

Infectious Disease Prevention and Response Policy

Kearney Public School District

1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to establish procedures for preventing, monitoring, and responding to infectious diseases within the district's schools. The policy aims to protect the health and safety of students, staff, and the community while maintaining continuity of education.

The district will coordinate with appropriate public health authorities including the **Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services (NDHHS)** and the **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)**.

2. Scope

This policy applies to:

- All students
- All employees
- Volunteers
- Contractors
- Visitors to district facilities

3. Definitions

Communicable Disease

An illness caused by infectious agents that can spread from person to person through direct contact, respiratory droplets, airborne transmission, contaminated surfaces, or other vectors.

School Infection Rate

The percentage of students and staff absent due to a confirmed or suspected infectious disease.

Community Infection Rate

Data reported by local health departments indicating disease transmission levels in the community.

4. Monitoring and Reporting

The district will:

1. Monitor absenteeism trends daily.
2. Coordinate with local health departments.
3. Review community infection data weekly or as needed.
4. Report required communicable disease data to public health authorities.
5. Maintain confidentiality consistent with FERPA and HIPAA requirements.
6. Communication with families at the discretion of the district administration based on guidance from the health department.

5. Tiered Response Levels

The district will implement protocols based on four operational levels.

Level 0 — Normal Operations (No Elevated Risk)

Criteria:

- Normal seasonal illness levels.
- School absence rate due to illness below **5%**.

Protocols:

- [Routine cleaning and sanitation.](#)
- Encourage regular handwashing.
- Encourage students and staff to stay home when sick.
- Follow standard vaccination requirements under Nebraska law.
- Health education on respiratory hygiene.

Level 1 — Increased Awareness

Criteria:

- Community illness activity is increasing.
- Individual School illness absence **5–10%**.

Protocols:

- Normal cleaning procedures with increased cleaning of high-touch surfaces.
 - For example, desks, doorknobs, bathrooms, water fountains, etc.

- Reinforce hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette.

Level 2 — Moderate Transmission

Criteria:

- Community transmission confirmed by public health officials **or**
- School illness absence **10–20%**.

Protocols:

- [Enhanced cleaning and disinfecting procedures.](#)
- Students and staff with symptoms must stay home until fever-free for 24 hours without medication.
- Have masks available for staff and students to use at their discretion.

Level 3 — High Transmission

Criteria:

- Significant outbreak in school- A sudden, unexpected increase in disease cases within a specific population, time, and location, exceeding normal baseline expectations.
- Illness absence exceeds **20%**
- Guidance issued by local or state health authorities.

Protocols:

- [Intensified with specific cleaning and disinfecting procedures.](#)
- May temporarily suspend large gatherings and assemblies at the discretion of administration.
- Required exclusion of symptomatic individuals until medically cleared or symptoms resolve.
- Possible temporary masking requirements in affected buildings.
- Increased spacing where feasible.
- May restrict building access for nonessential visitors.
- Remote learning may be implemented for affected classrooms or schools if necessary.

Level 4 — Emergency Conditions

Criteria:

- Severe outbreak or public health emergency declared by state or local authorities.

Protocols:

- Temporary building and/or closure if recommended by health authorities.
- District-wide remote learning implementation as necessary.
- Coordination with public health officials for testing, vaccination clinics, or other interventions.
- Enhanced contact tracing support where feasible or required by state health departments.

6. Isolation and Exclusion Guidelines

Children showing any signs or symptoms of a contagious or infectious disease are required by law to be sent to their homes immediately, or as soon as safe and proper conveyance can be found. Teachers are encouraged to observe each child carefully for signs of illness each time the child returns to school. This is particularly important when epidemic diseases are known to be present in the community.

The presence of one or more of the following signs or symptoms should make the teacher suspect a communicable disease: Fever, flushed face, headache, aches in muscles or joints, unexplained tiredness or listlessness, loss of appetite, stomach ache, nausea or vomiting, diarrhea, convulsions, sore throat, nasal congestion or discharge, unexplained skin eruption, sore or inflamed eyes.

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Return to school may require:

- Symptom resolution
- Fever-free period without medication
- Medical clearance when appropriate

7. Cleaning and Sanitation

The district will maintain cleaning protocols including:

- Routine disinfecting of classrooms and common areas.
- Daily sanitation of high-touch surfaces.
- Availability of hand sanitizer and handwashing facilities.
- Compliance with applicable health standards.

8. Communication

The district will communicate with:

- Parents and guardians
- Staff
- Local health authorities

Communication methods may include:

- District/school website updates and/or social media platforms
- Email or text notifications
- Public health guidance notices
- School board updates
- Newsletters and school based communications

9. Vaccination and Prevention

The district will:

- Follow Nebraska state immunization requirements for students.
- Encourage recommended vaccinations for staff and students when available.
- Notify the school community of voluntary vaccination clinics coordinated by health authorities.

10. Authority

The Superintendent or designee has authority to implement response levels and mitigation strategies in consultation with local health officials.

The school board will review this in their review of policy.

11. Non-Discrimination

Implementation of this policy will comply with all applicable federal and state civil rights laws. Health measures will be applied equitably and without discrimination.