

LOMOND SCHOOL STRATEGIC PLANNING FOR A 'FLU PANDEMIC

General Introduction

The World Health Organisation have recently warned that a flu pandemic “is both inevitable and imminent.” It is likely to arrive in two or more waves several months apart, each wave possibly lasting two to three months across the UK as a whole.

WHO has set out the phases of a pandemic:

Phase 3: there is a new subtype of virus but no human-to-human transmission or at most rare instances of spread to a close contact;

Phase 4: small clusters of infection, but limited human-to-human transmission;

Phase 5: large clusters of infection but human-to-human spread is localised; this suggest the virus is adapting to humans but may not yet be fully transmittable between humans;

Phase 6: Pandemic Phase; increased and sustained transmission between humans.

Flu viruses change all the time. A vaccine closely matching the specific virus in a pandemic will not be available for the first wave. UK Health Departments are jointly procuring a stockpile of an antiviral drugs to treat 25% of the population but it will be used to treat those who fall ill (not to prevent illness). Predicting the characteristics of a flu pandemic in advance is impossible. Current guidance is that people should try to continue their everyday essential activities as normally as possible, while taking personal responsibility for reducing risk of exposure to the virus and social responsibility to lessen its spread. There are some specific issues to consider concerning children, who secrete larger quantities of the virus and for longer than adults, and it can lead to a rapid spread of infection when they are together in schools. There may therefore be circumstances in which, based on medical advice, the Scottish Executive would advise the closure of schools and nurseries.

Preparatory Measures :

WHO Phase 3 (current)

Health and Welfare

- liaison with local health authority and school doctors to monitor and share up-to-date information

Communication

- letter informing parents of school policy and procedures if a flu pandemic reaches the UK to be issued in August
- information to staff and governors in August
- web page on school website to be set up to share information for new session

- commitments to be received from school guardians on looking after non UK students during pandemic
- regular checking of WHO through website
- update contact details of all parents in August

Education

- staff planning for distance learning
- IT resourcing for staff examined

WHO Phase 4 announcement

Health and welfare

- Medical staff to advise about the feasibility of obtaining vaccines and other prophylactic measures
- boarders from infected areas around the world to stay with guardians for three days prior to being examined and monitored by medical staff; re-join Burnbrae on receiving an all clear.
- appropriate posters and other information material to be distributed
- discuss cleaning measures with Sodexo

Communication

- communicate with parents/guardians updating them on WHO information and school policy
- update website

Education

- staff planning and resourcing for distance learning
- no school tours to be allowed to or from countries where human- to- human infection has been diagnosed
- travel advise to be issued to staff and pupils

WHO Phase 5

Health and welfare

- as for phase 4
- implementation of hygiene standards in school
- liaise with the local health authority about disposal of infected material

Communication

- more rigorous communication of pupil/staff hygiene measures around school
- daily monitoring of WHO and government websites for up-to-date information of spread of flu pandemic

Education

- as for phase 4

WHO Phase 6

Health and welfare

- Lomond's policy will be to continue to teach until such time as the first case of suspected avian flu is in school or as instructed by the local health authority to close the school
- if available the latest flu vaccination shall be administered to the school medical staff and resident house staff
- Burnbrae will be closed down but if there are infected pupils in Burnbrae they will, if resident outside Helensburgh, have to be taken care of. If there are other pupils in the same dorm not infected they will need to be kept under close monitoring and in isolation until given clearance by the medical staff. It is likely that a period up to 5 days may elapse before allowing non-infected pupils to return home
- certain dorms may have to be designated for particular use either as isolation or treatment rooms
- if bird flu is diagnosed the school will act on advice from the local health authority but it is likely that it will close and that teaching will be suspended until advised by the local health authority who will advise on treatment and care of patients
- The Welfare Team (management, school nurse and school doctor) to meet regularly for updates and to assess situation requirements
- boarding pupils to guardians; all the pupils will remain absent

Communication

- management team to meet as agreed to be updated on the school and the local situation
- arrangements made to man phone lines and post messages on the relevant area of the school website
- staff to be kept informed as appropriate
- school suppliers to be contacted and deliveries postponed

Education

- to continue as normal until the first case of flu is diagnosed in school
- distance learning procedures to be enacted for all year groups if feasible
- staff to provide support from home if possible
- cancellation of school tours and sporting fixtures until local health authority has given the all clear

In the event of an outbreak occurring during a school holiday the management team will meet to discuss the school's policy in light of national advice and instruction.

Post-Pandemic

Depending on the severity and outcome of the pandemic the management team will meet to take appropriate measures to discuss:

strategic planning for the recovery of lost learning time and subsequent management of this recuperation, including possible cancellation of fixtures and tell the management team is clear that the school community has caught up with any potential lost education; school reopening shall be communicated by the school website and e-mail; management team to coordinate counselling and other services if required; reprise of planning.

ADM
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