

FLU POLICY

Flu Pandemic

Avian Flu: There have been influenza pandemics around the World in the past with the last occurring in 1967. Experts have been concerned because the H5N1 virus currently circulating among birds in Asia, Africa and Europe has demonstrated the ability to cross the species barrier to cause disease and death in humans. The 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.

Swine Flu: This 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. The recent outbreak of Swine Flu in Mexico has resulted in cases elsewhere in the World, including the UK, and there has been some transmission human to human.

World Health Authority(WHO) Flu Pandemic: The WHO has raised the threat level to 5, this is a reflection that the virus is no longer containable and is being passed among people who were not exposed to the original source in Mexico. How virulent the strain of flu will be is unknown, but most of the victims outside of Mexico appear to have contracted a mild form of the disease which is treatable with antiviral drugs.

School Policy

The School recognised some time ago that global flu pandemic is increasingly likely and the School has created a phased plan which works in conjunction with the four UK threat levels which would come into play if the WHO threat level reaches 6, these are:

- UK Alert Level 1 No cases in the UK
- UK Alert Level 2 Virus isolated in the UK
- UK Alert Level 3 Outbreak(s) in the UK
- UK Alert Level 4 Widespread activity across the UK

The key elements at present are continuing to update the School's plan, in line with the emerging situation, and communication. The School intends to:

- use the School's website and other appropriate means to inform parents and staff, so that advice is prompt and easily accessible.
- act on the generic advice given to the national population by the Chief Medical Officer and appropriate government agencies, such as the Health Protection Agency.
- act on the specific advice to schools given by the Local Education Authority and the School's Medical Officer.

- Monitor the situation closely in the lead up to GCSE and A Level Exams to ensure pupils are not disadvantaged.

The School has already taken action to obtain sufficient stocks of cleaning products, alcohol wipes and gels to implement a focused cleaning programme, and it has available stocks of masks and gloves for medical staff. In continuing to prepare for a pandemic event the School will act to:

- ensure appropriate information and reminders with regard to personal hygiene are on display. There is a programme of education to pupils to reinforce this message.
- ensure that staff monitor the very closely updates for the Department of Health and local government with regard to the possible spread of the pandemic within the local area.
- Ensure that staff who show signs of infection are sent home and that children showing signs of infection are reassured, collected by their parents and taken home.

Every effort will be made to keep the School operating normally but if a decision is made by the Headmaster to close the School, this will be communicated to pupils and staff and it will be emailed out to parents. Daily updates will be made available on the School's website and arrangements in respect of academic work will then be put into operation on the intranet for pupils to access from home.