

Alpha Child Care Ltd. Pandemic Preparedness Plan

August 2009

Alpha Child Care Ltd's number one priority is the health and safety of the children and our staff and families. We have developed this Pandemic Preparedness Plan in order to provide reassurance, guidance and executable tasks in order to prevent, and manage a Pandemic outbreak at Alpha Child Care Ltd..

During a Pandemic, Alpha will follow the advice and guidance of Provincial and Local public health officials who have the expertise to assess the level of health risk posed by a specific situation.

A **Pandemic** is a sudden outbreak that becomes very widespread and affects a whole region, continent, or the world.

Key Messages:

- a) The Plan is open to staff, parents, students and the community for their information and feedback.
- b) Our priority during a pandemic is to keep our day care's open as long as it is safe to do so. Non-essential services will be cancelled in order to focus on providing essential care and curriculum.
- c) Parents are advised to make alternate child care arrangements as Local Public Health officials may order the temporary closing of Alpha at any time during a pandemic. It is predicted that the H1N1 virus will re-emerge in the fall of 2009.
- d) The health and safety of staff and students will be closely monitored and Alpha's staff will take direction from local health authorities.
- e) It should be noted that while the day care may be open during a declared pandemic, normal program expectations and service levels may not be met.

About H1N1 (Swine Flu) and Provincial/Local Health Authorities.

Introduction (From the Peel District School Board – Pandemic Plan)

The world is planning for the next pandemic. The World Health Organization, Health and Welfare Canada, the Ministry of Health and Long term Care, Peel Region, and the Cities of Mississauga and Brampton have commenced pandemic preparedness planning and are encouraging all major employers to do the same.

A flu pandemic occurs when a novel virus which is virulent and easily transmitted infects humans. The world typically experiences three pandemics per century. The 20th century saw the Spanish flu (1918), the Asian Flu (1967) and the Hong Kong flu (1974). The World Health Organization believes that the world is overdue for another pandemic. Considerable attention is focused on the potential for the H5N1 virus (avian flu) to be the source of the next pandemic. H5N1 has mutated from wild birds to domestic birds to cats (a route typical of past pandemics). It is mutating slowly and there are mixed reports of a few cases of human to human transmission.

The avian flu has however, served to bring a sense of urgency to the need for pandemic contingency planning. The Peel District School Board is being advised by all levels of government to consider the following predictions during its planning:

- the possibility that 40 - 60% of staff will be absent at some point during the course of the pandemic
- a 1-2% death rate among staff and students who contract the virus
- two distinct waves of illness, 3-9 months apart and each lasting 6-8 weeks

The World Health Organization identifies the following pandemic cycle. It considers the world to currently be in Phase 3.

Period	Phase	Characteristics
Preparedness	Phase 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No new influenza virus subtypes have been detected in humans. An influenza virus subtype that has caused human infection is present in animals.
	Phase 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No new influenza virus subtypes have been detected in humans. However, a circulating animal influenza virus subtype poses substantial risk of human disease.
	Phase 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Human infection(s) with a new subtype, but no human to human spread or at most rare instances in close contact only
	Phase 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Small cluster(s) with limited human to human transmission but spread is highly localized, suggesting the virus is not well adjusted to human hosts
	Phase 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Larger cluster(s) but human to human spread still localized, suggesting the virus is adapting to humans, but may not yet be fully transmissible (substantial pandemic risk)
Response	Phase 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased and sustained transmission to the general public
Recovery	Phase 7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Return to pandemic preparedness period.

The Region of Peel predicts that the effect of a moderate pandemic on the population in Peel would be approximately 500,000 ill, 132,000 hospitalized and 1600 deaths for every one million people.

What precautions should we take with children and babies, to avoid swine flu?

(from: www.parentree.in)

- Children should wash their hands regularly as these germs can be anywhere. They can also use cleaning gels, or wipes that are alcohol based.
- Teach them not to touch their face and mouth, as germs on their hand may find their way into their body
- Avoid contact with anyone who is sick, especially with flu-like symptoms
- Try to avoid areas that are too crowded where people are breathing very close to your babies and children - crowded beaches, packed temples etc., Be sensible about this. Don't avoid going out, just try to avoid packed crowds.
- If one child has flu like symptoms, while another does not, try to keep them isolated from each other. Of course, do this gently in a way that is fair to both children so that the one with the flu like symptoms does not feel that they are at fault.
- If they have a cough or a cold, make sure they use a tissue when they cough or sneeze and then throw it away. Practice cough and sneeze etiquette. Ensure they wash their hands after this also.
- Follow other good general health practices with children also
 - Drink enough fluids
 - Eat nutritious healthy foods
 - Physical activity

Symptoms of swine flu

Symptoms of swine flu are like any other flu:

- Fever
- Cough
- Sore throat
- Aches and pains
- Headaches
- Tiredness
- Loss of appetite
- Sometimes diarrhoea and vomiting

What Happens at Alpha if a Pandemic is Declared

In order to minimise the spread of the virus, if a pandemic is declared by public health, only essential group activities will be scheduled. Also, since the flu virus can live for several days on surfaces, Alpha will enhance it's disinfecting and cleaning protocols.

Group Activities:

- 1) **Parent Nights / Special Parent Events / Concerts, etc.** – all after school events will be temporarily cancelled and may be re-scheduled.
- 2) **Parent Committee Meetings** – Parent Committee Meetings will be cancelled
- 3) **Staff Meetings** – Monthly staff meetings will be cancelled though emergency planning meetings may be called by the supervisor in order to deal with planning/staffing affected by the pandemic.
- 4) **Staff Training** – staff training will be cancelled. Group/Team meetings will be cancelled. Sr. Staff Training will be cancelled. Training at outside agencies will be temporarily suspended.
- 5) **Field Trips/Excursions** – Field trips and excursions outside the day care will be cancelled.
- 6) **Individual Parent Meetings** – Meetings with individual parents will continue.
- 7) **Outside Agencies** –Case Conferences and meetings with outside agencies (ie Brampton/Caledon Community Living) will continue via speakerphone conference, not in person.
- 8) **Deliveries** – Deliveries will continue to be accepted though deliveries will be placed in an area outside the day care door.
- 9) **Volunteers** – Alpha will temporarily suspend signing up volunteers.
- 10) **Students / Placements** – Alpha will temporarily suspend training of ECE and High school co-op students.
- 11) **Picking up Students** – Alpha may suspend Before and After school services to individual students or group of students attending a school where an outbreak is occurring. Alpha will not pick up children from local schools should the school phone to say that the child is sick. Parents are expected to pick up the child themselves and keep them home until they are well.
- 12) **Siblings of Students** – Siblings of children attending public schools where an outbreak is occurring may be required to stay home for a 3 day test period after the school has been re-opened or declared virus free.
- 13) **Staff/Parent Vacation** - Staff and Families who have vacationed in an area where a pandemic has occurred will be required to stay home for a 1 week test period following their return from vacation. Staff may use lieu or vacation days.
- 14) **Staff and Other Workplaces** – Staff must disclose to their supervisors all other workplaces that they attend. Staff will immediately report any instances of a pandemic outbreak at theses workplaces and may be asked to stay home for a 1 week test period. Staff may use lieu days or vacation days for pay.

- 15) **Staff and College/University Training** – Staff will inform their supervisor immediately if their College/University has reported an outbreak. Staff have the option of discontinuing training until after the outbreak has ceased, or take a leave of absence from work if they wish to continue their college/university training.
- 16) **'Bumping' Children** – children may not visit other rooms or be 'bumped' to other rooms in order to maximise child/staff ratio's.
- 17) **Opening/Closing Rooms** – In order to minimise cross-contamination between rooms, depending on staff availability and scheduling issues, supervisors will have children arrive/leave their **home** playrooms.
- 18) **Closing of Individual Playrooms** – If the majority of children in a playroom are absent due to illness Alpha may, at its discretion, refuse care to the remaining children in the playroom until a reasonable time has passed in order to ensure that the flu has run its course. Staff from the room will not be transferred to another playroom in order to prevent cross-contamination.

Enhanced Cleaning / Disinfecting / Misc.

- 1) **Sick Children** – Children who appear ill will immediately be removed from the playroom area and parents called to pick up the child. The supervisor will create a staffed 'sick room' where children will be supervised until parents arrive to pick them up. Emergency persons will be called if parents can not come to the day care immediately.
- 2) **Deliveries** – Deliveries will be received outside the day care door. Boxes will be sprayed with disinfectant spray by the receiving staff.
- 3) **Hand Washing** – Children / Staff will schedule had washing when a child arrives at the day care and at least once every 60 minutes throughout the day including playground. If a sink is not available staff may use alcohol based hand sanitizer or Disposable alcohol based towelettes.
- 4) **Visitor/Parent/Staff Handwashing** – A hand washing station with alcohol based hand sanitizer or Disposable alcohol based towelettes will be placed near the entrance of the day cares and in the cubby area.
- 5) **Playground** – Each class will disinfect bike/wagon handles and climber grab handles prior to children playing on them. Hand washing stations will be set up on the playground with alcohol based hand sanitizer or Disposable alcohol based towelettes.
- 6) **Disinfecting** – In addition to their current cleaning and disinfecting routine, staff will use disinfectant or disinfectant spray to disinfect surfaces, door handles/door jams, garbage bin covers, counter tops, walls, window sills, blinds, etc. before closing the room at night and before going out to playground. At the end of the day the closing staff will spray the hallways, cubby area's, garbage bins, etc. with disinfectant spray. Supervisors will use disinfectant spray to spray their office area at the beginning and end of each day and following a parent interview or staff interview.
- 7) **Potential Clients/Visitors** – visits to the day care during a pandemic will be discouraged. Potential clients can arrange a visit to the day care after the flu has run its course. Potential visitors will be 'screened' by phone in order to ensure that they do not have any symptoms of the flu. During a

pandemic, all potential visitors will be warned that Alpha is currently in a pandemic mode and encouraged to visit when the pandemic has been lifted.

- 8) Monitoring Temperature** – Alpha will monitor the temperature of staff, parents, children, visitors at its own discretion and at a frequency Alpha deems necessary. Temporal Thermometers may be used to speed up temperature taking as individuals arrive at the day care and throughout the day.

Parents/Staff must not ‘mask’ flu symptoms with medications (ie. Advil/Tylenol) then come to the day care. Alpha may take disciplinary action with employees who violate this directive, and may discontinue services to families who violate this directive.

- 9) Health Care Workers** – Health Care Workers are the front line in our fight and treatment of a flu pandemic. Their services are essential to our wellbeing and for many, child care is essential for them to work. Unfortunately, they are often exposed to viruses more often than other professions. In order to prevent the introduction of a flu virus to Alpha by parents who work in the healthcare field, supervisors may offer to pick-up/deliver children to their parent’s car outside the day care.

Flu Shot – If/when a flu vaccine is made available to the public, Alpha will do it’s best to arrange a flu shot clinic at the day care for the convenience of staff, children and parents. Though it is not recommended by Alpha, Parents/Staff who refuse a flu shot due to medical or religious grounds and reasons of conscience must complete a Vaccination Exemption form.

- 10) Enhanced Daily Health Check** – In accordance with the Day Nursery Act (DNA) Alpha Child Care performs a Daily Health Check which is designed to note any health and behavioural markers which may indicate a health issue. During a pandemic, Alpha will enhance the Daily Health Check in order to look for symptoms specific to the pandemic. (see attached Enhanced Daily Health Check form)

Communication

- 1) As with all other outbreaks at the day care (ie. Lice, chicken pox, strep, etc.) Alpha will post a sign on the entry door to the day care, and on the playroom door, alerting parents/staff that we have been notified of ## cases of pandemic flu at the day care. Working with local health authorities, Alpha may issue individual notes to parents and staff alerting them of the flu and symptoms of the flu. Parents/staff will be advised of what to do if they suspect that they, or their children, has the flu.
- 2) If Alpha is closed by a local health authority, or Alpha’s owners choose to close a playroom in order to limit the spread of the flu to other playrooms, parents/ staff will be contacted by phone, or hand delivered notice.
- 3) Alpha will utilize it’s website and answering machine to alert parents/staff of our status during a closure. Parents/staff are advised to visit our website and call our message machine in order to determine when we will re-open.