

Darfield High School Pandemic Procedures

Foreword

This procedure is closely linked to the '**Pandemic Action Plan for Schools**' prepared by the Ministry of Education and should be used in conjunction with that document. A number of the points listed below are repeated at each stage of the Pandemic emergency, in the original document, and are not repeated here as this is a procedure paper. The checklist in the action plan, mentioned above, should be used in the event of such an emergency occurring.

Pandemic Preparation

Ministry of Health: White and Yellow alerts

- 1 A person should be appointed as head of a pandemic control committee within the school. This could be the Principal or a nominee.
- 2 In addition, it is recommended that a local cluster committee be formed to co-ordinate the approach to handling any pandemic. It should be made up of representatives of local schools.
 - a. This committee should co-ordinate the area's approach to handling the pandemic and should liaise with the local medical centres, the DHB, the MoE and the Police.
 - b. A medical advisor for the school should be appointed. (See Schools' Action Plan for advice on this).
- 3 School Emergency lists should be regularly updated and a phone tree should be established. It is recommended that the one used for the buses be adopted.
- 4 Education of parents, students and staff: These groups should be instructed in:
 - a. the symptoms of the pandemic illness
 - b. the importance of good hygiene practices
 - c. the importance of staying at home when sick
 - d. the gravity of the pandemic situation
- 5 Prior to the pandemic's arrival the school's Health curriculum should teach students the appropriate procedures for helping to prevent the spreading of the epidemic viz the importance of handwashing after toilet use and breaks, using tissues to turn taps on and off, coughing into arms rather than hands. Signs should be placed in bathrooms and classrooms and assemblies and notices used to remind students.
- 6 Lessons should be prepared for students to do at home in the event of an infection or the school closing.
- 7 The school should provide soap and paper towels or single use towels in all washroom areas.
- 8 The school should provide for each room a supply of tissues and plastic bags in which to collect them. The bags should have handles for tying up.
- 9 The school should arrange for the regular collection and incineration of these bags.

- 10 The school should consider providing disinfectant in all classrooms for the cleaning of at the end of all lessons.
- 11 The school should provide masks for distribution to students and staff who cannot control their coughing.

International Students

- 1 International students should be monitored closely, particularly those who have travelled abroad recently, for any signs of possible infection.
- 2 Caregivers should be reminded of their responsibilities under the Code of Practice for the Pastoral Care of International Students.
- 3 A list of available interpreters needs to be created to assist with International Students in the event of a pandemic.

The Arrival of the Pandemic Ministry of Health Alert: Red

- 1 When news of the arrival of the pandemic in the Canterbury region is received, it is recommended that all school trips be cancelled. This would include sporting fixtures. Itinerant teachers would stop lessons, advisors, visiting speakers or guests, RTLBs, etc would be discouraged from visiting.
- 2 A person must be appointed who is in a position to diagnose contagion in consultation with a medical authority.
- 3 Any student or staff member identified as having contracted the pandemic virus must be sent home and remain at home until they have been given written clearance by a registered medical practitioner.
- 4 An isolation room should be set up in the school so that those suspected of having contracted the pandemic virus can be isolated and checked.
- 5 When it has been determined that a student/staff member is suffering from 'flu, the person charged with diagnosing contagion should make the decision to send the child/staff member home.
- 6 It may be appropriate to have the school used as a Community Based Assessment Centre in the event of the pandemic arriving. Staff may be able to work in it on a volunteer basis.
- 7 A list needs to be established of staff who are willing to carry out 'alternative duties'.
- 8 The school will need to finalise a contact list for each student detailing at least two emergency contacts per child. This may be needed by Government Agencies.
- 9 The school will need to notify cases and status reports to health authorities through an appointed representative.

The Closure of the School

Ministry of Health Alert: Red

- 1** The school will be closed on advice from either the MoE, DHB or cluster committee in conjunction with the Board of Trustees.
- 2** In the event of school closure, notices will need to be posted at entry points and main buildings.
- 3** In the event of closure, relevant groups should be kept informed through briefings, e-mails, newsletters and websites. They need to be advised of what the local status is (i.e. the current pandemic phase).
- 4** The school's website and answer phone service should be updated at regular intervals with news of developments in the crisis.
- 5** Programmes for learning at home (referred to earlier) need to be organised (e.g. distance learning by e-mail and internet).
- 6** The school will need to collaborate with local agencies in making school facilities available in local response efforts. Such groups might include Civil Defence, District Health Board and the Police.

The Re-opening of the School

Ministry of Health Alert: Green

- 1** The School will be opened on advice of the MoE, DHB or BoT and Principal
- 2** Once the 'all-clear' has been given by the DHB or MoE, the school will need to assess the capacity of staff to resume normal operations.
- 3** The BoT will need to communicate with staff (including teaching, ancillary, teacher aides, itinerants etc), students, parents, other cluster schools and the community by means of email, website postings, telephone tree, newsletters or local publications.
- 4** The school will need to support and monitor the well-being of staff and students. Physical symptoms can remain for up to 21 days with students and eight for adults. The school will also need to watch for symptoms of grief or trauma.
- 5** Depending on how the pandemic has affected the school, it may be necessary to arrange trauma and/ or grief counselling for staff and students.

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