

4 June, 2009

UPDATE TO INFLUENZA CONTINGENCY PLAN

Dear Grammar Parent or Guardian,

Victoria's swine flu status has been moved from "Contain" to "Sustain". This will have several effects on our community's management of flu, flu-like illness, or a confirmed case of H1N1 virus. We now have confirmation that the effects of the virus are milder than those of the 'winter flu', and are unlikely to cause particularly significant physical hardship to previously healthy students or staff members of our school community.

Many aspects of our management will be unchanged, (listed below), but the following are revised government recommendations which will be incorporated into the School's management plan:

New elements of DHS recommendations:

- In the event of a diagnosed case of H1N1 virus, the school will not close, nor be closed by DHS.
- Diagnosed cases will continue to be quarantined, but now for only three (3) days, with other household members being given the Tamiflu treatment, but not requiring quarantine (unless also diagnosed).
- Children returning to school for the USA, Canada, Japan, Mexico and Panama are requested to remain in home quarantine for 7 days from arrival back to Australia. This list of countries may change, but is accurate as of today.

Existing elements of DHS recommendations:

- Requesting students, staff and parents to frequently wash hands
- To cough or sneeze into tissues or handkerchiefs (and away from others)
- To avoid the sharing of food or drink, and also avoiding unnecessary close physical contact
- **If any students, staff or their families, have the symptoms of the winter flu (as opposed to a common cold) in their home, please do not come to school.** This continues to be critical to prevention, and any students or staff who do present with, or develop symptoms, will be assessed in the Health Centre and then sent off the campus, with parents contacted to collect students immediately, and staff being required to return to their homes. Junior School students will be initially assessed in the Junior School and referred, if necessary, to the Health Centre.

At the conclusion of this update is the DHS suggested message to parents from schools.



Academic delivery:

All students have been reminded that curriculum will be delivered via the Grammar Portal if a student is absent, and any absent student should contact their teachers (again, most conveniently via the Portal to ensure they are up to date with their classes' progress.

I am confident that by adhering to our existing policy on communicable diseases, and seeking greater care with basic hygiene from the School Community, we can minimise any potential disruption caused by this disease.

Yours sincerely,



BRADLEY FRY
Acting Headmaster

DHS suggested communication:

“As you would be aware, Victoria is now in a modified ‘sustain’ phase of its plan to manage the impact of H1N1 Influenza (Human Swine Flu) in our community.

This means that only children confirmed by a doctor as having the virus will be quarantined. Those sharing a house with a confirmed case will not be required to enter quarantine, unless they too are confirmed as having the virus.

Children who may have been in contact with a confirmed case will generally no longer be quarantined and children’s services will no longer be partially or fully closed unless there are exceptional circumstances.

Children who are feeling unwell should remain at home. Children and families with flu-like symptoms are advised to seek medical attention and limit close contact with others.

If your child becomes ill at the centre, we will contact you immediately and ask that you arrange to collect your child. Please check that your contact details are up-to-date.

It should be remembered, however, that the virus has so far been mild and can be compared to our normal winter flu.

Good general hygiene remains the best defence against the flu and families should continue to ensure children undertake regular hand washing and cover their nose and mouth if sneezing and coughing, where possible. This is being practised at our centre.

Specific concerns from parents about H1N1 Influenza can be referred to any of the following:

- **The Swine Influenza Hotline Tel. 180 2007**
- **Nurse-on-Call Tel. 1300 606 024** – for expert health information and advice (24 hours, 7 days)
- **Your doctor (GP)** – if you have an influenza-like illness (fever, cough and fatigue) and have travelled to Mexico, USA, Canada, Japan or Panama in the past seven days.

The Department of Human Services is also continuing to ask parents of children returning from USA, Canada, Japan, Mexico and Panama to voluntarily keep their children home for seven (7) days from arrival back in Australia. This is a further precautionary measure to assist in managing the further spread of the virus.”