

## **Policy and procedures relating to an Epidemic or Pandemic at Barnard Castle School**

### **Addendum relating to Swine Flu**

The school policy and procedures take note of the Health Protection Agency (HPA) Guidance – Version 2.0 (17.05.09, updated 26.05.09) for Boarding Schools during the current swine flu outbreak (WHO Phase 5; UK Containment Phase).

#### **Reducing the Transmission**

The HPA gives clear guidance on how to help reduce the transmission. Based on this advice the school has put the following into action to help reduce the risk of transmission.

##### Communication to pupils:

- the Headmaster has addressed the whole school on the need to use paper tissues when coughing or sneezing, to dispose of the paper tissues in bins provided and to wash hands
- National 'Catch it Bin it Kill it' posters have been put up in all prominent parts of the school, and in every house

##### Communication to staff

- Key points communicated to staff at weekly staff meeting

##### Communication to parents

- Letter to parents explaining procedures; updates on school web site

##### Cleaning surfaces

- the Bursar and Housekeeper have arranged for door handles in the boarding houses and in classrooms to be cleaned with disinfectant daily
- stainless steel surfaces to be washed daily (kitchens and elsewhere)

##### Washing hands

- supply of soap in all toilets to be checked every day
- instructions for clean washing of hands to be put up in every toilet

#### **Recognition of cases and outbreaks**

As stated in the Health Protection Agency Guidelines, the school will inform the Health Protection Unit of any possible outbreaks of flu-like illnesses immediately. This will be done through Dr Welch, the school doctor. The two non-resident nurses in the school medical centre, the resident matrons and all teaching staff are aware of what symptoms to look out for including:

##### Clinical

- history of fever or temperature of 38.0 degrees or more PLUS two of the following:
- cough, runny nose, sore throat, sneezing, headache, limb/join pain

##### Epidemiological

- travel within seven days to a country where there is sustained person to person transmission of the swine influenza virus
- contact within seven days of a probable or confirmed case of swine flu

### **Outbreak control**

As stated in the HPA Guidance – Version 2.0 (17.05.09, updated 26.05.09), were there to be a confirmed outbreak within the school, the school understands that the HPU will draw up an individual risk assessment taking account the specific school circumstances, above all the mixing within the school. The school would work closely with the HPU in this situation.

The school understands that the HPU would give immediate consideration to the identification and antiviral medication of close contacts, and to isolation where appropriate.

The school also understands that as part of its risk assessment, the HPU would consider whether or not the school should be closed temporarily, initially for a period of seven days. The school will work closely with the HPU, not least with respect to boarders who do not have homes in the UK.

The school will communicate to pupils, staff and parents, updating information regularly on the school web site.

If closed, a decision to re-open the school after seven days will be based on an assessment by the Health Protection Agency.

### **Specific control measures**

The school takes note of the specific control measures outlined in the Health Protection Agency Guidelines - Version 2.0 (17.05.09, updated 26.05.09).

These can be found on p4-6 in the Guidance. Key points:

#### **Pupils:**

- pupils who have a flu-like illness within seven days of contacting areas known to be infected or in contact with a probable or confirmed case should stay at home (or be isolated in a boarding house). Parents should inform the school, and contact either their GP or NHS Direct (08454647). The school will inform the HPA:
- pupils will be monitored daily for fever and respiratory symptoms
- symptomatic pupils should be cared for in single rooms or in areas well away from those without symptoms
- symptomatic pupils to be asked whether they will wear a mask or cover their mouth when within 1 metre of other individuals
- symptomatic pupils' clothes/linen/rooms to be washed on a regular basis
- symptomatic pupils to be provided with tissues

#### **Staff**

- if possible, staff caring for affected pupils should not work with asymptomatic pupils
- staff at risk of complications if infected should avoid caring for symptomatic pupils
- symptomatic staff should be excluded from the school until no longer infectious
- staff should clean their hands thoroughly with soap and water before and after any contact with symptomatic pupils or staff and their environment
- staff should use single use plastic aprons when dealing with symptomatic pupils

**b) management of examinations during the present swine flu outbreak**

The school takes note of the specific control measures outlined in the Health Protection Agency Guidelines - Version 2.0 (17.05.09, updated 26.05.09).

These can be found on p6 in the Guidance. Key points:

If the school has had one or more instances of confirmed, probable or possible cases of swine flu more than seven days ago, no special precautions are necessary

If the school has had one or more instances of confirmed, probable or possible cases of swine flu in the last seven days:

- exam candidates with flu-like illness should not attend for an exam. The school will liaise with families concerned about these exams
- all 'well' candidates may attend exams as normal, but will be told not to congregate in large groups
- desks will be set out at least 1 metre apart
- if a pupil becomes unwell during the exam he/she will be removed swiftly and handled in accordance with existing guidelines
- his/her desk and area will be wiped down using relevant cleaner