media, etc. (emergency telephone chains must be up-to-date and in place).

## **PHASE 2: PANDEMIC DECLARED – SCHOOLS OPEN**

Phase 2 focuses on the Riverside School Board plan to continue to offer quality educational services during a pandemic.

Planning for Phase 2 consists of preparing two (2) principal elements:

1. to continue to provide quality schooling when a significant number of students and/or staff are absent;
2. to identify the essential services, within the schools/centre and the Board office, that are necessary to support the delivery of educational and administrative services in a secure and hygienic environment.

The essential services required to function efficiently include:

- sufficient personnel in each category of employment working in each school/centre;
- adequate transportation services;
- professional services adapted to provide reassurance and support to different schools when needed; and
- essential services at the Board office (building and maintenance, communication, payroll, etc).

### **HUMAN RESOURCES – Phase 2**

Director: Michel La Rue  
Alternate: Christine Denommée

At the request of the Office of the Director General, absenteeism will be monitored by the Director of Human Resources. A daily head count will be taken of the number of students and staff absent. The principal or centre director, or his or her delegate, will communicate this information to the Director of Human Resources.

This information will be transmitted to the government contact person(s).

#### **Essential Service Delivery**

To ensure that the delivery of services is maintained for employees and students, certain measures must be put into place. Human Resources will create a bank of replacement employees for all categories of employment. Retired employees will be contacted in the event of major absenteeism.

Payroll / Human Resources (HR) – In order to maintain operations, one employee in Human Resources will act as back up to the Payroll Master.

## **CURRICULUM SERVICES – Phase 2**

Directors: Maria Nasso-Maselli, Stephen Lessard  
Alternate: Lisa Rae Nutter

### **Essential Services Delivery**

Curriculum Services will continue to be provided, as much as possible, in the same manner as usual. Schools are encouraged to develop supplementary materials and make use of the expertise already available to them.

In the event of significant absenteeism, Curriculum Services will, insofar as possible, be available to provide support and guidance to schools having to manage multi-level groups.

## **COMPLEMENTARY SERVICES – Phase 2**

Director: Gail Somerville  
Alternate: Julie René de Cotret

Three (3) pandemic response teams of professionals will be formed and will remain on call for the duration of the pandemic.

## **MATERIAL RESOURCES – Phase 2**

Director: Pierre Farmer  
Alternate: Peter Sheel

### **Personnel**

Ongoing follow-up of maintenance staff attendance will be required to ensure that there are adequate numbers to do the essential cleaning at all locations. Material Resources in conjunction with Human Resources will actively search for replacements should there be a shortfall in the actual cleaning staff and bank of available employees.

Material Resources will follow-up with school administration to ensure that the cleaning/caretaking staff has the proper equipment and instructions to follow the prescribed methods of cleaning and to focus on the areas that are most prone to the transmission of the virus, based on recommendations from public health agencies and the MELS. Material Resources will provide appropriate instructions to all replacement personnel.

### **Materials**

Essential cleaning and hygiene materials specific to the virus pandemic will be stockpiled.

Material Resources will work with school principals and the centre director to ensure that staff has access to the necessary disinfecting cleaning products for frequently touched surfaces such as telephones, doorknobs, computer equipment and desks, which should be cleaned regularly.

## **Cleaning**

Should a school administrator have issues and/or concerns with building cleaning, Material Resources will be available to provide support.

## **TRANSPORTATION – Phase 2**

Manager: Franklin Jones (interim)  
Alternate: Tania Auksztinaitis

Transportation will work closely with the bus contractors to ensure that essential services are provided.

Where necessary, transportation will keep parents and schools informed of modifications to bus routes.

## **TECHNOLOGY (ICT) – Phase 2**

Coordinator: Gilles Deguire  
Alternate: Benoit Dupuis

Support services will be provided by current technicians. The technicians' absenteeism and rotational schedule will be supervised by the coordinator. With respect to the continued operation of the communication server technology, specialized training of back-up personnel will occur in conjunction with other school boards and/or outside consultants.

## **SECRETARY GENERAL (Communication) – Phase 2**

Director: Denise Paulson/Jane Dunant  
Alternate: Melanie Melnyk

During Phase 2 of this plan, the greatest challenge for communication will be to ensure consistency and accuracy of information. As the pandemic worsens, information provided to parents and students will be dictated by QPH and the MELS.

The Office of the Secretary General and Human Resources will work closely together to deliver consistent information to parents, students and staff.

Prevention and safety guidelines are communicated to parents and students, reassuring them that measures are in place to keep them safe at school. Parents will be reminded to keep their children at home if they present flu-like symptoms, and that if the students are sent to the school, they will be returned home.

Parents will be advised to refer to the Riverside School Board website for regular updates on the pandemic situation at Riverside.

The communication dossier may be coordinated from a remote location via internet if necessary by the Secretary General.

## **PHASE 3: PANDEMIC DECLARED – SCHOOLS CLOSED**

Phase 3 of the Riverside School Board Pandemic Response Plan deals with the potential situation of some or all our schools being closed during the pandemic. This situation will be officially declared by the Ministry of Public Security.

Before a declaration to close schools is made, our schools will have been operating for some time during an actual outbreak of a pandemic. Details outlined in Phase 2 regarding essential services will continue to apply as we move toward the closure of schools.

### **HUMAN RESOURCES – Phase 3**

Director: Michel La Rue  
Alternate: Christine Denommée

The Board office will remain open as long as possible during this Phase. Where possible, provisions for staff to work from home will be made.

### **CURRICULUM SERVICES – Phase 3**

Directors: Maria Nasso-Maselli, Stephen Lessard  
Alternate: Lisa Rae-Nutter

Supervision of educational activities is the responsibility of the parents in the event of prolonged school closures.

Support and guidance may be provided to parents by the school through pre-determined communication methods.

### **COMPLEMENTARY SERVICES – Phase 3**

Director: Gail Somerville  
Alternate: Julie René de Cotret

Insofar as possible, planning work will occur during this Phase to prepare for the re-opening of schools. Complementary Services will be available to support students and staff in trauma recovery.

### **MATERIAL RESOURCES – Phase 3**

Director: Pierre Farmer  
Alternate: Peter Sheel

Available maintenance staff, in conjunction with a recommendation from QPH, will assess the need for the disinfection of school buildings.

Stockpiled materials will be available for this work, in case that adequate new materials are not readily available.

Maintenance staff will also collaborate in establishing and maintaining security in each building.

### **TRANSPORTATION – Phase 3**

Manager: Franklin Jones (interim)  
Alternate: Tania Aukstinaitis

Personnel of this department may be asked to participate during this Phase to address needs in the school board not directly related to transportation.

### **TECHNOLOGY – Phase 3**

Coordinator: Gilles Deguire  
Alternate: Benoit Dupuis

It will be essential that Riverside School Board has at its disposal an operational internet and telephone communication system, insofar as our providers are able to do so.

### **SECRETARY GENERAL (Communication) – Phase 3**

Director: Denise Paulson/Jane Dunant  
Alternate: Melanie Melnyk

In cooperation with the Technology department, regular updates will be made to the website containing helpful information for all sectors of the Riverside School Board educational community.

## **PHASE 4: RECOVERY – SCHOOLS RE-OPEN**

Once the QPH and the MELS and QPH declare that schools may re-open, the CERT will convene to review the re-opening process.

### **HUMAN RESOURCES – Phase 4**

Director: Michel La Rue  
Alternate: Christine Denommée

Human Resources will communicate with the Unions to inform them of the timeline for the re-opening of buildings and will implement the telephone chains.

### **CURRICULUM SERVICES – Phase 4**

Directors: Maria Nasso-Maselli, Stephen Lessard  
Alternate: Lisa Rae-Nutter

Implement directives from MELS and provide support to schools where necessary. Help with the reintegration of students.

### **COMPLEMENTARY SERVICES – Phase 4**

Director: Gail Somerville  
Alternate: Julie René de Cotret

Help with the reintegration of students. Ensure that the 3 pandemic response teams are up to date on the current situation and will be available to support students and staff as the return to school.

### **MATERIAL RESOURCES – Phase 4**

Director: Pierre Farmer  
Alternate: Peter Sheel

Disinfect and prepare the schools for reopening.

### **TRANSPORTATION – Phase 4**

Manager: Franklin Jones (interim)  
Alternate: Tania Aukstinaitis

Communicate with transporters (providers).

#### **TECHNOLOGY – Phase 4**

Coordinator: Gilles Deguire  
Alternate: Benoit Dupuis

Provide troubleshooting support.

#### **SECRETARY GENERAL (Communications) – Phase 4**

Director: Denise Paulson/Jane Dunant  
Alternate: Melanie Melnyk

Provide update to website.

## Appendix 1

### Protect Yourself against Flu Virus

- Cough into your elbow.
- Wash your hands frequently with lots of soap and water.
- Use a hand sanitizer.
- Don't share your lunch.
- Keep yourself informed about the situation.
- Be honest with your children and take the time to explain what is going on in language they will understand.
- Keep your hands away from your face.
- Keep a thermometer or two on hand.
- If you're not feeling well, stay home and rest.
- Time to see the doctor? Don't put it off!

## Appendix 2

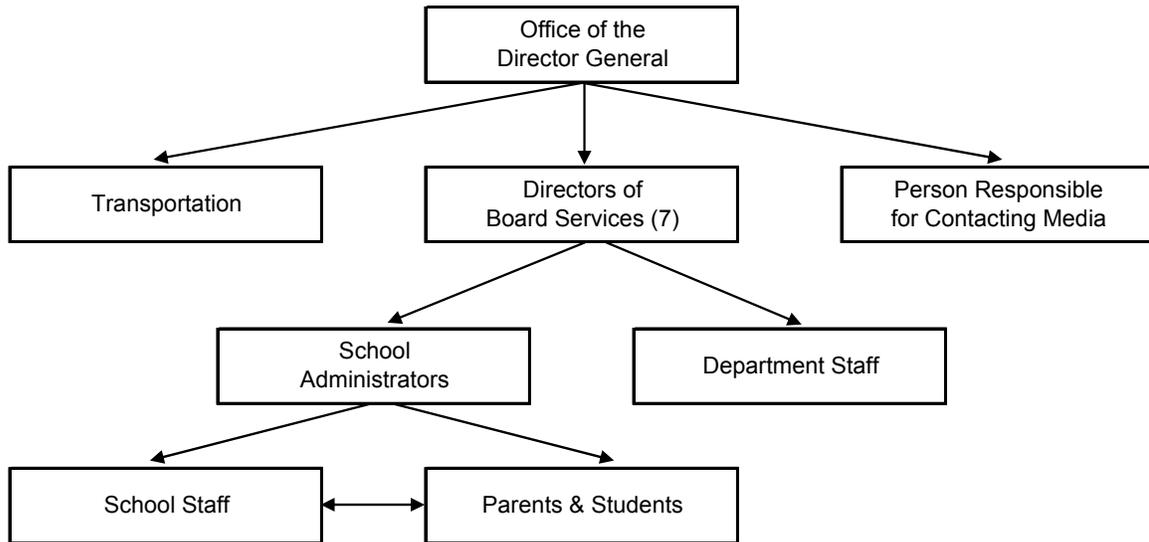
### Pandemic Plan Checklist for School and Centre Administrators

- Set up School's Health and Safety Committee to review this checklist and adapt it to meet the needs of the school.
- Vigilance and reinforcement of hygiene protocols (hand washing, coughing, sneezing).
- Designate an isolation area as requested by the MELS.\*
- The following items must be made available in the isolation area:
  - Covered trash bin with plastic bag
  - Gloves
  - Masks
  - Thermometer
  - Tissues
  - Hand sanitizer
- Keep track of student and staff absenteeism that is flu related on a daily basis and report it to the Director of Human Resources by e-mail.
- Update staff telephone chain.
- Update emergency telephone chain for students/parents.
- Update emergency contact list.
- Update parents' e-mail addresses, where applicable, for communication purposes.
- Promote Riverside School Board website and the portal as communication tools among staff, parents and students, where possible.
- Maintain regular communication with parents and provide regular updates to the staff and Governing Board.
- Ensure that letters to parents from the Board are distributed in a timely manner.
- Maintain an up-to-date list and contact information of casual employees able to replace in for support staff and/or teachers who become ill.
- Ensure that absent caretaking staff is always replaced.
- Conduct regular inspections with respect to the cleaning of the school or centre building.
- Ensure that caretaking staff follows the directives issued by Material Resources with respect to the clean up of body fluids, including diaper changing.
- Record/track additional expenses incurred related to flu virus as follows:
  - Budgetary code followed by project number (H1N1) plus school code  
(i.e. substitution = xxx-1-12000-181-H1N1xx, materials = xxx-1-23300-490-H1N1xx, etc.)

\*As per MELS' recommendation, designate an isolation area where students who present flu-like symptoms can stay while waiting to be taken home. The isolation area must provide a minimum distance of 2 meters between the student and other people. Supervision must also be ensured.

## Appendix 3

### Telephone Chain/Emergency Contact Info for Administrators



## Appendix 4

### List of Media Contacts

Below is the list of Radio and TV stations contacted in the event of an emergency school closure:

- 98.5FM/INFO 690/Q92/CKOI
- CKAC/940 NEWS AM
- CJAD/MIX 96/CHOM
- CBC
- GLOBAL TV
- TVA & CTV

## **Appendix 5**

### **Emergency: Recorded Message for 450-672-4010**

#### **All Schools/Centres Open**

Today, \_\_\_date\_\_\_, at \_\_\_time\_\_\_, all Riverside School Board schools, centres and board office are open.

Please check our website regularly for updates at [www.rsb.qc.ca](http://www.rsb.qc.ca).

#### **Some Schools/Centres Closed**

Today, \_\_\_date\_\_\_, at \_\_\_time\_\_\_, due to the high number of student absences, the following schools are closed : \_\_\_

All other schools, centres and board office are open.

Please check our website regularly for updates at [www.rsb.qc.ca](http://www.rsb.qc.ca).

#### **All Schools/Centres Closed**

On the recommendation of the Minister of Education, Recreation and Sports and the Public Health authorities, all Riverside School Board schools, centres and board office are closed until further notice.

Please check our website regularly for updates at [www.rsb.qc.ca](http://www.rsb.qc.ca).

## **Appendix 6**

### **Communiqués: Closing of Schools/Reopening of Schools**