



Bishop Milner Catholic College

Pandemic Influenza Policy

Agreed by Representatives: September 2020

Review Date: September 2022

1 Background

1.1 Purpose

This policy document seeks to provide a context for influenza pandemic preparedness and response, and aims to provide a framework which will guide and support the college's wider planning for major incidents. It should be read alongside existing major incident and emergency plans, ideally as an appendix to them. It should be reviewed once a year, or when any substantive changes are made to national or local authority guidance.

Definition

1.2 Pandemic Definition and Background

A pandemic is the worldwide spread of a disease, with outbreaks or epidemics occurring in many countries and in most regions of the world. An influenza pandemic is likely to occur when the influenza virus undergoes major change and a new influenza virus emerges, which is markedly different to recently circulating strains, and to which people are not immune. A pandemic will occur if the new virus:-

- infects people (rather than, or in addition to, animals or birds);
- spreads from person to person;
- causes illness in a high proportion of the people infected;
- spreads widely, (most people will have little or no immunity to the new virus and will be susceptible to infection).

1.3 An influenza pandemic is likely to spread rapidly worldwide. It will affect every aspect of the local community for several months; in particular health and social care services, and some of these effects will have long term consequences. There may be little warning. The pandemic may well occur in three 12-week long waves over a period of six-nine months.

Advance planning and preparedness are essential.

1.4 The UK Government Chief Medical Officer and other eminent medical experts worldwide have indicated that they believe that it is not a question of whether there will be another severe influenza pandemic, but when. The current guidance being promulgated both nationally and regionally is that the threat of an influenza pandemic is one of the greatest, if not the greatest public health threat, facing the UK.

2. Risk Assessment

2.1 Business Continuity Plans

This policy is in addition to and not as a replacement for the Business Continuity Plan for the MAC.

2.2 Aims and Objectives

2.2.1 The aim of the policy is:-

To support other public services in managing the crisis whilst maintaining identified key priority services whilst it is judged safe to do so.

2.2.2 The objectives of the policy for the college are, as far as reasonably practicable, to:

- i. Be aware of the developing situation and remain in closed contact with the Council prior to a possible pandemic;
- ii. Assess the needs of the college community and begin to make plans to support them if and when a pandemic outbreak is confirmed
- iii. Provide advice and support for staff who may be at risk, including access to personal protective equipment as and when this becomes available;
- iv. Minimise disruption to the college as far as is safe
- v. Reduce the impact on daily life and business of the college whilst the college remains open;
- vi. Provide accurate, timely and authoritative advice and information to parents, staff and students, based on advice circulated by the Local Authority and its partners.

2.3 Day-to-day decisions about students and staff and the general running of the college community are the responsibility of the Principal working within a statutory framework set out by central government and within guidelines and strategic direction set out by the Academy Committee and the Local Authority. Bishop Milner Catholic College will follow the guidelines circulated by the authority in the event of any declared Pandemic Influenza outbreak for the duration of the crisis.

2.4 In particular, decisions about the internal redeployment of staff, or engaging additional staff, would be ones taken by the Principal in consultation as necessary with the Academy Committee, but without the need for any direct consultation with the Local Authority. However, in terms of major and county-wide disruption, the college will work with other partners as appropriate to help maintain critical services. This would only occur in close liaison with heads, the governing bodies and unions.

2.5 In any time of crisis, the college will try to ensure timely and full communication with parents based on official advice and guidance from the authorities. In any rapid change in the situation (for example, a suspected outbreak in the college), the college would aim to contact parents as fast as possible, preferably by telephone. The college will also use written

communication, via parents' newsletters, to ensure that parents were kept aware of a college closure, other announcement or any change to the arrangements for their child at college. Communication via the college website and/or via public radio announcements using established protocols will also be used to ensure families in getting timely access to information.

3. College Emergency Incident Plans

3.1 The college should have processes in place for receiving and storing current guidance on pandemic flu. In the event of any pandemic affecting the locality, the college will follow the Local Authority, advice on when to close, and when it is safe to re-open. Decisions regarding how to maintain learning provision for students, particularly those approaching national tests and public examinations, will be taken by the college, following advice and guidance from the DFE and the Local Authority.

3.2 Prior to the emergence of any flu pandemic in the UK, the college will receive updates to guidance regarding their duties. The Local Authority's own policy will be communicated to key staff and colleges at this time.

3.3 The college will need to review its pandemic flu policy regularly to ensure that it remains consistent with the Local Authority's Flu Pandemic Plan.

3.4 The college will confirm that this policy takes into account the outline guidance provided for them by the Local Authority. Latest national guidance supports authorities in recommending that all colleges in an area would shut, given the likely vulnerability of children and young people.

4. Priorities for Service Continuity

4.1 The college provides services to students between the ages of 11 and 19. The college and the Local Authority remain under a statutory duty to maintain education services to students in the age range *as far as possible*.

Key Workers

Colleges

4.5 The Principal is the key individual for exercising management and leadership on both a day-to-day and strategic basis, supported by a Senior Leadership Team (SLT). It is anticipated that the Principal together with SLT will plan key actions during a flu pandemic and will also take day-to-day decisions in the light of changing circumstances, any changes in advice and guidance from the Local Authority and the ebb and flow of the pandemic. Arrangements for the management and deployment of college key workers, comprising teachers, classroom assistants, cleaners, site managers and administration officers will be decided by the senior management team. Contingency arrangements may need to be

agreed in advance to prepare for the possibility of losing one or more senior managers to periods of illness during an outbreak.

Other Key workers

4.6 While the college is open other non-college staff employed by the Local Authority supporting the following services may be considered as “Key Workers”:-

- Catering
- ICT Support Services
- Building Maintenance Services
- Student Support Services
- Support for students with special educational needs
- Home-to-college transport escorts

4.7 Arrangements for other personnel and services commissioned directly by colleges, or which use college premises via other agencies, eg Primary Care Trust or early years providers, will be addressed by the Principal and/or other members of the Senior Leadership Team.

Support from Children’s Services Directorate

4.8 It is probable that the decision about colleges remaining open or closing during the emergency will be taken by the Principal or Local Authority, based on all available information and guidance from central government. The Local Authority will support colleges as far as possible during a pandemic with a view to ensuring the very minimum of disturbance to normal activities but in the event of significant disruption, to help ensure appropriate arrangements for key activities such as GCSE courses and national tests. Local Authority provided services judged particularly important to the college in ensuring maximum continuity include:-

- Catering
- ICT Support Services
- Building Maintenance Services
- Student Support Services
- Support for students with special educational needs
- Home-to-college transport escorts

4.9 The college will liaise with the Local Authority for advice in relation to health and medical issues social care issues. The college will follow advice around good hygienic practices before, during and after the emergency, eg in relation to hand washing and the safe isolation of affected students or staff until received by parents/carers.

5. Resilience Measures

Management of the Crisis

5.1 It is anticipated that if the crisis reaches a stage where significant numbers of children and/or college staff were absent from college, or if it is clear that the illness has emerged somewhere within the locality, then a decision will be made to recommend the closure of all colleges.

5.2 In the pre-critical time before any decision to shut all colleges, the colleges would manage its day to day activities in-house. In each college this decision would be taken by a group typically consisting of the Principal and SLT together with a representative of the Academy Committee (usually the Chair of the Committee) based on advice and guidance provided by the Local Authority and/or central government. It is not therefore anticipated that major decisions about college closure or partial closure will be taken by the college acting unilaterally except where the college suspects it has become an early victim of the outbreak.

External Influences

6.1 The following external influences may impact on others' ability to support the college during any such crisis:

- Access to accommodation
- Access to telecommunication
- Access to information and communication technology
- Access to staff
- Access to transportation
- Staff access to child and other care

6.2 The college's Senior Leadership Team should spend time prior to the outbreak of any pandemic identifying potential business continuity issues and seeking ways to overcome them.

7.SLT/ Special Emergency Response Team

7.1 Day by day management of a Flu Pandemic within the college will be co-ordinated by the Senior Leadership Team, supported by other members of staff as appropriate. A Special Emergency Response Team will be established at an early point in any national outbreak, and will include individuals from each work area, eg teachers/year leaders, ancillary staff and the site manager.

Record Keeping

7.2 The college will use its existing systems for logging and recording major incidents that happen both during and outside normal college hours. During a flu pandemic crisis, it is expected that the college will review its record keeping capability and make whatever adjustments it deems necessary to ensure that recording and logging are efficiently carried out.

7.3 Significant decisions made within the college during the outbreak will be fully recorded with the reasoning. This is to protect the college in case decisions are later be challenged and the decision maker called to account for their judgement at civil or criminal proceedings.