



# ST JOSEPH'S SCHOOL PLEASANT POINT

## PANDEMIC PLANNING AND PROCEDURES

### RATIONALE:

St Joseph's School, as part of a wider community, will be prepared to manage a pandemic situation in accordance with Ministry of Education (MOE) and Ministry of Health (MOH) protocols.

**Key Point-** This plan is written while recognising the following Note from the MOE's Pandemic Planning information and the website.

“Some advance warning is likely if a pandemic develops overseas, but that warning period may be very short. Should pandemic influenza spread within New Zealand the education sector would most probably be one of the first sectors to be closed and closures sustained.”

### GUIDELINES:

The Pandemic Manager will begin with the Principal or their delegate.

**Stage 1**      Code White- Information/Advisory  
                    Code Yellow- Standby

- 1) All staff and parent contact lists will be up dated immediately and include
  - a) preferred method of contact eg phone and/or email availability and
  - b) including if possible, a delegated person to act on their behalf.
- 2) Contact “trees” will be established using preferred method of contact
- 3) Implement education programmes with children and staff regarding hand hygiene, coughing and sneezing etiquette, no spitting and staying home when sick or beginning to exhibit symptoms of the disease.
- 4) Distribute letter to parents/caregivers re the current status/situation (see Appendix 1) including-
  - a) Information on illness symptoms as posted by MOH.
  - b) Basic techniques of limiting spread of disease ie hand washing techniques, cough and sneezing etiquette as provided by Public Health Nurses
  - c) The understanding that the expectation will be to keep children home from school if they or **any other member of their household** is sick with symptoms of the illness.
  - d) Statement that if/when the school closes they or a specified delegate will be expected to collect their child/ren **immediately**.
- 5) Review school resources according to current MOH recommendations and guidelines with regards to
  - a) protective wear (eg disposable masks and gloves),
  - b) medicines,
  - c) Isolation Area/sick bay equipment eg mattresses, pillows, linen, bowls, rubbish bins etc (See Appendix 2)
  - d) A physical barrier where person to person contact and social distancing techniques are required eg for school office and Isolation/sick bay area.

- 6) Advise cleaning staff of changes to cleaning procedures that would bring them in line with current cleaning techniques recommended by MOH.
- 7) Cancel all extracurricular activities and cancel planned school/class trips.
- 8) Identify any essential functioning or activities within the school that need to be backed up with alternative arrangements if then school should close.
- 9) Review current recommendations and legal compliance from MOE regarding staff sick leave. (See Appendix 4)

## **Stage 2. Code Red Activation**

- 1) Through consultation with the local District Health Board (DHB) Emergency Planner, local MOE and other agencies, the school's Pandemic Planner will make the decision re school closure.
- 2) Take care of students/staff exhibiting symptoms of the illness.
  1. Set up Isolation Area/sick bay in staff room with appropriate signage (see Appendix 3)
  2. Entry/exit will be via outside sliding doors only.
  3. Limit entry to suitably protected adults or parents/caregivers coming to collect child and siblings.

## **Stage 3 and 4 Code Red Activation**

- 1) Decision made to close the school
- 2) Notify all parents/caregivers to collect all children immediately. Children can make their own way home provided permission has been granted by their parent via phone or email that they can go home and with whom.
- 3) Advise all staff
- 4) Post closure notices on all entry points.
- 5) Inform all other agencies via local media, phone message.
- 6) The delegated Pandemic Planner will collaborate with local agencies in making school facilities available in Pandemic Response efforts.
- 7) Follow all instructions and recommendations from local DHB, MOH, and MOE.

## **Stage 5 Recovery**

1. Notify school reopening via local media, school communication trees
2. Arrange trauma/grief counselling in consultation with MOE Group Special Need Education.
3. Undertake debrief with BOT and senior management as and when appropriate.
4. Maintain safe practices re pandemic spread, symptom recognition and management.

**Reviewed:** April 2013

**Chairperson:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

***This policy should be read in conjunction with the Special Character policy and the school's Mission Statement.***

## Appendix 1

### Sample Letters

***NB Text will need to be changed if the pandemic is not influenza.***

#### Sample letter 1

##### **Letter to parents/caregivers: introduction to pandemic planning**

Dear Parents / Caregivers

The government is preparing plans to protect the country from a possible influenza pandemic. As part of this nation-wide planning, schools have been asked to prepare their own pandemic plans.

Our school has an **emergency management plan** that covers most emergencies, such as fire and earthquake. Using resources provided by the Ministry of Education, we are now updating our emergency management plan to include plans for coping with a pandemic.

We will keep you informed as our **pandemic plan** develops. Meanwhile, you can reduce the risk of your child catching influenza:

- Teach your children the importance of hand washing – especially before meals and after toileting.
- Teach your children to use a disposable tissue when coughing or sneezing.
- Keep your children at home if they have the flu.

An important part of emergency planning is ensuring we have **up-to-date contact details** for all students and staff. Please ensure that you **complete and return the attached form**. Your personal details will not be used for any other purpose other than in the context of emergency management.

Find out more about pandemic planning and 'bird flu' on these websites:

[www.moh.govt.nz/pandemicinfluenza](http://www.moh.govt.nz/pandemicinfluenza) and  
[www.minedu.govt.nz/goto/pandemicplanning](http://www.minedu.govt.nz/goto/pandemicplanning) .

If you have any questions or concerns at this stage, please contact me directly.

Yours sincerely

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Principal

#### Sample letter 2

## Pandemic Stage 2

Dear Parents / Caregivers

The government has announced that New Zealand is stepping up its pandemic influenza response plans. This means that the situation overseas has changed and New Zealand's borders have been tightened in an attempt to stop the virus getting here.

Our school is talking with health and civil defence officials and we have been advised that there is no reason for alarm. Our school will remain open until further notice. Our own pandemic plans mean that we have systems in place to help us cope if anything changes.

The most important thing you can do as parents and caregivers is reinforce healthy messages:

- Teach your children the importance of hand washing and drying – especially before meals and after toileting.
- Teach your children to use a disposable tissue when coughing or sneezing.

We ask that all children showing flu like symptoms be kept home until checked and okayed by a doctor or nurse to return to school. **The symptoms of influenza and how they differ from common cold symptom are included with this letter.**

Our school is updating our **emergency contact details** for all students and staff. Please **complete the attached form and return it to your child's classroom teacher.**

The board of trustees and I are working closely with staff to ensure that all students at our school are kept as safe as possible.

If you have any questions or concerns please contact me directly. Thank you.

Yours sincerely

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Principal

## Appendix 2

### Summary of Influenza Protection Measures

Protection measure	Where applicable
Hand hygiene, cough etiquette, ventilation	Everyone, all the time
Health and safety policies	School, all the time
Social distancing	Everyone, whenever practical stay at least one metre away from other people.
Protective barriers	In situations where regular work practice requires unavoidable, relatively close contact with the public, for example, reception areas.
Disposable surgical mask	Sick people coughing and sneezing Staff having close contact with suspected infected people, for example, in sick bay caring for the sick (this includes first aiders) Also as a possible adjunct to protective barriers.
Disposable particulate respirator masks, eye protection, gloves, gowns, aprons	Health care workers participating directly in close contact patient care when there is a high risk of contact with respiratory secretions, particularly via aerosols (mostly inpatient settings). Unlikely to be necessary in schools.

# INFLUENZA NOTIFICATION

Influenza is a contagious disease.

There is currently an increase in the numbers of people in New Zealand with influenza. To prevent the spread of influenza here:

## **DO NOT ENTER** if you have:

- chills, shivering and a fever (temperature above 38°C)
- onset muscle aches and pains
- sore throat
- dry cough
- trouble breathing
- sneezing
- stuffy or runny nose
- tiredness

If you start to feel ill at school or are showing any of the symptoms listed above, **proceed to the designated isolation area.**

# INFLUENZA NOTIFICATION

Influenza is a contagious disease.

There is currently an increase in the numbers of people in New Zealand with influenza.

To prevent the spread of influenza in this school, you must **tell your teacher** if you have any of the following flu symptoms:

- chills, shivering and a fever
- onset of muscle aches and pains
- sore throat
- dry cough
- trouble breathing
- sneezing
- stuffy or runny nose
- tiredness

Closure notice

# SCHOOL CLOSED

DUE TO THE INFLUENZA PANDEMIC,  
THIS SCHOOL IS CLOSED UNTIL FURTHER  
NOTICE

## DO NOT ENTER

If you have to collect a child please proceed  
to \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**For urgent enquiries, contact**

\_\_\_\_\_



## Appendix 4

### Legislation

#### Compliance with the Health and Safety in Employment Act 1992

In addition to requirements under the Civil Defence Emergency Management Act, pandemic planning will help schools/centres ensure they meet their obligations under the Health and Safety in Employment Act, including:

- *Section 6: All practicable steps*

“Every employer shall take all practicable steps to ensure the safety of employees while at work; and in particular shall take all practicable steps to:

- provide and maintain for employees a safe working environment
- provide and maintain for employees while they are at work facilities for their safety and health...”

- *Section 28: Employees may refuse to perform work likely to cause serious harm*

“An employee may refuse to do work if the employee believes that the work that the employee is required to perform is likely to cause serious harm to him or her....”

In the event of a pandemic, it is recommended that boards of trustees and principals check the Ministry of Health website for the latest advice