

# *Public Health Emergency Annex to Safe School Plans*

*August 2009*



**Los Angeles County  
Office of Education**



**COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES  
Public Health**

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## PART I: INTRODUCTION

The Los Angeles County Department of Public Health (LACPDH) encourages schools, residents, community organizations and businesses to develop plans and policies in the event of a public health emergency, such as a pandemic or other large-scale disease outbreak. Preparedness is one of the best prevention techniques available. Many of the planning procedures and precautionary measures suggested are important to practice in everyday life—not only in the event of a public health emergency.

The purpose of this annex is to provide a functional tool for school administrators and staff to mitigate, prepare for, respond to, and recover from a public health emergency. During the development and revision of this annex, LACDPH consulted with a variety of stakeholder groups within schools including special needs/education representatives, communications, risk managers, and school nurse administrators. This document was designed to be practical and concise and therefore suggests links to other repositories of information and resources, such as the Schools' Public Health Emergency/Infectious Disease Toolkit developed in conjunction with LACDPH, the Los Angeles County Office of Education (LACOE), and Medweb. While designed with the needs of small-to-medium sized school districts in mind, the annex does not represent a one-size-fits-all solution. This annex was conceived as a resource template to assist schools during their public health emergency planning efforts; however, each school has its own unique needs and therefore should tailor the annex accordingly.

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## PART II: RESOURCE OVERVIEW

### **The Schools' Pandemic Influenza & Infectious Disease/Public Health Emergency Toolkit ([www.laschooltoolkit.com](http://www.laschooltoolkit.com))**

- Customizable Preparedness and Response Letters for parents, students, staff and administrators; pre-approved by LACDPH
- Roles and Responsibilities during a Public Health Emergency
- Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) and resources for 15 infectious diseases
- Detailed reporting protocols for school administrators and nursing personnel
- Readily modifiable exercise materials and an Exercise Design Tutorial
- Sample Continuity of Operations (COOP) plan for schools
- Continuity of Instruction materials for schools
- Disaster Preparedness information for individuals and families
- Standardized Emergency Management (SEMS)/National Incident Management System (NIMS) resources
- Special Populations Resources including checklists, planning guides and "Community and School Skill Routines"

### **The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Website for Pandemic Flu Planning ([www.pandemicflu.gov](http://www.pandemicflu.gov))**

- Pandemic planning information for communities, schools, families and individuals
- Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) and resources for flu, travel, vaccines and more
- Flyers and fact sheets encouraging preparedness and healthy habits

### **U.S. Department of Homeland Security Website for Emergency Preparedness ([www.ready.gov](http://www.ready.gov))**

- Family preparedness plan guidelines
- Checklists for designing a disaster kit
- Information and resources pertaining to over 20 emergency scenarios

### **Toolkit User Guide (<http://tinyurl.com/ltsybb>)**

- A user guide designed to successfully navigate you through the Schools' Pandemic Influenza and Infectious Disease/Public Health Emergency Toolkit
- Contains screen shots and navigational instruction for each section

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## PART III: SCHOOL ACTION STEPS FOR A PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCY

The following is a chronological list of step-by-step actions schools can take before, during and after a public health emergency, such as a pandemic or other large-scale public health emergency. Many pandemic plans use the World Health Organization's (WHO) six level model as means of categorizing their steps ([http://www.who.int/csr/disease/avian\\_influenza/phase/en/](http://www.who.int/csr/disease/avian_influenza/phase/en/)). This Annex, however, has simplified the categorization of steps into basic before, during, and after components.\* Public health emergencies can have several cycles (or waves) so the action steps may need to be repeated based on the emergency.

*To maintain practicality of this Annex, this list is not fully comprehensive; however, it provides an excellent starting place for school districts/schools to better mitigate, prepare for, respond to and recover from a public health emergency.*

Action Step	Reference	Date Completed
<b>Stage: Preparedness -- Prior To Outbreak</b>		
<input type="checkbox"/> Review the District Public Health Emergency Plan for all schools.	CDC School Pandemic Flu Planning Checklist ( <a href="http://www.pandemicflu.gov/plan/school/schoolchecklist.html">http://www.pandemicflu.gov/plan/school/schoolchecklist.html</a> )	
Each school will: <input type="checkbox"/> Complete the Pandemic Influenza Preparedness Checklist <input type="checkbox"/> Ensure the necessary supplies are on hand to respond to any type of public health emergency	Schools' Infectious Disease/Public Health Emergency Toolkit ( <a href="http://www.laschooltoolkit.com/d_3.html">www.laschooltoolkit.com/d_3.html</a> )	
The District has partnered with local health officials and emergency preparedness officials to disseminate "healthy habits" information to families.  In addition, families are encouraged to: <input type="checkbox"/> Complete a Family Emergency Plan  Schools will augment this effort by sending home the Preparedness Letter from the Toolkit and keep staff apprised of preparedness efforts.	U.S. Department of Homeland Security ( <a href="http://www.ready.gov/america/_downloads/familyemergencyplan.pdf">www.ready.gov/america/_downloads/familyemergencyplan.pdf</a> ) for Family Plan guidelines  Schools' Pandemic Influenza/Public Health Emergency Toolkit ( <a href="http://www.laschooltoolkit.com/letters.html">www.laschooltoolkit.com/letters.html</a> )	

\* There are several reasons why this is a preferred method. First, there is considerable confusion surrounding the WHO six step model; people incorrectly assume the steps are equidistant and, for example, incorrectly assume a level 4 is twice as severe as a level 2. People also incorrectly assume the levels describe severity of illness—rather, the levels note the change in spread of disease, not severity of disease. Finally, the WHO levels describe the worldwide spread of disease and may not accurately reflect local spread of disease.

Action Step	Reference	Date Completed
<p>Each school will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Identify alternate means of communication with parents and staff</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Determine what can be done to improve the lines of communication in the event of a public health emergency</li> </ul>	Schools' Pandemic Influenza/Public Health Emergency Toolkit ( <a href="http://www.laschooltoolkit.com">www.laschooltoolkit.com</a> )	
<p>Using the Incident Command System (ICS), schools will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Designate the roles and responsibilities of school staff (including all ancillary staff) to support a public health or other emergency.</li> </ul>	Schools' Pandemic Influenza/Public Health Emergency Toolkit ( <a href="http://www.laschooltoolkit.com/gp_hh_4.html">www.laschooltoolkit.com/gp_hh_4.html</a> )	
<p>District Nursing Services will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Train nurses and staff in flu-symptom/disease recognition to ensure standard surveillance/disease recognition procedures are in place and implemented</li> </ul> <p><i>Remember that a person who is infected with the flu does not show symptoms right away. However, people are most contagious when they are symptomatic. Children who are becoming ill may show an unusual or different behavior than usual, such as eating less or being irritable.</i></p>	Schools' Pandemic Influenza/Public Health Emergency Toolkit -- Surveillance and Reporting Sections ( <a href="http://www.laschooltoolkit.com/reporting_protocols.html">www.laschooltoolkit.com/reporting_protocols.html</a> )	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Reinforce the importance of good hygiene for students and staff.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Educate students about the importance of good health practices and encourage staff to set an example for their students.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Use simple health practices to reduce the spread of disease by encouraging "cough and sneeze etiquette," clean hands, and clean work areas.</li> </ul>	<p>Schools' Pandemic Influenza/Public Health Emergency Toolkit</p> <p>Healthy Habits Resources (<a href="http://www.laschooltoolkit.com/gp_hh.html">www.laschooltoolkit.com/gp_hh.html</a>)</p> <p>Fact Sheets (<a href="http://www.laschooltoolkit.com/gp_hh_2.html">www.laschooltoolkit.com/gp_hh_2.html</a>)</p> <p>Posters (<a href="http://www.laschooltoolkit.com/gp_hh_1.html">www.laschooltoolkit.com/gp_hh_1.html</a>)</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Review the health needs of students. Some students may be more impacted by the emergency, so encourage these families to talk with their health care providers. Some parents may need to be more cautious in keeping their children out of school.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> School Nurses should provide a list to their schools administrator of students who may require additional consideration or care during an emergency.</li> </ul>	Schools' Pandemic Influenza/Public Health Emergency Toolkit Special Populations Resources ( <a href="http://www.laschooltoolkit.com/gp_hh_8.html">www.laschooltoolkit.com/gp_hh_8.html</a> )	

Action Step	Reference	Date Completed
<input type="checkbox"/> Pay attention to the emotional needs of the student population. Distribute materials and messages that reinforce calmness and orderliness. <input type="checkbox"/> Reinforce among staff, administrators, parents, etc. the idea that children respond to situations in the same way they perceive adults reacting.	Working with Students with Disabilities in a Disaster PowerPoint Presentation ( <a href="http://www.laschooltoolkit.com/gp_hh_8.html">http://www.laschooltoolkit.com/gp_hh_8.html</a> )	
<input type="checkbox"/> Continue to improve your school's distance learning and continuity of instruction plans.	Schools' Pandemic Influenza/Public Health Emergency Toolkit -- Continuity of Instruction Resource ( <a href="http://www.laschooltoolkit.com/gp_hh_5.html">www.laschooltoolkit.com/gp_hh_5.html</a> )	
<input type="checkbox"/> Develop alternative learning strategies such as collaborative agreements with Los Angeles Television or other local cable stations, teleconferencing, lessons on CDs, and the print media.	Schools' Pandemic Influenza/Public Health Emergency Toolkit ( <a href="http://www.laschooltoolkit.com/gp_hh_5.html">http://www.laschooltoolkit.com/gp_hh_5.html</a> )	
<input type="checkbox"/> Educate staff, students and parents regarding key disease facts on a regular and ongoing basis, to include proper hygiene practices and what to expect in a large-scale public health emergency.	Public Information Section of Binder  Schools' Pandemic Influenza/Public Health Emergency Toolkit ( <a href="http://www.laschooltoolkit.com/diseases.html">www.laschooltoolkit.com/diseases.html</a> )	

Action Step	Reference	Date Completed
<b>Stage: Public Health Emergency</b> <b>(Disease Outbreak or Other Public Health Emergency)</b> <b>County Health Officer issues notification to begin Surveillance Reporting</b>		
<input type="checkbox"/> Begin district-wide heightened surveillance reporting measures, in partnership with Public Health.		
<input type="checkbox"/> Review Toolkit Response Letter with School District Nurse Administrator, and send to parents, staff and students as appropriate.	Schools' Pandemic Influenza/Public Health Emergency Toolkit Letter Builder – Response ( <a href="http://www.laschooltoolkit.com/letters.html">www.laschooltoolkit.com/letters.html</a> )	
Work with the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health to: <input type="checkbox"/> Develop a press release with key messages regarding the emergency and the action(s) and consideration(s) for schools. If appropriate, begin to discuss potential student dismissals.	Public Information Section of Safe School Plans	
<input type="checkbox"/> Post prevention and healthy habits posters on campuses and distribute healthy habits flyers.	Schools' Pandemic Influenza/Public Health Emergency Toolkit ( <a href="http://www.laschooltoolkit.com/gp_hh.html">www.laschooltoolkit.com/gp_hh.html</a> )	

Action Step	Reference	Date Completed
<b>Stage: Expansion of Outbreak (Potential Declaration of Public Health Emergency by Public Health Officer)</b>		
<input type="checkbox"/> Establish regular liaison with Public Health. <input type="checkbox"/> Reinforce messages from Public Health and adhere to standards set forth by Public Health.  <i>Do NOT take actions unilaterally (such as extreme sanitization measures, etc.) simply because "some" action is demanded by the public. This will propagate unnecessary rumors and spread fear, and will erode the integrity of the response over the long-term.</i>		
<input type="checkbox"/> Continue district-wide heightened surveillance reporting measures, in partnership with Public Health.		
Maintain communication lines with parents and staff.  The constant and reliable dissemination of accurate information will help minimize fears and reduce the spread of disease.	Schools' Pandemic Influenza/Public Health Emergency Toolkit ( <a href="http://www.laschooltoolkit.com/letters.html">www.laschooltoolkit.com/letters.html</a> )	

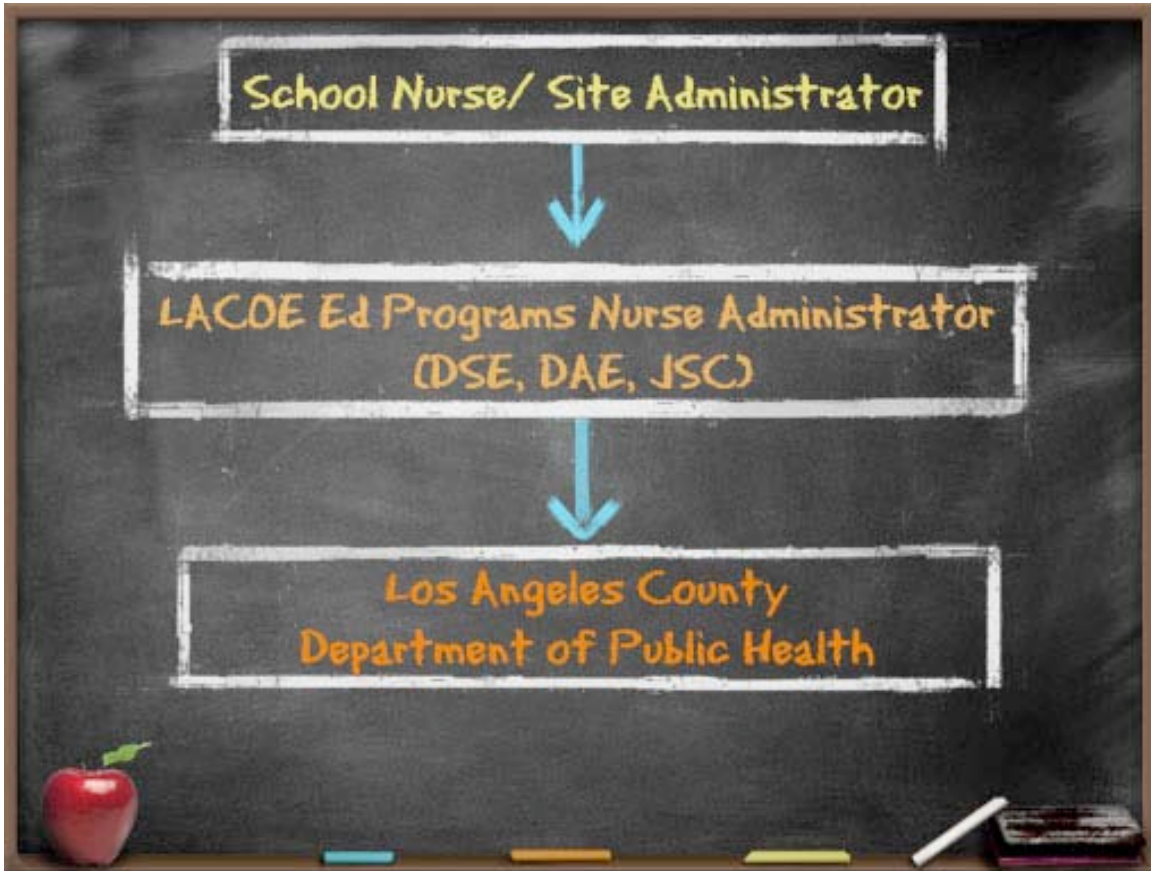
Action Step	Reference	Date Completed
<b>Stage: Recovery</b>		
<input type="checkbox"/> Continue communications with Public Health and emergency management officials.		
<input type="checkbox"/> Return to "new normal" district-wide heightened surveillance reporting, as defined by Public Health.		
<input type="checkbox"/> Continue to reinforce health habits messages with staff, students and parents to prevent further outbreaks or reemergence of the disease.	Schools' Pandemic Influenza/Public Health Emergency Toolkit ( <a href="http://www.laschooltoolkit.com">www.laschooltoolkit.com</a> )	

## PART IV: PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCY REPORTING PROTOCOLS FOR SCHOOLS/SCHOOL DISTRICTS

The following chart provides a graphic illustration of the reporting protocols that most LA County schools/school districts will follow in general terms for the response to a suspicious disease case/outbreak.



(Reporting Protocols for most Schools/School Districts in LA County)



(Reporting Protocols for LACOE Ed Programs ONLY (Division of Special Education (DSE), the Division of Alternative Education (DAE) and the Juvenile Court Schools (JSC)).



## Los Angeles County Department of Public Health Public Health Centers and Nursing Contact Information

The following chart is current as of August 2009, and provides the points of contact for LACDPH.

Los Angeles County Department of Public Health Public Health Centers and Nursing Contact Information					
Districts Areas Served	Health Center	Nursing Line (for reporting)	Districts Areas Served	Health Center	Nursing Line (for reporting)
<b>SPA 1. Antelope Valley Area</b>					
<b>Antelope Valley Area</b> Lancaster, Palmdale, Acton, Gorman, Lake Los Angeles, Pearlblossom, Littlerock	Antelope Valley HC 335-B East Ave., K-6 Lancaster, CA 93535 (661) 945-8477	(661) 723-4648	<b>SPA 4. Metro Area</b>		
<b>SPA 2. San Fernando Valley Area</b>					
<b>San Fernando Area</b> San Fernando, Santa Clarita, Arleta, Castaic, Val Verde, Canyon Country, Sylmar, Pacoima, Mission Hills, Granada Hills, Lake View Terrace, Porter Ranch	Pacoima HC 13300 Van Nuys Blvd. Pacoima, CA 91331 (818) 896-1903	(818) 896-1903	<b>Hollywood/Wilshire</b> Hollywood and neighboring parts of LA	Hollywood/Wilshire HC 5205 Melrose Ave. Los Angeles, CA 90038 (323) 769-7800	(323) 769-7867
<b>West Valley Area</b> Agoura Hills, Calabasas, Hidden Hills, Westlake Village, Canoga Park, Chatsworth, Encino, Lake Balboa, North Hills, Northridge, Reseda, Tarzana, Van Nuys (west of San Diego Freeway), West Hills, Winnetka, Woodland Hills	North Hollywood HC 5300 Tujunga Ave. No. Hollywood, CA 91601 (818) 766-3982	(818) 752-1840	<b>Central LA Area</b> Central LA and Downtown LA, Northeast LA	Central HC 241 N. Figueroa St. Los Angeles, CA 90012 (213) 240-8204	(213) 240-8251
<b>East Valley Area</b> Universal City, North Hollywood, Panorama City, Sherman Oaks, Studio City, part of Sun Valley, Toluca Lake, Valley Glen, Valley Village, Van Nuys (east of San Diego Freeway)	North Hollywood HC 5300 Tujunga Ave. No. Hollywood, CA 91601 (818) 766-3982	(818) 985-5703	<b>SPA 5. West Area</b>		
<b>Glendale Area</b> Burbank, Glendale, La Canada Flintridge, Atwater Village, Eagle Rock, Glassell Park, Griffith Park/Los Feliz, La Crescenta-Montrose, Shadow Hills, Sunland, Tujunga, part of Sun Valley	Glendale HC 501 N. Glendale Ave. Glendale, CA 91206 (818) 500-5750	(818) 500-5760	<b>West LA Area</b> Santa Monica, West LA, Culver City, Malibu	Burke HC 2509 W. Pico Blvd. Santa Monica, CA 90405 (310) 998-3203	(310) 998-3203
<b>SPA 3. San Gabriel Valley Area</b>					
<b>Monrovia Area</b> Monrovia, Monterey Park, Alhambra, El Monte (not La Puente Catchment)	Monrovia HC 330 W. Maple Ave. Monrovia, CA 91016 (626) 256-1600	(626) 301-1932	<b>SPA 6. South Area</b>		
<b>Pomona Area</b> Pomona, El Monte (La Puente Catchment)	Pomona HC 750 S. Park Ave. Pomona, CA 91766 (909) 868-0235	(909) 868-0241	<b>Southwest LA Area</b>	Hubert Humphrey HC 5850 S. Main St. Los Angeles, CA 90003 (323) 235-6730	(323) 235-6730
<b>Other Neighboring Health Districts (non-LA County Health Districts)</b>					
Pasadena	(626) 744-6043	Orange County	(714) 834-8024		
Long Beach	(562) 570-4302	Ventura County	(805) 981-5201		
<b>SPA 7. East Area</b>					
<b>East LA County</b> Whittier, East LA, Bellflower, Southgate	Whittier HC 7643 S. Painter Ave. Whittier, CA 90602 (562) 464-5350	(562) 464-5417	<b>South LA Area</b> South and Southeast LA, Compton	South HC 1522 E. 102 <sup>nd</sup> St., Los Angeles, CA 90002 (323) 563-4054	(323) 563-4092
<b>SPA 8. South Bay Area</b>					
<b>Inglewood Area</b> Inglewood, Lennox, Gardena, Hawthorne	Curtis Tucker HC 123 W. Manchester Blvd. Inglewood, CA 90301 (310) 419-5325	(310) 419-5333	<b>Harbor Torrance Area</b> Torrance, Carson Harbor City	Torrance HC 711 Del Amo Blvd. Torrance, CA 90502 (310) 354-2300	(310) 354-2218

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## PART V: SCHOOLS' TOOLKIT LETTER BUILDER

The Schools' Pandemic Influenza/Public Health Emergency Toolkit contains a customizable *Letter Builder* that guides school/school district representatives through a step-by-step process to develop tailored letters for staff, students and parents during the preparedness and response phases. The content of the letter for 15 diseases is pre-approved by LACDPH.

LACDPH highly encourages schools/districts to utilize the preparedness letters on a regular and ongoing basis. The best prevention is education, and the best way to prevent public fear and panic is the provision of regular and ongoing communication. It is highly recommended that school/district nursing be involved in any information campaign related to health/infectious diseases/public health emergencies.

During the response phase of a public health emergency, LACDPH recognizes that getting information into the hands of staff, students and parents promptly is critical to prevent any fear based responses and to prevent the spread of disease. Therefore, LACDPH urges schools/districts to use the *Letter Builder's* Response Letter in the event of a **confirmed** infectious disease outbreak or a public health emergency. **It is imperative that school/district administrators confer with their nursing offices prior to any release of information in the response phase.** School Nurses/School District Nurse Administrators are a valuable resource during a public health emergency. The Schools' Toolkit Letter Builder can be accessed by visiting: <http://www.laschooltoolkit.com/letters.html>

- **Preparedness Letter** – This letter has been designed to address the readiness of Los Angeles County schools to mitigate (prevent), prepare for, respond to, and recover from a pandemic or other public health emergency. It provides a step-by-step guide to assist in personalizing a letter for your school/school district, and ensures the appropriate supporting materials are included. The content of these letters and the supporting materials have been approved by the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health. *As of August 2009, customized letters are available in English and Spanish.*
- **Response Letter** – The response letter articulates the same healthy habits suggested in the preparedness letter, but should be utilized as a response to a particular disease threat or due to heightened media attention surrounding a particular disease. The health information found in this letter and the supporting materials have been approved by the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health. In addition, this link provides a step-by-step guide to assist you in personalizing the letter for your school/school district, and ensures you have the appropriate supporting materials. The response letter is an excellent resource for schools and one that will help quickly disseminate the correct information to parents in the event of a disease outbreak or other public health emergency. *As of August 2009, customized letters are available in English and Spanish.*