



Infectious Disease Preparedness and Response Plan (COVID-19)

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Introduction:

In February 2020, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention released a statement advising communities to prepare for a domestic outbreak of COVID-19, a new coronavirus. Thompson School District (TSD) understands that our schools are essential educational and community institutions that serve many members of our local population. TSD also acknowledges that an outbreak of any infectious illness, including COVID-19, would be detrimental to our community. To guide preparation, response, and recovery from any such potential outbreak, TSD has created this Infectious Disease Preparedness and Response Plan.

This document provides information about TSD's plans and responsibilities in the event of a local or regional outbreak of COVID-19. It is intended to be supplemental to the information provided by the Larimer County Department of Health and Environment, Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment, and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. For the most current information about COVID-19 or any other public health concern, please access the information provided by these public health organizations.

TSD is working closely with local, state, and national health officials to monitor ongoing developments related to the global outbreak of COVID-19. As additional information becomes available, the district will continue to communicate with families and the community. The most current information available from Thompson School District related to COVID-19 will always be posted on the Thompson School District COVID-19 Coronavirus Response webpage on the TSD website.

This plan outlines Thompson School District's strategies in preparing for, responding to, and recovering from COVID-19 (Coronavirus) occurrences or Pandemics.

Purpose:

TSD's Infectious Disease Preparedness and Response Plan will serve as a resource guide for planning for, responding to, and recovering from a pandemic that may impact or is impacting our schools and communities. Unlike most other disasters or crises, a pandemic is people-centric and will require a community and people-focused response. Although this document is specifically focused on outlining the district's response to COVID-19, the same or similar strategies may be used to address any highly infectious illness that may impact our community.

The primary goals of this plan are to:

- Prevent or minimize the spread of illness while preserving, to the extent possible, the continuity of essential school and district functions.
- Continue the essential operations of TSD, as possible, in the event of increased student or staff absences due to an outbreak of COVID-19.
- Ensure effective, timely, and situation-sensitive decision-making related to any outbreak that is impacting or has the potential to impact the TSD community.
- Establish a clear communications plan that ensures that students, families, and staff receive timely and accurate information regarding illness prevention and infection control strategies as well as information about impacts to the school district and available services.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION: COVID-19

The outbreak of COVID-19, commonly referred to as “coronavirus,” originated in the Wuhan province of China. Symptoms of COVID-19 reportedly include mild to severe respiratory illness accompanied by fever, cough, and shortness of breath. The virus is spread person-to-person via respiratory droplets produced when an infected person sneezes or coughs. The droplets can land in the mouths or noses of people who are nearby, within a distance of about six feet, where the droplets are then inhaled into the lungs. Transmission may also be possible through contact with contaminated surfaces, though this is not considered the primary method of transmission. Symptoms typically appear within two to 14 days of exposure to the virus.

The Larimer County Department of Health and Environment has identified those persons most at risk for contracting COVID-19 as those who have recently traveled to countries experiencing an outbreak such as China or those who have been in close contact with people who have been diagnosed with COVID-19 (March, 2020).

According to infectious disease authorities, there are several strategies that can help prevent the spread of COVID-19 and other respiratory illnesses, including:

- Washing hands often with soap and water or an alcohol-based hand rub if soap and water are not available
- Covering nose and mouth when coughing and sneezing
- Avoiding close contact with anyone with cold or flu-like symptoms
- Getting a flu shot if you have not gotten one this year
- Cleaning frequently touched surfaces and objects
- Keeping children home if they are sick or remaining home if you are sick.

If a child is sick, parents/guardians are encouraged to notify the school and share information about symptoms and whether the child has had a positive influenza or COVID-19 diagnosis. In accordance with the Family Educational Rights Protection Act, or FERPA, TSD will not identify the name, grade, or age the student(s) or staff member(s) confirmed to have tested positive for COVID19 in any communication. TSD also follows guidelines provided by the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment, for use in evaluating whether a child or staff member is too sick to attend school or school sponsored activities. See “How Sick is Too Sick” guidelines.

Authorities/Roles & Responsibilities:

In the United States, the State of Colorado, and Larimer County, various public officials have authorities related to the protection of public health and safety. During an outbreak of a highly infectious illness, the United States Government, specifically the US Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) along with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), is the national leader for communication and coordination efforts. In some instances, the United States Government may also work in collaboration with the World Health Organization (WHO). The US Department of Health and Human Services and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention will:

- Identify, appoint, and lead the highly infectious disease response; enact or modify legislation and policies required to sustain and optimize pandemic preparedness, capacity development, and response efforts across all sectors.
- Lead national and domestic efforts in surveillance and detection of outbreaks. Prioritize and guide the allocation and targeting of resources to achieve the goals as outlined in a country's response.
- Provide additional resources for national pandemic preparedness, capacity development, and response measures. Support rapid containment of outbreaks, provide guidance to state level authorities on the use and timing of community infection control measures.

- Support biomedical research and development of new vaccines and medical countermeasures.
- Consider providing resources and technical assistance to countries experiencing outbreaks of the highly infectious illness.

Thompson School District Roles/Responsibilities:

At the state level, the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE) is guided by the US Department of Health and Human Services and the CDC. At the local level, Larimer County Department of Health and Environment takes guidance from the CDPHE. National, state, and local authorities are charged with collaborating in highly infectious illness preparedness and response efforts. TSD cooperates with these authorities to raise awareness and take necessary actions in response to reported illness.

TSD’s response to an outbreak of COVID-19 will be guided by the recommendations of the Larimer County Department of Health and Environment and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The Director of the Larimer County Department of Health and Environment will make a recommendation about whether to close school(s).

When COVID-19 is reported:

- The Superintendent will work closely with all state and local officials (Larimer County Department of Health and Environment) to make all decisions related to possible school closure in response to COVID-19.
- Comprehensive COVID-19 communications will be developed and delivered to students, families, staff, and community members.
- The district and school nurses will educate school communities about strategies for the prevention of illness including, proper hand washing techniques, good health habits, community mitigation, social mitigation, and vaccinations if these become available; as well as any other strategies deemed necessary or appropriate for preventing illness transmission.
- School administration and school nurses will utilize and update plans to be enacted in the event that a student or staff member must be sent home from school due to illness.
- Collaboration will occur with the Larimer County Department of Health and Environment to monitor health data and update schools, staff, and families regarding potential changes that may occur or new and pertinent information related to the extent or spread of the illness.
- Chain of command procedures will be followed as outlined in the Thompson School District Emergency Operations Plan (EOP).
- TSD may develop planning to determine if designated treatment sites will be needed during the infectious disease event.
- Health plans will be reviewed as needed to manage both short and long-term student and staff absences related to illness.
- All district departments will carry out and document infectious disease responses.

Assumptions:

In the event of a pandemic illness that results in a public health emergency, the Colorado Governor may declare a state of emergency. A state of emergency was declared March 10, 2020 and means that the response to the outbreak will be coordinated across all levels of government, including the school district.

In a state of emergency:

- CDPHE will take the role of Lead State Agency for emergency support and will coordinate with Colorado Emergency Management, within the Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Management and other state and local agencies, as part of a unified command structure.
- Effective prevention and therapeutic measures, including vaccine and antiviral medications, could be delayed, in short supply, or not available.
- Substantial public education regarding the need to target priority groups for vaccination and

antiviral/antibiotic medication and the allocation of limited supplies, is crucial in averting public panic.

- Non-pharmaceutical interventions, travel restrictions, cancellation of public events, isolation and/or quarantine may be required to slow the spread of an outbreak.
- Secondary bacterial infections, following the outbreak, may result in shortages in antibiotic supplies.
- Larimer County Department of Health and Environment will work with area healthcare agencies to coordinate the distribution of vaccines, antivirals, and other medications and/or medical supplies. TSD registered nurses may assist with this effort.
- There may be a need for alternate care sites to act as temporary health care facilities.
- Healthcare workers, firefighters, and police officers may be at higher risk of exposure and illness than the general population, further straining the outbreak response.
- Widespread illness could increase the likelihood of sudden and potentially significant shortages of personnel in other sectors that provide critical public safety and necessary services.
- It may be necessary to expand mortuary service capacity including Disaster Mortuary Operational Response Teams (DMORT) through CDPHE.
- With Pandemic diseases, illness may occur in waves. This means there could be up to two months with little or no flu activity, then another illness wave that can last as long as 18 months.

Prepare – Prevent – Protect:

Preparedness refers to those actions and measures taken before an event in order to manage an emergency when it arises. For infectious disease events, CDC plays a prevalent role in making sure states and local health departments are prepared for public health emergencies. CDPHE and LCDHE prepare school districts and the public before, during, and after an exposure to a highly infectious illness or pandemic flu.

Prior to and in the early phases of a pandemic or outbreak, public health officials recommend practicing every day, good health habits and the use of non-pharmaceutical interventions (NPIs) to prevent and protect the human population from the spread of the highly infectious illness or pandemic flu.

Everyday, good health habits include the following:

- Avoid close contact with people who are sick. When you are sick, stay home and away from others to prevent spreading the illness.
- Cover your mouth and nose when sneezing or coughing with a tissue and then throw away the tissue after each use.
- Wash your hands after coughing or sneezing and often throughout the day. Handwashing is always the best and the preferred method. If soap and water is not available, 60% alcohol-based, hand sanitizer may reduce the risk.
 - See TSD’s “Handwashing Guidelines”
 - The CDC offers free handwashing resources to encourage proper handwashing technique and that include tips for families to help children develop good handwashing habits.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth. Illnesses are often spread by touching these areas.
- Encourage families and staff to receive a flu immunization, if one is available.
- Practice other good health strategies including the following: clean and disinfect surfaces in your home (especially when someone is ill), get plenty of sleep, manage your stress, and be physically active.

In addition to everyday good health habits, other NPIs that may protect the community include:

- Social distancing – create ways to provide distance between people in close contact areas including work and school; with COVID-19 social distancing of six or more feet is recommended.
- Closures – consider suspending non-urgent/non-mandated events and travel even before public health mandates are enacted.
- Preparation and information--continue communicating pertinent information and monitoring the outbreak or pandemic.
- Education campaigns that share outbreak updates and prevention information including handwashing guidelines, “How Sick is Too Sick” guidelines, posters, email reminders, district website page and face-to-face trainings/presentations.
- Maintain a clean and disinfected environment.

As TSD continues its preparation efforts, the district is also implementing the following preparedness measures in accordance with guidance from the CDC and the Larimer County Department of Public Health and Environment:

- Planning:
 - Reviewing, updating, and implementing emergency operations plans in collaboration with the Larimer County Department of Health and Environment.
 - Monitoring and planning for absenteeism in schools and offices.
 - Thompson School District follows CDPHE guidelines that dictate that daily absence rates at or exceeding 10% of students or 5% of staff in a single building due to illness of any form be reported to the Health Services Coordinator, the Environmental Specialist, TSD Leadership, Communications and the Larimer County Department of Health and Environment.
 - Any case of suspected or confirmed COVID-19 will be reported to these same departments.
 - Review of attendance and sick leave policies. Encourage students and staff to stay home when sick.
 - Referencing guidelines from the CDC and the Larimer County Department of Health and Environment who have developed guidelines for businesses managing employee leave and sick time.
 - Identifying critical job functions and positions and planning for alternative coverage of these positions as needed.
 - Developing plans for remote learning for students and for remote work for staff in the event of extended closures.
 - Determining what level of absenteeism will disrupt continuity of teaching and learning.
 - Creating communication plans to ensure that students, families, staff, and the community receive information necessary to prepare for and respond to an outbreak.
 - Managing all internal resources as well as documenting and tracking all expenses in real time. This will require the support of the Business Services Department.
- Education, Prevention, Protection:
 - Encouraging all students, families, and staff to follow the good health habits and encouraging implementation of measures that prevent the spread of illness.
 - Sharing resources with families to help them understand when to keep children home. TSD will continue to share the resources published by the CDC and the Larimer County Department of Health and Environment.
 - Following procedures to ensure students and staff who become sick at school or arrive at school sick are sent home as soon as possible and ensuring that sick students and

- staff are separated from well students and staff until they can leave.
- Performing routine environmental cleaning of schools, busses, and offices including cleaning of frequently touched surfaces (i.e. doorknobs, light switches, countertops, door frames, handicap push buttons, tabletops, backs of chairs, pencil sharpeners, keyboards, mice, monitors, portions of walls, etc.) with cleaning products used in accordance with labeled directions.
 - Collaborating with Larimer County Department of Health and Environment regarding recommended changes to custodial practices, including daily disinfecting of frequently touched surfaces like those outlined above. Additionally, custodians in TSD are using disinfectant instead of sanitizer for COVID-19.
 - In times of more prevalent illness, the Operations Department works closely with the Larimer County Health Department regarding cleaning and disinfectant protocols. The district will continue to adopt and implement additional preparedness measures as they are identified.
 - Convening leadership teams who will be involved in guiding district employees through the infectious disease response process. It is important that all departments communicate the same message to all staff, students, parents, and community members.

Respond:

The first step of any response phase will be consultation with local health officials from the Larimer County Department of Health and Environment.

Once it is determined that transition to a response phase is necessary, TSD, via the Policy Group/TSD Cabinet, will consider the circumstances and determine the most appropriate response. The potential response options and phases outlined herein are based on current knowledge of COVID-19. As additional information becomes available about the virus, how it spreads, and additional prevention and control measures, this response plan may be updated in accordance with recommendations provided by the Larimer County Department of Health and Environment and the CDC.

Surveillance data: During any highly infectious illness outbreak/pandemic, TSD will collect surveillance data as requested by LCDHE and CDPHE. This de-identified data will contribute to the health and safety of our community.

Quarantine and Isolation: When these actions are indicated due to the severity of the event, TSD will take direction from government officials including law enforcement, CDPHE, and LCDHE regarding next steps. If voluntary home quarantine measures are recommended, TSD will communicate the need for such measures to staff, students, parents, and community members.

TSD School/Office Closures:

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, temporarily dismissing childcare programs and K-12 schools is a strategy to stop or slow the spread of COVID-19 in communities. Local health officials may recommend temporary school closures in instances where a student or staff member attended school or work prior to being confirmed as a COVID-19 case. In such instances, local health officials with the Larimer County Department of Public Health and Environment will collaborate with TSD to make recommendations related to the scope of the closure (i.e. a single school, an entire district). The duration of closures will be determined on a case-by-case basis using the most up-to-date information available about COVID-19 and the specific case(s) in the community.

In the event of exposure within the TSD community, the following steps will be taken:

- TSD will confer with local health officials at the Larimer County Department of Health and Environment to obtain a recommendation regarding school closure, timing, scope, and duration.
- TSD will communicate the possible exposure to the community, which includes students, families, staff, and community members. TSD will not identify the name, grade, or age the student(s) or staff member(s) confirmed to have tested positive for COVID-19.
- TSD will communicate plans for school and office closures and event/group activity cancellations as appropriate and in as timely a fashion as possible.

If local health officials recommend closure of a TSD school, multiple schools, or the entire district, the following procedures will be followed:

- Building Closure and Cleaning
 - The school(s) and district offices, as appropriate, will be closed beginning on the date/time collaboratively determined with local health officials.
 - The extent of closure – whether it impacts one or more schools and district offices, will be determined in partnership with local health officials.
 - Only identified essential personnel will have access to school buildings during closure.
 - TSD will communicate that staff, with the exception of those designated as essential personnel by their supervisor, and students are not to enter or TSD school or district facility during a closure.
 - The district will evaluate options to provide meal programs, if feasible, or to connect to community resources where available. Cafeterias will not be open during building closures.
 - All regularly scheduled events, including athletic and extracurricular activities, performances, etc. will be cancelled or postponed until further notice.
 - All facility rentals will be cancelled or postponed until further notice.
 - Before and after school childcare in TSD buildings will be cancelled.
 - Signs will be posted at all schools indicating playground closures for the duration of the school closure or unless otherwise determined.
 - Cleaning of affected TSD facilities will be completed in accordance with district protocols and in accordance with recommendations from the Larimer County Department of Health and Environment. All cleaning will be completed prior to implementation of any student or staff building re-entry.
 - Cleaning protocols in response to a closure would include removing trash and recycling from the building, vacuuming all floor surfaces, sweeping, and mopping. High Touch surfaces such as desks, counters, sinks, water fountains and tabletops will be disinfected. Restrooms, locker rooms, and health offices would be cleaned and disinfected. Surfaces with cracks or corners will be sprayed with disinfectant. All Early Childhood and kindergarten toys will be disinfected. All carpet will be sprayed with disinfectant and all kitchens, including floors, prep areas, serving tables, and equipment, and restrooms would be disinfected. Buses and child restraint devices used for transportation will continue to be cleaned and disinfected as well.
 - The Finance department has articulated a plan to ensure that payroll will be processed based on all current scheduled assignments and paid to existing direct deposit accounts. Employees without direct deposit will not receive checks until buildings are reopened. Due to fraud risks, employees will not be able to sign up for direct deposit during a closure, unless a Payroll Manager is able to positively confirm the change with the employee.

- **Communication:** Information about the closure will be shared as soon as possible after closure determinations and updated frequently via:
 - District and school websites as well as social media messaging
 - Emails, phone calls, and/or text messages to families and staff
 - Signage on the doors at all affected school buildings and TSD facilities

- **Continuity of Education and District Services:**
 - To prepare to support continuity of education and district services, TSD is currently exploring and developing comprehensive plans for the following:
 - E-learning for students that includes digital and distance learning options, such as access to digital textbook resources, online classroom collaboration tools, etc.
 - Planning to support students without regular access to internet.
 - Collaborating with the Colorado Department of Education regarding any necessary waivers to state requirements for in-person instructional hours, school days, or seat time. Decisions regarding waivers will be made on an as-needed basis by the Colorado Department of Education.
 - Collaborating and receiving guidance from the Colorado Department of Education regarding state assessment requirements and from the College Board regarding Advanced Placement (AP) and SAT assessments.
 - Planning for necessary technical support efforts via the ITS Help Desk at extension 7777.
 - Planning for ongoing maintenance of school and office buildings as needed.
 - Planning for ensuring ongoing security of school and office buildings as needed.

- **Extended Closures:** In the event of extended school/office closures, the district is also exploring the following:
 - The potential need to modify school schedules as a result of extended closures (e.g. adding days to the end of the school year etc.).
 - Modifying contracts with employees, as needed, to accommodate for extended closures. This consideration will be informed by decisions made by the Colorado Department of Education regarding requirements to make up days/class time missed and will be considered in the context of the TSD Employee Agreement. Human Resources will collaborate with employee groups should extended closures be necessary.
 - Long-term financial planning to meet the district's financial obligations (i.e. payroll, etc.).

- **Travel:**
 - As COVID-19 cases continue to be identified in Colorado, across the country, and around the world, TSD will continue to evaluate whether to permit domestic or international travel for field trips or school-sponsored events and/or for staff professional development.
 - Should the district make district-level determinations about whether to permit student and staff travel for district-sponsored events, field trips, professional development, etc., they will be made on a case-by-case basis and will be shared with schools, students, families, and staff.
 - Note that the COVID-19 event is a rapidly evolving situation that may require frequent reevaluation of travel procedures.

RECOVER:

In the event of school or office closures related to COVID-19, TSD will communicate when it is safe to return to school as well as what steps and precautions will need to be followed at that time.

All schools, offices, buses, and support vehicles will be cleaned and disinfected, as appropriate, prior to reopening of buildings. Cleaning and disinfection practices will be guided by recommendations from the Larimer County Department of Health and Environment.

Communication platforms that will be utilized to share information about the reopening of buildings and the reentry process will include but are not limited to the district-wide website and social media platforms, school level websites and social media platforms, voicemail recordings, emails, phone calls, and text messages to staff and families.

TSD will also develop and implement a plan for return to the classroom for students who may have missed an extended period of instruction during a school closure.

TSD will make every effort to return to “business as usual” following any necessary closures.

TSD’s Psychological Response Team will evaluate the need for additional mental health support and resources for our students, families, and staff, and will provide these supports to the extent possible.

TSD will also continue to partner with local health officials to monitor for illness and debrief regarding the illness event.

PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE PLANS

At this time, please refer to the TSD Emergency Operations Plan for specific actions and procedures.