



Pandemic Policy 2023-24

INTRODUCTION

Although rare, there is risk that the school or its associated community might be subject to the outbreak of an infectious disease. It is therefore necessary to take appropriate actions to prevent and control the spread of infectious disease under the guidance of local or central government.

BACKGROUND

Pandemics are not new. Non-one knows exactly when a pandemic will occur. Once a pandemic arrives, it is likely to spread throughout the country in a matter of weeks. It may come in two or more waves several months apart. Each wave may last two to three months across the UK as a whole or worldwide.

VIRAL INFECTIONS

Viral infections (for example, Influenza ('flu'), Norovirus, Coronavirus ('Covid 19')) are spread by breathing in air containing the virus or by contaminated hands and is highly infectious. It mainly affects the nose, throat, and lungs.

ADVANCE PLANNING PRIOR TO WORLD HEALTH ORGANISATION ALERT

The School reviews its advance planning appropriately. Considerations include:

- Contact details for staff and parents/carers being up to date.
- Plans in place for dealing with above average levels of staff absence.
- Adequate supplies of cleaning materials being readily available for regular cleaning of hard surfaces.
- Hand hygiene facilities being adequate and working properly.
- Adequate stocks of tissues, paper towels and soaps.

REDUCING SPREAD OF VIRUS

- Cover your nose and mouth when coughing or sneezing (preferably with a tissue).
- Dispose of dirty tissues promptly and carefully.
- Maintain good basic hygiene (frequent hand washing with soap and water).
- Avoid non-essential travel and large crowds.
- Clean all hard surfaces frequently (kitchen work surfaces, door handles).

FLU SYMPTOMS AND WHAT TO DO

- Day 1 – Fever (38.9 and above)/chills/muscle ache.
- Day 2 – Dry cough/sore throat/blocked nose or nausea/vomiting/diarrhoea.

- Stay home and rest.
- Drink plenty of fluids.
- Take Paracetamol/Ibuprofen as directed.
- Avoid non-essential contact with people.
- Contact 111, if symptoms persist or if symptoms severe seek emergency medical care immediately, by calling 999.

NOROVIRUS SYMPTOMS AND WHAT TO DO

- Day 1 – Fever (38.9 and above)/chills/muscle ache.
- Day 2 – Nausea/vomiting/diarrhoea.
- Stay home and rest.
- Drink plenty of fluids.
- Take Paracetamol/Ibuprofen as directed.
- Avoid non-essential contact with people.
- Stay off work school/work until you have not been sick or had diarrhoea for at least 2 days. This is when you are most infectious.
- Contact 111, if symptoms persist or if symptoms severe seek emergency medical care immediately, by calling 999.

COVID 19 SYMPTOMS AND WHAT TO DO

- Day 1 – Fever (38.9 and above)/chills/muscle ache.
- Day 2 – A new continuous cough, changing in the sense of taste and smell.
- Other symptoms can be sore throat/blocked nose or nausea/vomiting/ Diarrhoea/headache/shortness of breath or difficulty breathing.
- Stay home and rest.
- Drink plenty of fluids.
- Take Paracetamol/Ibuprofen as directed.
- Avoid contact with people/self-isolate/test, dependent on the medical advice given, contact 111. If symptoms become severe seek emergency medical care immediately by calling 999.

DURING ALERT PHASE

Guidance during an alert is issued by a number of organisations. These include:

- The World Health Organisation;
- The Department of Health;
- The Public Health Authority;
- The DfE;
- Local Government.

Where an alert has been issued, these sources will be monitored daily by the School Director for updated information. The school will follow the advice and direction of the appropriate authority on whether closure is appropriate. The School Director and/or Chair of Trustees will be responsible for co-ordinating the school's response. Unless advised or directed to close, the aim of the school will be to remain open and conduct teaching and learning as normally as possible.

Staff and students will be encouraged to play their part in helping to reduce the spread of any pandemic. Two key principles will be applied:

- Good hygiene practice – washing hands regularly, particularly after coughing, sneezing, or blowing the nose.
- Staff with flu symptoms should not go to work. If they become ill at work, they should inform the School Director and/or Chair of Trustees and go home. If students show flu symptoms, they should be kept at home. If students become ill, they should be sent immediately to the Medical Room and isolated until they can be sent home.

ACTIONS WHERE THE SCHOOL REMAINS OPEN

When the School is open during an alert phase, actions taken should include the following:

- Regularly monitor the information services as above. Liaise with appropriate authorities for advice.
- Ensure that awareness is kept high in students and staff through staff meetings and assemblies.
- Look for symptoms in students and staff.
- Students showing symptoms should be sent to the medical room immediately to await collection by their parents or guardians.
- Staff showing symptoms should be sent home as soon as possible or, if unable to do so safely, have arrangements made by the school to get them home.
- The appropriate authority should be contacted if a student or staff member falls sick with flu symptoms.
- Plans for staff cover should be in place. Cover of lessons will be provided by existing staff or classes will be combined as necessary.
- Supplies of tissues and antiseptic gel in toilets will be checked daily.
- Remote working plans for the students will be reviewed. It is expected that students will be taught through work distributed and collected electronically via the portal or email. Teaching staff will be in contact with the students through the portal, email or telephone.

ACTIONS WHEN A POSSIBLE CASE HAS BEEN IDENTIFIED

- Any student or staff member who has been sent home due to viral like symptoms, should be followed up to ensure the school is aware of the diagnosis.
- The appropriate authorities will be informed, and advice followed regarding measures to be taken, including possible closure.
- School trustees and staff will be informed.
- Information to parents will be in line with the advice of the appropriate authorities.
- A risk assessment will be undertaken, in line with advice from the Health Protection Agency.

ACTIONS WHEN THE SCHOOL HAS CLOSED

If the school has closed on the advice of an appropriate authority, actions should include:

- Liaison with the appropriate authorities should be maintained by the senior management team.
- Parents and staff will be kept updated through letters, the website, emails, and texts as appropriate.
- Published guidance should be checked daily and advice should be followed.
- Teaching and learning should continue electronically through the internet and by email. Priority will be given to students who are taking public examinations.

ONLINE TEACHER DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Daily tasks vary for online teachers based on the subject or subjects they teach, the number of students and the curriculum requirements.

However, the basic duties for online teachers are:

- Risk Assessment – Online teachers to complete a homeworking risk assessment to ensure that their working environment is compliant with health and safety regulations. Any actions that are required will be referred to the senior management team for implementation.
- Design Lesson Plans – Online teachers to design lesson plans and follow all curriculum requirements.
- Create Assignments – Online teachers to assign classwork, homework (where appropriate), projects and reading assignments to students.
- Engage Students During Class – Online teachers to encourage student participation and lead student discussions to keep them active and engaged in learning.
- Provide Feedback – Online teachers to provide feedback to students and mark classwork and coursework.
- Assess Student Performance – Online teachers to assess and monitor individual student performance to ensure students are keeping up with the curriculum and not falling behind.
- Maintain Availability – Online teachers to communicate with students and/or parents to provide progress report and update through online chat sessions and email.
- Track Attendance – Online teachers to track student attendance to online classes and report absentee students to the senior management team and student's wellbeing mentors.
- Emotional Wellbeing – Wellbeing Mentors to communicate with students so they are emotionally supported throughout this crucial time. If there are signs that a student's wellbeing is deteriorating the Designated Safeguarding Lead may have to liaise with other agencies to secure a plan of action to safeguard their mental wellbeing.

STUDENT/PARENTS/CARERS DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- Attendance - Where students are unable to attend school, they are expected to engage in online lessons provided by the school to continue with their learning or alternatively complete workbooks (provided prior to closure) and/or assignment(s) sent by email.

- Emotional Wellbeing – Many of our students suffer from significant anxiety and find a change in routine extremely difficult. The school understands that some students may find it very difficult to take part in online face to face lessons and that they may prefer to complete work at their own pace.
- Support - Parents/carers need to ensure that student's have a suitable workstation in order to facilitate safe learning. The school will if able ensure that students have appropriate resources to access online learning. Any school resources will have appropriate filters to comply with the School's Online Safety Policy.

CONCLUSION

It is not possible to determine in advance all the likely consequences for the school in the event of a major pandemic. The school should continue to function unless advised or directed to close. Flexibility will be required by all staff and students to minimise risks while at the same time continuing the educational function of the school. In the event of a major pandemic, the senior management team will act in the best interests of all concerned following the advice of the appropriate authorities.

Review: September 2024