

Panama Central School

Public Employer Health Emergency Plan



This plan has been created to meet the requirements of legislation (S8617B/A10832) signed into law by the Governor on September 7, 2020 that addresses Panama Central School's plan for continuation of operations in the event that the governor declares a public health emergency involving communicable disease.

**Board Approved:
March 15, 2021**

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Promulgation

This plan has been developed in accordance with the amended New York State Labor Law section 27-c and New York State Education Law paragraphs k and l of subdivision 2 of section 2801-a (as amended by section 1 of part B of chapter 56 of the laws of 2016), as applicable. This plan has been developed with the input of the Panama Central School District Central Office Administrators and School Related Personnel labor unions, as required by the amended New York State Labor Law.

No content of this plan is intended to impede, infringe, diminish, or impair the rights of us or our valued employees under any law, rule, regulation, or collectively negotiated agreement, or the rights and benefits which accrue to employees through collective bargaining agreements, or otherwise diminish the integrity of the existing collective bargaining relationship.

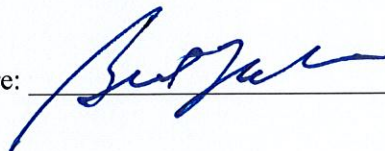
This plan has been approved in accordance with requirements applicable to the agency, jurisdiction, authority, or district, as represented by the signature of the authorized individual below.

As the authorized official of Panama Central School, I hereby attest that this plan has been developed, approved, and placed in full effect in accordance with S8617B/A10832 which amends New York State Labor Law section 27-c and New York State Education Law paragraphs k and l of subdivision 2 of section 2801-a (as amended by section 1 of part B of chapter 56 of the laws of 2016), as applicable, to address public health emergency planning requirements.

Signed on this day:

By: Bert Lictus

Signature: _____



Title: Superintendent

Purpose, Scope, Situation Overview, and Assumptions

Purpose

This plan has been developed in accordance with the amended New York State Labor Law section 27-c and New York State Education Law paragraphs k and l of subdivision 2 of section 2801-a (as amended by section 1 of part B of chapter 56 of the laws of 2016), as applicable. These laws were amended by the passing of legislation S8617B/A10832 signed by the Governor of New York State on September 7, 2020, requires public employers to adopt a plan for operations in the event of a declared public health emergency involving a communicable disease. The plan includes the identification of essential positions, facilitation of remote work for non-essential positions, provision of personal protective equipment, and protocols for supporting contact tracing.

Scope

This plan was developed exclusively for and is applicable to Panama Central School. This plan is pertinent to a declared public health emergency in the State of New York which may impact our operations; and it is in the interest of the safety of our employees and contractors, and the continuity of our operations that we have promulgated this plan.

Situation Overview

On March 11, 2020 the World Health Organization declared a pandemic for the novel coronavirus which causes the COVID-19 severe acute respiratory syndrome. This plan has been developed in accordance with amended laws to support continued resilience for a continuation of the spread of this disease or for other infectious diseases which may emerge and cause a declaration of a public health emergency.

The health and safety of our employees and contractors is crucial to maintaining our mission essential operations. We encourage all employees and contractors to use [CDC Guidance for Keeping Workplaces, Schools, Homes, and Commercial Establishments Safe](#). The fundamentals of reducing the spread of infection include:

- Using hand sanitizer and washing hands with soap and water frequently, including:
 - After using the restroom
 - After returning from a public outing
 - After touching/disposing of garbage
 - After using public computers, touching public tables, and countertops, etc.
- Practice social distancing when possible
- If you are feeling ill or have a fever, notify your supervisor immediately and go home
- If you start to experience coughing or sneezing, step away from people and food, cough or sneeze into the crook of your arm or a tissue, the latter of which should be disposed of immediately
- Clean and disinfect workstations at the beginning, middle, and end of each shift
- Other guidance which may be published by the CDC, the State Department of Health, or County health officials.

Planning Assumptions

This plan was developed based on information, best practices, and guidance available as of the date of publication. The plan was developed to largely reflect the circumstances of the current Coronavirus pandemic but may also be applicable to other infectious disease outbreaks.

The following assumptions have been made in the development of this plan:

- The health and safety of our employees and contractors, and their families, is of utmost importance
- The circumstances of a public health emergency may directly impact our own operations.
- Impacts of a public health emergency will take time for us to respond to, with appropriate safety measures put into place and adjustments made to operations to maximize safety
- The public and our constituency expects us to maintain a level of mission essential operations
- Resource support from other jurisdictions may be limited based upon the level of impact the public health emergency has upon them
- Supply chains, particularly those for personal protective equipment (PPE) and cleaning supplies, may be heavily impacted, resulting in considerable delays in procurement
- The operations of other entities, including the private sector (vendors, contractors, etc.), non-profit organizations, and other governmental agencies and services may also be impacted due to the public health emergency, causing delays or other disruptions in their services
- Emergency measures and operational changes may need to be adjusted based upon the specific circumstances and impacts of the public health emergency, as well as guidance and direction from public health officials and the governor
- Per S8617B/A10832, 'essential employee' is defined as a public employee or contractor that is required to be physically present at a work site to perform their job
- Per S8617B/A10832, 'non-essential employee' is defined as a public employee or contractor that is not required to be physically present at a work site to perform their job

Concept of Operations

The Superintendent of Panama Central School or their designee, or their successor holds the authority to execute and direct the implementation of this plan. Implementation, monitoring of operations, and adjustments to plan implementation may be supported by additional personnel, at the discretion of the Superintendent.

Upon the determination of implementing this plan, all employees and contractors of Panama Central School shall be notified by email, with details provided as possible and necessary, with additional information and updates provided on a regular basis. Panama Central School staff members will be notified of pertinent operational changes by way of email notification. Other interested parties, such as vendors, will be notified by phone and/or email as necessary. The Panama Central School Superintendent or their designee will maintain communications with the public and constituents as needed throughout the implementation of this plan.

The Panama Central School Superintendent, their designee, or their successor will maintain awareness of information, direction, and guidance from public health officials and the Governor's office, directing the implementation of changes as necessary.

Upon resolution of the public health emergency, the Superintendent of Panama Central School, their designee, or their successor will direct the resumption of normal operations or operations with modifications as necessary.

Mission Essential Functions

When confronting events that disrupt normal operations, Panama Central School committed to ensuring that essential functions will be continued even under the most challenging circumstances.

Essential functions are those functions that enable an organization to:

1. Maintain the safety of employees, contractors, and our constituency
2. Provide vital services
3. Provide services required by law
4. Sustain quality operations
5. Uphold the core values of Panama Central School

Panama Central School has identified as critical only those priority functions that are required or are necessary to provide vital services. During activation of this plan, all other activities may be suspended to enable the organization to concentrate on providing the critical functions and building the internal capabilities necessary to increase and eventually restore operations. Appropriate communications with employees, contractors, our constituents, and other stakeholders will be an ongoing priority.

Essential functions are prioritized according to:

- The time criticality of each essential function
- Interdependency of a one function to others
- The recovery sequence of essential functions and their vital processes

Priority 1 identifies the most essential of functions, with priority 4 identifying functions that are essential, but least among them.

The mission essential functions for Panama Central School have been identified as:

Role	Detail and Rationale
District Administration & Clerical Support	Required to ensure the fulfillment of our educational mission and continuity of the response efforts in the event of a public health emergency.
Building Administration &	Required to ensure the fulfillment of our educational mission and continuity of the

Clerical Support	response efforts in the event of a public health emergency.
Buildings & Grounds	Custodians and laborers will be essential in maintaining the safety of our schools and workplace. Snow removal, daily sanitation and cleaning, etc. will be necessary if personnel are working within our schools for meal or instructional resource distribution.
Business Office	Essential functions are, at minimum, payroll and accounts payable. Dependent on the public health emergency, purchasing (of supplies and equipment) and accounts payable may serve essential functions.
Food service	If schools are directed to provide meals to students and families that are eligible to receive free and/or reduced priced meals, personnel will be essential for this purpose. The contracted vendor will organize food preparation for distribution.
Health services	May be essential in contact tracing, testing, reporting requirements and monitoring health of individuals on site..
Information Technology	Provides all hardware and software for the school system. Maintains critical communication tools including the network, email and phone system. While IT is an essential function of the organization, these positions can mainly work from a remote location and may be required to occasionally be onsite for equipment maintenance, repair and/or to exchange an inoperable device for a student, teacher or staff member.
Instruction & Student Support Services	As an educational organization, our primary mission is the education of our students. Equally important is supporting the special education and mental health needs of our students. While it is important to articulate that mission, with the evolution of our technological resources many of these functions can shift to a staggered schedule or fully remote program where teleconferencing, distance learning and other tools are utilized to fulfill our primary mission.
Personnel	Ensuring compliance with regulation, policy, and legal requirements to ensure safety and continuation of the workforce needed to operate the District.
Safety & Security	Ensuring the safety and security of the school.
Transportation	If schools are directed to provide meals to students and families as outlined above, or if schools are directed to provide a continuity of instruction, transportation personnel may be essential for the distribution of meals and/or instructional resources, such as technological devices.

Essential Positions

Panama Central School District has determined the following positions are deemed essential due to the nature of the duties, the equipment needed to perform their duties, and/or the highly confidential nature of their duties that cannot be performed off-site, which are critical to the fulfillment of our mission. Note: while some functions and associated personnel may be essential, some of these can be conducted remotely and do not need to be identified in this section.

Role	Title(s)	Detail and Rationale
Transportation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transportation clerical • Bus drivers • Mechanics 	<p>Transportation aide maintain communications with drivers, supporting the safety of drivers.</p> <p>Bus drivers are critical in meal and instructional resource delivery.</p> <p>Mechanics are critical to the maintenance of our bus fleet.</p>
Buildings & Grounds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Head Custodian • Custodians • Cleaners 	<p>The Head Custodian prioritizes the duties of the department and oversees all staff.</p> <p>Custodian and cleaners are critical to the safety (sanitation, cleaning and disinfecting) of schools fulfilling the essential functions.</p>
Business Office	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • District Treasurer • Account Clerk 	<p>While payroll and other business office functions are essential to the organization, these positions can occasionally work from a remote location. There are times, due to the highly confidential nature of their work or the fiscal controls and procedural nature of a duty necessitates on-site work. During such occasions, staggered schedules will be considered to reduce density of people in the workplace.</p>

Reducing Risk Through Remote Work and Staggered Shifts

Through assigning certain staff to work remotely and by staggering work shifts, we can decrease crowding and density at work sites and on public transportation

Remote Work Protocols

Non-essential employees and contractors able to accomplish their functions remotely will be enabled to do so at the greatest extent possible. Working remotely requires:

1. Identification of staff who will work remotely
2. Approval and assignment of remote work
3. Equipping staff for remote work, which may include:
 - i. Internet capable laptop
 - ii. Necessary peripherals
 - iii. Access to VPN and/or secure network drives
 - iv. Access to software and databases necessary to perform their duties
 - v. A solution for telephone communications

- vi. Note that phone lines may need to be forwarded to off-site staff

Administrators and supervisors will analyze his/her department to identify staff who will work remotely and the equipment needed to successfully and efficiently work off-site.

Staggered Shifts

Implementing staggered shifts may be possible for personnel performing duties which are necessary to be performed on-site but perhaps less sensitive to being accomplished only within core business hours. As possible, management will identify opportunities for staff to work outside core business hours as a strategy of limiting exposure. Regardless of changes in start and end times of shifts, Panama Central School will ensure that employees are provided with their typical or contracted minimum work hours per week. Staggering shifts requires:

1. Identification of positions for which work hours will be staggered
2. Approval and assignment of changed work hours

Administrators and supervisors of each department will alter schedules and/or create temporary schedules to provide for a reduction in workforce onsite as practicable and with consideration of chain of command and supervision of employees, building access and utilities (i.e. temperature control outside of normal business hours).

Personal Protective Equipment

The use of personal protective equipment (PPE) to reduce the spread of infectious disease is important to supporting the health and safety of our employees and contractors. PPE which may be needed can include:

- Masks
- Face shields
- Gloves
- Disposable gowns and aprons

Note that while cleaning supplies are not PPE, there is a related need for cleaning supplies used to sanitize surfaces, as well as hand soap and hand sanitizer. The Coronavirus pandemic demonstrated that supply chains were not able to keep up with increased demand for these products early in the pandemic. As such, we are including these supplies in this section as they are pertinent to protecting the health and safety of our employees and contractors.

Protocols for providing PPE include the following:

1. Identification of need for PPE based upon job duties and work location
2. Procurement of PPE
 - a. As specified in the amended law, public employers must be able to provide at least two pieces of each required type of PPE to each essential employee and contractor during any given work shift for at least six months

- b. Public employers must be able to mitigate supply chain disruptions to meet this requirement
- 3. Storage of, access to, and monitoring of PPE stock
 - a. PPE must be stored in a manner which will prevent degradation
 - b. Employees and contractors must have immediate access to PPE in the event of an emergency
 - c. The supply of PPE must be monitored to ensure integrity and to track usage rates

The Head Custodian will work with administrators and supervisors to determine the inventory needed to support the organization based on the number of employees, and with consideration of those working on-site versus those working off-site.

Staff Exposures, Cleaning, and Disinfection

Staff Exposures

Staff exposures are organized under several categories based upon the type of exposure and presence of symptoms. Following CDC guidelines, we have established the following protocols:

A. If employees or contractors are exposed to a known case of communicable disease that is the subject of the public health emergency (defined as a 'close contact' with someone who is confirmed infected, which is a prolonged presence within six feet with that person):

1. Potentially exposed employees or contractors who do not have symptoms should remain at home or in a comparable setting and practice social distancing for the lesser of 14 days or other current CDC/public health guidance for the communicable disease in question.
 - a. As possible, these employees will be permitted to work remotely during this period of time if they are not ill.
 - b. The Superintendent or their designee in conjunction with the school nurse are responsible for ensuring that these protocols are followed.
 - c. See the section titled Documentation of Work Hours and Locations for additional information on contact tracing
2. CDC guidelines for communicable disease(s) that is the subject of the public health emergency provide that critical essential employees may be permitted to continue work following potential exposure, provided they remain symptom-free and additional precautions are taken to protect them, other employees and contractors, and our constituency/public.
 - a. Additional precautions will include the requirement of the subject employee or contractor, as well as others working in their proximity, to wear appropriate PPE at all times to limit the potential of transmission.
 - b. In-person interactions with the subject employee or contractor will be limited as much as possible.
 - c. Work areas in which the subject employee or contractor are present will be disinfected according to current CDC/public health protocol at least every hour, as practical. See the section on Cleaning and Disinfection for additional information on that subject.
 - d. If at any time they exhibit symptoms, refer to item B below.

- e. The Superintendent or their designee in conjunction with the school nurse are responsible for ensuring that these protocols are followed.

B. If an employee or contractor exhibits symptoms of the communicable disease that is the subject of the public health emergency:

1. Employees and contractors who exhibit symptoms in the workplace should be immediately separated from other employees, customers, and visitors. They should immediately be sent home with a recommendation to contact their physician.
2. Employees and contractors who exhibit symptoms outside of work should notify their supervisor and stay home, with a recommendation to contact their physician.
3. Employees should not return to work until they have met the criteria to discontinue home isolation per CDC/public health guidance and have consulted with a healthcare provider.
4. Panama Central School will not require sick employees to provide a negative test result for the disease in question or healthcare provider's note to validate their illness, qualify for sick leave, or return to work; unless there is a recommendation from the CDC/public health officials to do so.
5. CDC criteria for communicable disease(s) provides that persons exhibiting symptoms may return to work if at least 24 hours have passed since the last instance of fever without the use of fever-reducing medications. If the disease in question is other than the communicable disease(s) identified in the public health emergency, CDC and other public guidance shall be referenced.
6. The Superintendent or their designee in conjunction with the school nurse are responsible for ensuring that these protocols are followed.

C. If an employee or contractor has tested positive for the communicable disease that is the subject of the public health emergency:

1. Apply the steps identified in item B, above, as applicable.
2. Areas occupied for prolonged periods of time by the subject employee or contractor will be closed off.
 - a. CDC guidance for COVID-19 indicates that a period of 24 hours is ideally given before cleaning, disinfecting, and reoccupation of those spaces will take place. If this time period is not possible, a period of as long as possible will be given. CDC/public health guidance for the disease in question will be followed.
 - b. Any common areas entered, surfaces touched, or equipment used shall be cleaned and disinfected immediately.
 - c. See the section on Cleaning and Disinfection for additional information on that subject.
3. Identification of potential employee and contractor exposures will be conducted
 - a. If an employee or contractor is confirmed to have the disease in question, The Superintendent or their designee should inform all contacts of their possible exposure. Confidentiality shall be maintained as required by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).
 - b. Apply the steps identified in item A, above, as applicable, for all potentially exposed personnel.
4. The Superintendent or their designee in conjunction with the school nurse are responsible for ensuring that these protocols are followed.

We recognize there may be nuances or complexities associated with potential exposures, close contacts, symptomatic persons, and those testing positive. We will follow CDC/public health recommendations and requirements and coordinate with our local public health office for additional guidance and support as needed.

Cleaning and Disinfecting

CDC/public health guidelines will be followed for cleaning and disinfection of surfaces/areas. Present guidance for routine cleaning during a public health emergency includes:

1. As possible, employees and contractors will clean their own workspaces in the beginning, middle, and end of their shifts, at a minimum.
 - i. High traffic/high touch areas and areas which are accessible to the public/constituents will be disinfected routinely.
 - ii. The Superintendent or their designee in conjunction with the Head Custodian are responsible for ensuring that these protocols are followed.
2. Staff tasked with cleaning and disinfecting areas will be issued and required to wear PPE appropriate to the task.
3. Surfaces will be disinfected with products that meet EPA criteria for use against the virus in question and which are appropriate for that surface.
4. Staff will follow instructions of cleaning products to ensure safe and effective use of the products.

Employee and Contractor Leave

Note: In the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic, additional federal and state benefits were made available to employees to deter ill individuals from reporting to work, to provide benefits to individuals deemed close contacts and/or under Department of Health mandated quarantines. The *Families First Coronavirus Response Act of 2020*, for example, extended specific paid sick leave to employees. The Panama Central School District will comply with any and all current leave requirements and benefits for our employees and contractors in accordance with state and federal law.

Additional provisions may be enacted based upon need and the guidance and requirements in place by federal and state employment laws, FMLA, executive orders, and other potential sources.

Contractors, either independent or affiliated with a contracted firm, are not classified as employees of the Panama Central School District, and as such are not provided with paid leave time by name of public employer, unless required by law.

Documentation of Work Hours and Locations

In a public health emergency, it may be necessary to document work hours and locations of each employee and contractor to support contact tracing efforts. Identification of locations shall include on-site work, off-site visits. This information may be used by the Panama Central School District to support contact tracing within the organization and may be shared with local public health officials.

Examples of methods of tracking attendance, work hours and locations include:

- Attendance records and timesheets
- Access control records
- Teacher/aide/student daily schedules

Housing for Essential Employees

There are circumstances within a public health emergency when it may be prudent to have essential employees lodged in such a manner which will help prevent the spread of the subject communicable disease to protect these employees from potential exposures, thus helping to ensure their health and safety and the continuity of the PanamaCentral School District's essential operations.

If such a need arises, hotel rooms are expected to be the most viable option. If hotel rooms are for some reason deemed not practical or ideal, or if there are no hotel rooms available, Panama Central School will coordinate with the Chautauqua County Sheriff and Health Department to help identify and arrange for these housing needs. The Superintendent or their designee is responsible for ensuring that these protocols are followed.