



# Pandemic Influenza Policy and Action Plan

Whole school	INTRANET & WEBSITE
Statutory?	YES
Reviewed	February 2020
Next review	February 2023

# INTRODUCTION

## What is Influenza?

Influenza is a viral infection which is usually sudden in onset and can produce intense symptoms including:

- Fever;
- Cough;
- Sore throat;
- Joint aches and pains;
- Headache.

An Influenza pandemic is declared when there is an outbreak of a new type of influenza virus, which most people do not have immunity to, due to no previous exposure. This can happen at any time of year and may cause a very large number of the population to be infected. This is not in reference to seasonal Influenza (Department of Health, 2014).

This policy contains the Contingency Plan arrangements for King's Ely in the event of a disaster occasioned by a pandemic. This Plan will be reviewed *triennially* and is subject to any developments in the international situation and advice received from external agencies.

The Contingency Plan is based on the following:

- Advice from the School Medical Officer;
- UK Influenza Pandemic Preparedness Strategy 2011 (Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, 2011)
- Pandemic Influenza Risk Management (World Health Organisation, May 2017)
- Pandemic Influenza. NHS Guidance on the current and future preparedness in support of an outbreak (National Health Service, January 2014)
- 'Explaining pandemic Flu: A Guide from the Chief Medical Officer' (Department of Health (DOH), 19 October 2005);
- 'Clinical review: Influenza pandemics and avian flu' by Douglas Fleming (British Medical Journal, 5 November 2005);
- Highly pathogenic H5N1 avian influenza outbreaks in poultry and in humans: Food safety implications' by the World Health Organisation (International Food Safety Authorities Network Information Note No. 7/2005, 4 November 2005).
- Operating Framework for Pandemic Influenza. NHS England, 2013.
- Reducing Transmission of Pandemic H1N1 in Schools. (World Health Organisation 2009)
- Pandemic Influenza Response Plan 2014 (Public Health England, 2014)

The World Health Organization (WHO) have set out new guidance for assessment of pandemic risk with four phases of classification which are on a continuum in which the phases may change in a gradual or swift manner. These phases are no longer numbered and are also non-linear, not always following a strict order. The WHO Pandemic Phase Classification is as follows: Interpandemic phase; Alert phase; pandemic phase and transition phase (WHO, 2013).

Although the WHO are responsible for declaring a Pandemic Influenza event internationally, the Department of Health (DOH) are responsible for the slightly different classification of pandemic phases in the United Kingdom that are clear and flexible. These are Detection, Assessment, Treatment, Escalation and Recovery (DATER).

- The first phase, **Detection**, is activated when the WHO declare a Pandemic Alert phase, and this phase involves gathering intelligence to build a picture of the magnitude of the pandemic, and its' characteristics, and beginning implementation of clinical resources.
- Movement to the second phase, **Assessment** is triggered by the identification of a novel influenza virus in patients in the UK. This calls for epidemiological data to be collected and analysed with a view to estimate the potential severity and impact in the UK.
- The transition to the third phase, **Treatment**, is in the case that there is evidence of continual community transmission of the strain of influenza. Treatment involves advice of individual case management, as well as population treatment in a bid to promoting good public health practices to contain the virus as much as possible. This may involve closure of public places such as schools and plan for vaccinations when available.
- **Escalation** phase is preliminarily activated when the treatment phase has become operational, and will involve extra NHS services specific for the treatment of the pandemic, and prioritization methods to ensure that essential services can continue, making good contingency plans. De-escalation indicates that the pandemic is nearing its end.
- **Recovery** phase involves returning affected societies to normal, and reflection of the handling of the pandemic.

(Public Health England, 2014)

## A PANDEMIC EVENT

Forward planning is essential when there is news of a Pandemic Influenza in the local area. The following should be carried out:

- The school should adopt guidance in this policy to advise that students and staff with symptoms of influenza should stay at home.
- The school medical centre nurses will maintain open communications with The School Medical Officer (SMO) at St Mary's Surgery. Recommendations will be made by the SMO who will be following instructions from the NHS Infectious Disease Control Consultant.
- Hand hygiene and respiratory infection control should be intensified.
- Pupils and Staff who become unwell while at school should be isolated as soon as possible and crowding should be avoided e.g. pupils attending dining hall in smaller numbered phases.
- Improve ventilation of indoor areas, and employ strict cleaning procedures.
- Public health advice should be closely followed.

(WHO, 2009)

It is accepted that a World Health Organisation (WHO) classification of Pandemic Phase in the UK would be expected to cause intense pressure on health and other essential services with disruption to most aspects of normal daily life throughout the UK.

A Pandemic event will impact on all services, including emergency services, fuel supply, food production, distribution and transport, prisons, schools and businesses as the consequence of an

expected absenteeism of 50% from the workplace, the imposition of travel restrictions and introduction of countermeasures by the Government and other organizations through civil emergency response contingency plans (DOH, 2005)

## **King's Ely Recovery Management Team**

The Principal, advised by the Senior Leadership Team, will form a Recovery Management Team for a pandemic event to include the Chairman of Governors (or his representative from the Governing Body), and members of the School's Senior Leadership Team.

The Principal will identify the responsibilities of the Recovery Management Team, to include:

- informing Governors/Staff/Parents/Pupils where appropriate;
- contacting suppliers/service providers, including all contractors and the Emergency Services;
- liaising with the Media;
- ensuring continued function of the School as normally as possible;
- considering with the School's Medical Officer appropriate medical action, such as an immunisation policy and medication issues (both prophylaxis and treatment), as the situation develops and advice is received.

## **Contingency Plan 1:**

### **King's Ely Plan for the closure of the School in term-time in response to the growing threat of the onset of a Pandemic Event.**

King's Ely will:

- warn all parents of boarding pupils by letter of the Governors' intention to close its boarding facilities should the School regard it as necessary for the protection of its pupils and staff in the light of a growing threat of a possible pandemic. All parents will also be advised of the implications for examinations and payment of fees;
- send the warning letter to parents and guardians of boarding pupils in significant advance of a possible pandemic, namely at that stage when media attention has begun to focus on a possible pandemic outbreak which may affect the UK in the medium to short term future;
- notify all Academic and Support Staff throughout the School of this action;
- request the School Medical Officer to notify the School immediately on being advised of a confirmed outbreak of the potential pandemic infection in the UK. **On being notified of a confirmed outbreak:**
  - the Chairman of the Governing Body, in consultation with the Principal, Director of Boarding, the Chief Operating Officer and the Business Manager, will determine if the threat is high and whether to close the boarding facilities;
  - if the decision is made to close the boarding facilities, the School will notify all parents and guardians of the closure and arrange with them the collection or transport of boarding pupils to their parents or guardians. If a boarding pupil is not able to return home or to their guardian, the School will seek to use external guardianship agencies;
  - the School will consult with its suppliers, service providers, contractors and Emergency Services;

- the Chairman of the Governing Body will notify the other members of the Governing Body and the Business Manager will notify the School insurers;
- the School Medical Officer will be requested to notify the School immediately on being advised of a confirmed cluster of localised human-to-human spread of the potential pandemic infection in the UK. **On being advised of a DOH Assessment Phase Activation:**
  - the Chairman of the Governing Body, in consultation with the Principal, Director of Boarding, the Chief Operating Officer and the Business Manager, will determine if the threat is high and whether to close the boarding facilities (if not already done so);
  - if the decision is made at this stage to close the boarding facilities, the School will notify all parents and guardians by emergency contact procedure of the closure and will arrange with them for the collection or transport of boarding pupils to their parents or guardians. If a boarding pupil is not able to return home or to their guardian the School will seek to use external guardianship agencies;
  - the Chairman of the Governing Body will notify the other members of the Governing Body and the Business Manager will notify the School insurers;
  - the School will consult with the Local Authority and other Government Agencies concerning the potential closure of all parts of the School;
  - if the School is advised by the Local Authority or Government Agency that closure of the whole school may be imminent, the School will advise all parents by letter and pupils and Staff by announcement of the possible closure of all parts of the School;
  - the Chairman of the Governing Body will update the Governing Body and the Business Manager will update the School Insurers, advising them of the imminent closure of the school facilities;
  - **on confirmation by the Department of Health of activation of Treatment and or Escalation Phases and notification to the School to close by the Local Authority or Government Agency** the School will be closed in accordance with emergency notification procedures, ensuring that the Governing Body are notified and School insurers are informed.

During **Treatment Phase** it is intended that a skeleton Staff from those resident at the School will be available to undertake general duties, including the security of the buildings and equipment, emergency maintenance of plant and buildings and to provide contact support for parents, pupils and staff. In addition, key staff members of the Academic, Administrative and Finance Teams will be expected to continue to be at work (subject to the level of disruption of the transport networks, impositions on travel and the controls imposed by the CCC under the civil emergency response contingency plans).

During **Escalation Phase** pandemic it is envisaged that no staff will be available to undertake any duties at the School.

If the School is closed (either in part or in full) all teaching staff will be expected to be at work either in School or from home in support of the arrangements put in place by the School to deliver education for its pupils through distance learning.

## Contingency Plan 2:

### King's Ely Plan for the closure of the School in holiday-time in response to the growing threat of the onset of a Pandemic Event.

King's Ely will:

- warn all parents of boarding pupils by letter of the Governors' intention to close its boarding facilities should the School regard it as necessary for the protection of its pupils and staff in the light of a growing threat of a possible pandemic. All parents will also be advised of the implications for examinations and payment of fees;
- send the warning letter to parents and guardians of boarding pupils in significant advance of a possible pandemic, namely at that stage when media attention has begun to focus on a possible pandemic outbreak which may affect the UK in the medium to short term future;
- notify all Academic and Support Staff throughout the School of this action;
- **on the announcement by WHO of a confirmed outbreak of a cluster of localised human-to-human spread of the potential pandemic infection somewhere in the world** (corresponding to DOH **Detection Phase**) the School will seek advice from the DOH, WHO and the School Medical Officer and will:
  - determine, by consultation between the Chairman of the Governing Body, the Principal, the Director of Boarding, the Chief Operating Officer and the Business Manager and on advice from the DOH, WHO, and other appropriate Government Agencies, if the potential threat from pupils returning from those countries with the infection is high and if so will:
  - write to all parents and guardians to advise them that pupils returning to the School from those countries so identified will not be allowed to attend the School until after a stated period has elapsed after their arrival in the UK in order to assist the prevention of the spread of the infection;
  - write to all Staff to advise them that if they are returning to the School from those countries so identified they will be on paid leave and not be allowed into work at the School until after a stated period has elapsed after their arrival in the UK in order to assist the prevention of the spread of the infection;
  - the Business Manager will notify the School insurers;
  - request the School Medical Officer, to notify the School immediately **on being advised of a confirmed outbreak of the potential pandemic infection in the UK**. On being notified of a confirmed outbreak, the Chairman of the Governing Body, in consultation with the Principal and the Chief Operating Officer and the Business Manager, will determine if the threat is high and whether to close the boarding facilities;
  - if it is determined to close the boarding facilities then the School will write to all parents and guardians advising them of the closure and that the pupils should not return to School except as a day pupil;
  - the School will consult with its suppliers, service providers, contractors, IT Support and Emergency Services;
  - the Chairman of the Governing Body will notify the other members of the Governing Body and the Business Manager will notify the School insurers;
  - the School Medical Officer will be requested to notify the School immediately **on being advised of a confirmed cluster of localised human-to-human spread of the potential pandemic infection in the UK (DOH Assessment Phase)** on being advised of such an outbreak:

- the Chairman of the Governing Body in consultation with the Principal, the Director of Boarding, the Chief Operating Officer and the Business Manager will determine if the threat is high and whether to close the boarding facilities (if not already done so);
- if it is determined to close the boarding facilities the School will notify all parents and guardians of the closure to ensure that the pupils should not return to School except as a day pupil;
- the Chairman of the Governing Body will notify the other members of the Governing Body and the Business Manager will notify the School insurers;
- the School will consult with the Local Authority and other Government Agencies concerning the potential closure of the whole School;
- if advised by the Local Authority or Government Agency that closure of all parts of the School may be imminent, the School will advise parents, pupils and Staff by letter of the possible closure in the light of the outbreaks of human-to-human infection and the consultation with the Local Authority and Government Agencies;
- the Governing Body, The King's School Enterprises and the School Insurers will be notified of the imminent closure of the school facilities;
- **on confirmation by the Department of Health of activation of Treatment Phase and/or notification to the School to close by the Local Authority or Government Agency**, the School will be closed in accordance with emergency notification procedures, ensuring that the Governing Body are notified and School insurers are informed.

During a DOH **Treatment Phase**, it is intended that a skeleton Staff from those resident at the School will be available to undertake general duties, including the security of the buildings and equipment, emergency maintenance of plant and buildings, to provide contact support for parents, pupils and staff, and liaison with its suppliers, service providers, contractors, IT Support and Emergency Services. In addition the key Staff members of the Academic, Administrative and Finance Teams will be expected to continue to be at work, subject to the level of disruption of the transport networks, impositions on travel and the controls imposed by the CCC under the civil emergency response contingency plans.

During a DOH **Escalation Phase** pandemic, it is envisaged that no Staff will be available to undertake any duties at the School.

If the School is closed (either in part or in full) all teaching staff will be expected to return to work at the start of the term by either being in School (if allowed by DOH) or from home in support of the arrangements put in place by the School to deliver education for its pupils through distance learning.

## **Food and Medical Supplies and Services**

When advised by the School Medical Officer of a confirmed cluster of localised human-to-human spread of the potential pandemic infection in the UK (DOH **Assessment Phase**) the School will undertake an immediate review of its stocks and supplies and place appropriate orders to achieve full stock. In placing such orders due consideration will be given to the advice of the School Medical Officer, Local Authorities and Government Agencies regarding types of food to be avoided. Additionally, The Recovery Management Team, in consultation with the Catering and Maintenance Departments, may introduce a modification of existing usage e.g. alter menus, close buildings etc.

On the closure of the School, food, medical and other supplies will be maintained from stock to support those departments and Staff who remain at work during DOH **Treatment Phase**.

## **Press and Media**

When advised by the School Medical Officer of a DOH **Assessment Phase**, the School will prepare a Press Statement, agreed with the Chairman of the Governing Body, for issue in response to Press and other Media enquiries.

Furthermore, when closure of the School has been determined, the School will prepare another such statement for issue in response to Press and other Media enquiries.

## **Financial Considerations**

The Business Manager will keep the School's Insurers informed of advice received from the Local Authority and Government Agencies and the actions of the School. The School will register a potential claim under Business Interruption Cover with the School's Insurers at the assessment of the commencement of DOH **Assessment Phase**.

The Business Manager will as and when appropriate, consult with the Chairman of the Executive and Finance Committee on the School's investments and cash.

On the decision to close the School and/or commencement of DOH **Treatment Phase**, the Principal, in consultation with the Business Manager will advise the Chairman of the Governing Body concerning the possible acceleration of the payment of salaries, if appropriate, before the onset of DOH **Escalation Phase**, when it may be assumed that the normal financial operating network will cease to operate effectively.

## **Outbreak of a pandemic infection at the School**

In accordance with the pandemic response approach advised by the School Medical Officer, an infection suspected at the School will be dealt with as follows:

- isolate infected person/s by moving them to the Medical Centre or other designated location at the School;
- send the patient to hospital;
- if the patient is a boarding pupil then secure the patient's bedroom and property in accordance with normal procedures to prevent spread of infection;
- follow medical advice and seek further advice from the School Medical Officer on an immunisation policy and other medication issues (both prophylaxis and treatment);
- The School will then await confirmation of the infection and follow the advice of the School Medical Officer and other Local Authority or other Government Agency.



## **King's Ely Plan for the opening of the School after the notification of the end of a pandemic event**

On formal notification from the Local Authority or DOH that the Pandemic has reached the **Recovery Phase** and it is the end of the pandemic event and that schools are to open, the School will notify staff and write to parents and guardians advising of the date the School will re-open. School suppliers, service providers, IT Support, the Governing Body and the School Insurers will also be notified.

The School will maintain close contact with the School Medical Officer, Local Authority and Government Agencies as appropriate once the School returns to work in consideration of the probable second pandemic wave that is likely to occur in 3-9 months (DOH, 2005).