

Flu Pandemic Policy (Avian Flu and Swine Flu)

Preventative Measures

Personal Care: Staff and pupils are encouraged to note the following general advice which can help prevent the spread of flu:

- Maintain good basic hygiene, wash your hands frequently with soap and water and ensure hard surfaces (e.g. door handles, phones and worktops) are cleaned regularly.
- Cover your nose and mouth when coughing or sneezing and use a tissue
- Dispose of dirty tissues, bag them and bin them.

If you have recently travelled to Mexico and have flu type symptoms (typically a sudden fever and cough) then the NHS currently advise that you should stay at home and contact either their GP or NHS Direct on 0845 4647

School Care: the school will:

- Monitor closely updates from the Department of Health and local government with regards to the possible spread of the pandemic within the local area
- Ensure appropriate information and reminders with regard to personal hygiene are announced to pupils.
- Ensure that the school is suitably equipped with materials to prevent the spread of infection e.g. soap and tissues.
- Ensure arrangements for general cleaning are maintained and that adequate cleaning materials are available.
- Ensure that the medical room is well stocked and prepared for pupils with the symptoms of flu.
- Ensure that children showing signs of infection are collected by the parents and taken home and that staff who show signs of infection are informed that they should not come in to school.

Response Plan

In the event of the school receiving advice from medical/governmental sources that a flu pandemic is imminent the school intends to inform parents, pupils and staff of the situation and the school's response regularly in line with the emerging situation. This will be managed by use of the school's website and whole school email.

The Governors are ultimately responsible for deciding when to close (and re-open) the school should the need arise. Any decision on closure/re-opening would be made in close consultation with the local authority or other government agency.

In the event that the school has to close (and on re-opening), parents, pupils and staff will be informed by use of the school website, whole school email and local radio.

Definitions

Avian influenza is a disease that affects birds. It can be carried by wild birds, though often does not make them ill. It can be therefore be easily transmitted across country borders. The disease is caused by a class of viruses: the infection caused by the virus sub-type H5N1 is very dangerous to domestic poultry in particular. The disease has reached several European countries.

H5N1 avian influenza is very difficult to transmit from birds to humans and such transmission has occurred almost entirely within those working closely with poultry. Human to human transmission is virtually unknown. The main worries as far as the UK is concerned are:

- That the disease reaches the UK, and poultry is affected;
- That there is bird-man transmission within the poultry industry causing illness in humans;
- That the virus H5N1 mutates and the mutated virus is then easily transmissible between humans. There would be no 'inbuilt resistance' to such a virus which could, though not necessarily, cause a severe and dangerous 'human-type influenza' with a high mortality rate. A pandemic, which occurs from time to time with human influenza, would then be likely.

Swine Flu is a respiratory disease and has some elements of a virus found in pigs. There is no evidence of this disease circulating in pigs in the UK.

If swine flu is confirmed in a number of countries and spreads from human to human, this could lead to what is referred to as a pandemic flu outbreak.

The World Health Organisation (WHO) closely monitors cases of swine flu and other types of flu globally to see whether these viruses develop into a pandemic. The WHO operates a 6 level system of alerts in which level 6 indicates a global pandemic.

Other useful information (including advice on the effect on public examinations if there is a pandemic)

Main emergency planning: www.teachernet.gov.uk/emergencies/planning/flupandemic/

Updates page: www.teachernet.gov.uk/educationoverview/flupandemic/

Q&A page: www.teachernet.gov.uk/educationoverview/flupandemic/flupandemicqanda/

Pandemic influenza: www.hse.gov.uk/biosafety/diseases/pandemic.htm