



## DIRECTOR'S OFFICE

# Briefing Notes

**Date:** September 16, 2009

**Topic:** Status Report on H1N1 Virus and TCDSB Influenza Pandemic Plan

- The TCDSB Pandemic Plan was activated on April 26, 2009 and remained in effect throughout the summer to deal with summer school, focus on youth and other community use of schools.
- The Facilities Department has provided refresher training on infection control and disinfection procedures to all custodians prior to the start of the school year on September 1, 2 and 3, 2009. The Board's custodial chemical supplier, Flexo Products Limited, demonstrated the use of the hospital grade disinfectant (Patriot 16) used in our schools.
- The Director's Office has sent an update letter to all parents and guardians on the first day of school, September 8, 2009.

<http://www.tcdsb.org/health%20and%20safety/H1N1%20Letter%204%20from%20Director%20of%20Education%20%20september%202009.pdf>

- This is the fourth update letter sent to parents and guardians since the TCDSB Pandemic Plan was activated. Communications Department sent this letter by e-mail to all on the Board's e-mail system.
- A second meeting is being scheduled through the Director's Office to update representatives of all employee groups on the Board's TCDSB Pandemic Plan. The first meeting was held on May 5, 2009.
- On September 10, 2009, the Ministry of Education held a conference call with school board officials. The guest speaker was Dr. Arlene King, Chief Medical Officer of Health. Dr. King has provided notes of her discussion to share with staff. Her notes address the issues of school closure and pregnant workers.

<http://www.tcdsb.org/health%20and%20safety/Dr.%20King's%20Notes%20%20September%2010%20%202009%20Conference%20Call.pdf>

- In 2004, the Ontario Fire Marshall's Office issued a fire alert on the use of alcohol-based hand sanitizers in schools. The Fire Marshall's concern was the potential misuse of alcohol-based hand sanitizers in some schools by students.

<http://www.tcdsb.org/health%20and%20safety/Fire%20Marshal's%20Fire%20Alert%20%20Hand%20Sanitizers.pdf>

- During the September 10 conference call, the Province's Chief Medical Officer of Health, Dr. Arlene King, reiterated that the preferred method of handwashing in schools is soap and water. Hand sanitizers should only be used on a limited basis if soap and water is not available. As such, the Ministry of Education is providing funding for school boards to purchase hand sanitizers and is advising school boards to consult with their local fire departments. The TCDSB Pandemic Committee has agreed to purchase one hand sanitizer dispenser for the main office of every school. This dispenser is identical to the one seen in most shopping malls. This dispenser would be used by parents and other visitors who are required to report to the main office.
- In the event of an outbreak at a school, or water not being available due to plumbing issues, or work being conducted by the City of Toronto Public Workers Dept in a neighbourhood, students would be allowed to use hand sanitizers under very strict teacher supervision.
- Fire, student vandalism and misuse such as accidental ingestion are concerns over the use of hand sanitizers in every classroom. Also, there is concern that some staff and students have environmental sensitivities or allergies to isopropyl alcohol, the main ingredient of alcohol-based hand sanitizers.
- The TCDSB continues to promote hand washing using soap and water through the Toronto Public Health DVD on Handwashing titled "Lather, Rinse, Defeat Germs" which is posted on the Board's web site. Each school has been given a copy of this DVD.  
<http://www.tcdsb.org/health%20and%20safety/swinefluupdate.htm>
- Emmy Szekeres from the Communications Department is maintaining the H1N1 postings on the Board's web site  
<http://www.tcdsb.org/health%20and%20safety/swinefluupdate.htm>
- For further information, please contact Corrado Maltese, Senior Manager, Occupational Health and Safety Department, 416-222-8282, ext. 2665