

CLS CONTINGENCY PLAN FOR DEALING WITH A FLU PANDEMIC
(Devised in Autumn Term 2006 and Updated Summer Term 2009)

1. Introduction

- 1.1** Pandemic 'flu is a type of influenza that occurs every few decades and which spreads rapidly to affect most countries and regions around the world. Swine 'flu, which has been the subject of recent media coverage, has been identified by the W.H.O. as a potential trigger for such a pandemic. The symptoms of pandemic flu are similar to those of "ordinary" flu, but are usually more severe.
- 1.2** Experts advise that a further flu pandemic is inevitable, but cannot say when it will happen. When it happens, the Government expects it to spread rapidly to all areas of the UK and have a significant impact. Depending on the severity of the pandemic 25 – 50 % of the population may become ill at some stage during one or more waves, each lasting three to four months, and 50,000 to 700,000 more people than usual may die.
- 1.3** The DCSF have issued guidance in 2008 which indicates that all major employers need to draw up plans to cope with the onset of a flu pandemic.
- 1.4** In the light of this information, the City of London Corporation, and CLS in particular, have revised their contingency plan to cope, should there be a pandemic, the main features of which are listed below.

2. Closure of School ?

- 2.1** If a 'flu pandemic occurs, it will be necessary to decide whether CLS can remain open for all, or some, of its pupils. If it is to close, the duration of closure must be considered.
- 2.2** The general advice from the DCSF is that schools should seek to continue operating as normally as possible during a pandemic, but they should plan for much higher than usual levels of staff absence and the consequences of this. Children are highly efficient "spreaders" of respiratory infections, both among themselves and to adults in their families. So, closing schools for a period might significantly reduce the number of children infected.

2.3 The decision to close (partially or fully) will be taken by the **Headmaster**, on the advice of:

- The SMT
- Chairman of Governors
- City of London Corporation
- DCSF
- Department of Health & Health Protection Agency

2.4 This decision will be based on two overriding criteria:

- a. The number of staff available and the minimum number of staff present to maintain a satisfactory and safe learning environment. If the number of teaching staff falls below seventy (i.e. 25% or more of the teaching staff are absent), it will prove impossible to provide classes for all pupils present. If support staff are badly hit, some of the usual services may not be available.
- b. Vulnerability of pupils to infection. If the Government (or the City of London Corporation) advise that it will be for the social good to close (i.e. on child welfare grounds) to reduce the spread of infection among children, then the School may need to close.

2.5 A secondary, but important, consideration is whether the School can provide sufficient support services, such as maintenance of the building, utilities, catering etc. Can health and safety be guaranteed? The Facilities and Deputy Facilities Managers will advise on these matters.

3. Remaining Open?

3.1 The general advice from Government is that, in the event of a pandemic, everyone should endeavour to carry on as best they can. Even if the School has to close, those staff not directly affected, should endeavour to come to work.

3.2 In a pandemic, if the School remains open, it will be necessary to:

- Take hygiene measures to reduce the risk of infection spreading e.g. antiseptic and antibacterial wipes, a large supply of tissues, efficient disposal of the above. (Level of supplies to be monitored and increased)
- Ensure that staff showing signs of infection go home.
- Ensure that children showing signs of infection are taken home or are collected by parents.
- Provide accommodation in school (eg the rooms closest to the School Nurse to be used as sick bays) for sick pupils and or staff, until they can go home.
- Provide information to parents and staff as frequently and sensibly as it is possible to do so.

- Provide opportunities for “remote learning”. (See 3.6 below)

- 3.3 Priority will be given to public exam classes – notably in the Fifth and Sixth Form. It may be possible to run these classes, even if younger boys are required to stay at home.
- 3.4 Other school activities may need to be postponed or reduced e.g. Sport, Extra Curricular activities, Visits etc. because of staffing levels and the availability of transport (e.g. to Grove Park).
- 3.5 The School may need to provide bereavement counselling.
- 3.6 Guidance relating to “remote learning”, using electronic media, has been issued by the DCSF and CLS will do what we can to at least match the standards expected in the maintained sector.

4. Key Personnel

- 4.1 Those who will play a crucial role in assessing and reassessing the feasibility of keeping the school operating are:
 - Headmaster
 - SMT
 - Facilities Manager and Deputy Facilities Manager
 - School Nurse (and other First Aiders)
 - Finance Director
 - Chairman of Governors
 - Heads of Year
- 4.2 Of course, some of those mentioned in 4.1 could be hit by flu themselves and there will be a need for flexibility, providing cover for absentees amongst this group.
- 4.3 The Assistant Headmaster would normally be responsible for operating the Relief System for Teaching Staff, but in his absence other members of the SMT might need to take over this role.

5. Communication with Parents

- 5.1 It is vital that there are adequate channels of communication to keep parents (and boys) informed of developments during the crisis. DCSF guidelines point out that, in preparation for a flu pandemic, the School must ensure it has current contact details available: telephone numbers, addresses, email etc. To this effect an attempt will be made to contact all parents to check and amend details currently kept on SIMS.
- 5.2 A reminder about the Schoolcomms facility should be sent to all parents
- 5.3 Communication may be through:

- Schoolcomms (text messaging and email)
- The CLS website
- Telephone
- Letter
- The public address system (for those in the building).

5.4 Parents need to know about:

- Closure (and if so for which age groups)
- Individual boys being sent home unwell
- What to do with the unwell pupil and other family members i.e. keep the unwell pupil and siblings at home and consult the GP via telephone or ring NHS Direct
- Reduced services e.g. catering
- Re-opening
- Any school work that can be sent to parents for boys to do at home.
- Public examinations and advice to candidates who should be taking exams during the pandemic.

5.5 Examination Boards are to be contacted to see what advice they can offer in the event of the pandemic occurring during the exam season(s)