



Responding to an  
Influenza Pandemic Policy

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“Learning together; to be the best we can be”

## 1. Scope

1.1. This policy applies to all academies and business units across Nexus MAT.

## 2. Context

2.1. The World Health Organisation (WHO) advises that there will, sooner or later, be an influenza pandemic. Scientific modelling shows that it usually starts outside the UK and that within 2-3 weeks of a pandemic influenza virus entering the UK it would become widespread. Depending on the severity of the pandemic, 25-50% of the population may become ill at some stage during one or two waves, each lasting 3-4 months, and 50,000-700,000 more people than usual may die.

2.2. Central Government has overall responsibility for contingency planning and for national policy decisions. Local Authorities would communicate information from Central Government to all schools. Depending on the nature of the pandemic virus, children's vulnerability to it and the regions it has reached, schools may be advised to close. It is the Head's responsibility to respond appropriately to the advice received. Schools have been advised to plan for both remaining open and for possible closure during a pandemic. If there is no advice to close the school, it would remain open as long as there were sufficient staff available for the school to function.

2.3. Public Health England have a published Pandemic Influenza Response Plan, and Nexus MAT will be guided by the lead taken nationally and will work closely with the designated statutory agencies to respond to the local context affecting our academies.

## 3. Key Areas

3.1. There are 3 key areas to consider when preparing for and responding to any pandemic:

- Health & Safety
- Communication
- Continuity of Educational Provision

## 4. Health and Safety

- 4.1. Any person, pupil or member of staff, who exhibits 'flu symptoms should remain at home until health is restored.
- 4.2. Any person with a pre-existing chronic health condition<sup>1</sup> or anyone over the age of 65 should be advised to get immunisation.
- 4.3. Influenza or 'flu is a viral infection. It is spread by breathing in air containing the virus or by contaminated hands, and is highly infectious. It mainly affects the nose, throat and lungs.
- 4.4. Reducing spread of the virus can be managed by:
  - 4.4.1. Covering your nose and mouth when coughing or sneezing (preferably with a tissue);
  - 4.4.2. Disposing of dirty tissues promptly and carefully;
  - 4.4.3. Maintaining good basic hygiene (frequent hand washing with soap and water);
  - 4.4.4. Avoiding non-essential travel and large crowds;
  - 4.4.5. Cleaning all hard surfaces frequently (kitchen work surfaces, door handles etc).
- 4.5. Symptoms of influenza include:
  - 4.5.1. Day 1. – Fever/Chills/Muscle ache;
  - 4.5.2. Day 2. – Dry cough/Sore throat/Blocked nose or nausea/vomiting/diarrhoea;
- 4.6. Affected individuals are asked to:
  - 4.6.1. Stay home and rest;
  - 4.6.2. Drink plenty of fluids;
  - 4.6.3. Take Paracetamol/Ibuprofen as directed;
  - 4.6.4. Avoid non-essential contact with people.

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<sup>1</sup> Chronic heart/lung/metabolic disorders (including severe asthma & diabetes), Kidney problems or Immune system impairment (including cancer treatment)

- 4.7. If you are in school and start to have symptoms: you will need to go/ be taken home as soon as possible. Please ensure you follow the academy's sickness absence procedure as a matter of urgency.
- 4.8. Most people recover within one week but tiredness may last 2-3 weeks. Serious illness is usually due to secondary bacterial infection in the lungs (pneumonia/bronchitis), which needs antibiotic treatment.

## 5. Communication

- 5.1. Individual academy websites will provide a central resource for all information relating to a severe influenza outbreak.
- 5.2. Academies will also use standardised methods of communicating with parents i.e Phone/Email/Text Service/Social Media.

## 6. Continuation of Education Provision

- 6.1. It is the MAT's intention to provide educational continuity wherever possible. In the event of an influenza epidemic and closure of sites, all Nexus academies will do all they can to provide pupils and parents with access educational material at home.
- 6.2. Subject to health, teachers will continue to attend school in order to support pupils' remote learning. When numbers of staff absences pose a concern for the continued safe running of the school, the Head may consider closing the school fully, in line with the academy crisis response and business continuity plan.