

COWORTH-FLEXLANDS SCHOOL

PANDEMIC FLU PLAN

AIMS OF THE PLAN

This plan allows Coworth-Flexlands School to deal with the impact of a pandemic flu outbreak in our area. Our aims are:

- To ensure minimal interruption in the event of a pandemic outbreak of flu
- To maintain control of the situation and prevent the spread of infection
- To keep staff, parents' and pupils' informed of our actions and aware of procedures.

WHAT IS PANDEMIC FLU?

Pandemic flu is a type of influenza outbreak that occurs every few decades and which spreads rapidly to affect most countries and regions around the world. The symptoms in a pandemic flu outbreak are similar to those of 'ordinary' flu but are usually more severe.

Flu viruses are constantly changing, producing new strains. Pandemics occur when a virus develops that is so different from previously circulating strains that few, if any, people have any immunity to it. This allows it to spread widely and rapidly, affecting many hundreds of thousands of people.

A new pandemic virus may emerge through the mixing of human flu virus with an animal flu virus (usually a bird (avian) flu virus).

It may affect around 25% of the population and people of every age may be at risk of serious illness. A vaccine may not always be available to start with and when it does become available the Government will advise on who should be immunised.

COMMUNICATION

Clear communication is critical in providing staff, parents and pupils with a full understanding of their role in the plan. It will also alleviate fears and prevent uncoordinated and hasty decision making.

- This plan will be briefed to all staff and posted on the school shared drive and website.
- The school website will provide a link to the Department of Health Protection Agency and World Health Organisation websites which will contain the most up to date information on a national/international level.
- Emergency communication to staff and parents will be through the Clarion Call group texts and emails system, if this fails then through Class Reps. In addition, the website will communicate the pandemic status. Otherwise routines newsletters will provide normal updates.

EARLY PLANNING

- In the event of the Head contracting the virus, leadership will pass to the SMT in the following order: Deputy Head, Head of Pre Prep and Bursar; thereafter Heads of Departments in alphabetical order.
- An emergency supply of hand sanitizer, tissues, facemasks and antiseptic wipes will be stored until required for use.
- At the end of each term all parents will be contacted to ensure their contact details, including secondary contacts, are up to date.
- The School Emergency Plan is updated each term with contact numbers of all parents, staff and governors along with contact details for the local education authority.

SCHOOL CLOSURE

Children are highly efficient 'spreaders' of respiratory infections, both among themselves and to adults in their families. Evidence suggests that such infections spread less in holiday periods than in term-time. So, closing schools for a period might significantly reduce the number of children infected.

Central Government will advise whether schools in affected areas should stay open or close, on the basis of scientific advice. If the Government were to advise closure, Local Authorities (LAs) would act on local health information and inform schools when their area is affected and if the advice to close applies. If there is advice to close all schools in an area, the LA would tell schools when this advice will be reviewed; after such a review, the LA would advise schools whether to remain closed or to re-open, and, if they are to re-open, whether any specific conditions should apply.

The decision to close/reopen Coworth-Flexlands School will be taken by the Chairman of the Board of Governors and the Headmistress when notified by the LA/Government.

SCHOOL REMAINS OPEN – STEPS TO TAKE:

- The school will operate as normal as possible but plan for staff absence. A list of supply teachers that can be called upon for help is located in the emergency plan:
- There may be disruption in any area of the school and staff should be prepared to cover absenteeism and may have to perform jobs outside their normal duties, i.e. cleaning, extra duties.
- Should the kitchen staff fall ill, we may ask parents and staff to provide packed lunches.
- The school will follow the Government guidance for the quarantine at home for siblings of children who become sick and for staff members whose immediate family members become ill.
- Children who become sick during the day will be cared for in the school medical room, thus being separated from other pupils and minimising contact with staff until they are collected by their parents.
- Parents are asked to be extra vigilant in watching for flu symptoms in their children and if they are concerned, they should keep their child at home and contact their doctor's surgery. Bringing their child to school, or to the surgery, greatly increases the risk of spreading the virus.
- If any member of staff shows signs of infection, they will be sent home immediately.
- We will provide the LA with any information requested, i.e. absence rates, etc.
- After school clubs/activities may be postponed.

BASIC MEASURES TO REDUCE THE RISK OF INFECTION

All staff and pupils should adhere to the following guidelines to prevent the spread of infection:

- Cover your mouth and nose when coughing or sneezing, using a tissue whenever possible.
- Dispose of dirty tissues promptly and carefully – bag and bin them. Plastic bags will be available in all classrooms which should be regularly tied up and disposed of in the dustbins.
- Maintain good hygiene – washing hands frequently in soap and water protects against picking the virus up from surfaces and passing it on. Pupils will be instructed to wash their hands with soap at break, before and after lunch and before going home.
- Extra supplies of bags, soap and tissues are kept in the Eves cupboard on the second floor of the academic block.

As well as the above we will introduce extra cleaning measures:

- Regularly wiping door handles and phones – the cleaners will do this each evening but staff should ensure their area/classroom is as clean as possible during the day and may

have to step in to clean during the evening in the event the cleaners are infected by the virus. Supplies of antiseptic wipes will be made available and stored in the Eves cupboard.

- Daily washing of desks – as above.

SCHOOL CLOSES – STEPS TO TAKE:

If the LA orders the school to close the Chairman of the Board of Governors and the Headmistress will inform the SMT, staff and parents accordingly.

- Staff should come into school, unless ill, caring for dependants or authorised to work elsewhere.
- We have a duty to provide education for children of compulsory school age who are out of school. The staff not affected by the virus should set and mark work which will be sent to pupils via our website and email.
- Should the Government introduce limitations on the movement of people which affect our pupils, the school will continue to set and mark work via the website or email.
- Parents will be advised to watch for notices and information placed on the website.

The school will reopen when authorised by the LA/Government and the Chairman of the Board of Governors and the Headmistress.

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