

GODOLPHIN SCHOOL**Policy for dealing with a Pandemic**

To be reviewed by: Deputy Head, Pastoral and Estates Manager

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Next Review: August 2023

Refer also to: Crisis Management Policy

Godolphin Pandemic Policy

Introduction

This document provides guidance for Godolphin's response to any pandemic. The World Health Organisation (WHO) raises an alert to Level 5 if they feel a global pandemic is imminent. If this occurs this guidance must be read in conjunction with regular information updates being issued by Public Health England (PHE). It can be expected that the Health Protection Team will liaise closely with schools, should the threat be considered to be significant.

Responsibilities

The Head and Senior Leadership Team will coordinate the school's response to the threat, in consultation with the Governors.

The School Business Manager and Deputy Heads will monitor the regular information updates issued by the appropriate authorities and direct and monitor preventative measures and responses within the school. The Health Centre is to maintain regular communication with the school's medical advisors and appropriate authorities and to consult with the Senior Leadership Team on appropriate actions to be taken.

Preventative measures

Limiting transmission of a pandemic in the school setting requires a range of measures which can be considered as a hierarchy of controls. Administrative controls are implemented at an organisational level to help prevent the introduction of infection and to control and limit the transmission of infection. Next environmental/engineering controls will, through effective environmental cleaning and adequate ventilation, physically reduce exposure to infection. Finally, the use of personal protective equipment (PPE) will protect staff, patients and visitors. The principles below are listed according to such a hierarchy. (Note that this list is not exhaustive but includes key principles and illustrates a useful approach to infection control.)

Administrative controls:

- Timely recognition of infected cases
- Maintaining separation between infected and non-infected pupils, including appropriate pupil triage by Health Centre nursing staff.
- Occupational health arrangements, including immunisation of appropriate and available staff
- Educating staff, patients and visitors about infection control, including the importance of good respiratory and hand hygiene
- Instructing staff members with symptoms to stay at home and not come in to work and to seek medical advice from GP/111

Environmental/engineering controls:

- Environmental cleaning
- Adequate ventilation
- Waste disposal.

PPE controls:

- Using PPE appropriately according to the risk of exposure to the virus (gowns and FFP3 standard high level protection masks available in Health Centre. NB There may be supply issues during a pandemic)
- Good hand hygiene practices.

The best protection is a high level of personal hygiene and this must be constantly emphasised with all staff and students. Hand wash and alcohol gel is available throughout the school; should an alert be raised the Health Centre, Boarding Houses and staff work areas will be provided with further alcohol gel and other medicines as necessary.

Daily cleaning occurs throughout the school and should the alert be raised, particular attention will be paid to hard surfaces and areas such as door handles where there are multiple users and infections could spread.

Any staff or student displaying relevant symptoms (see Appendix A for response to different illnesses) should contact the Health Centre, who will decide whether that person needs to be referred to the School Doctor, to 111 or whether a 999 ambulance needs to be called. Up to six pupils can be isolated in the Health Centre but this is dependent on the type of illness suspected (see Appendix A). Should there be a requirement to provide further isolation of resident staff or students, a boarding house may be used for this purpose.

If an outbreak is occurring in a country where pupils will be returning to for a holiday period, discussions will be had with parents regarding the risks and pupils will need to be screened and cleared for travel back to the UK before their return.

Existing policies on illness and staff sickness apply.

School Closure

Should a pandemic be declared by WHO, it is possible that the school or a specific boarding House might be directed to close. However, whilst it is preferable that the school is closed only on the advice of the local authority, the Governors might decide to close the school as a protective measure. Should the school need to close, Godolphin's Crisis Plan would be actioned and the provision of education will continue by electronic means.

Parents of overseas pupils are required to supply details of a guardian in the UK who is available to provide accommodation in such circumstances.

Parent Contract and Insurances

Under the Parent Contract, Parents are obliged to comply with the school's request to keep students away from School due to a health risk either presented by their child to others, or to their child by others or by reason of a virus, pandemic, epidemic or other risk, should it be necessary.

The Parent Contract provides for events outside of the School's or parents' control (ie 'Force Majeure'), which includes pandemic or epidemic of any disease. In these circumstances, the school will communicate with all families about the nature and extent of the event. Provided the school has acted reasonably and prudently to prevent and/or minimise the effect of the event the school will not be responsible for not performing its obligations which are prevented

or delayed by the event. The School will try, during the continuation of the event, to continue to provide educational services including by providing appropriate educational services remotely.

At this point, the parents are still liable for fees, which will not be reduced for absence.

If the school was prevented from performing all of its obligations for more than 6 months, parents would be notified and they would be entitled to end the contract without giving a term's notice or paying a term's fees in lieu of notice.

The School Business Manager is responsible for liaison with the school's insurers

- Business Interruption cover for infectious diseases. There is a limited list of diseases which would trigger business interruption insurance.
- Public Liability – the school is expected to take all reasonable precautions which means following advice from relevant bodies such as local authorities, including trips to/from affected areas.
- Travel insurance - disinclination to travel is not covered by the insurance policy. If official Foreign Office advice is to avoid all but essential travel, or not to travel, and the trip goes ahead, the policy would be invalid. Should the Foreign Office advice be to avoid all but essential travel, or not to travel this would be covered under cancellation.

There will be no refund or waiver of fees in the event that a term is shortened, the student is released home early or quarantined at home for health (including precautionary) reasons, except at the discretion of the school and then only in exceptional circumstances.

Appendix A – Response to a Specific Illness

Ebola (severe viral haemorrhagic fever or VHF)

For Ebola, the incubation period can be anything between 2 to 21 days. Should the likelihood of an Ebola outbreak be significantly high, the school will be alerted by Public Health England.

In the early stages (0-3 days) symptoms include:

- Fever
- Severe [headache](#)
- Joint and muscle pains
- [Sore throat](#)
- Intense muscle weakness

In these early stages if fever <38 degrees C and symptoms mild, the level of virus is likely to be low and unlikely to pose a risk to others. In the following 3-12 days, symptoms can worsen and include the following

- Diarrhoea
- Vomiting
- Stomach pain
- Hiccups
- Severe diarrhoea and vomiting
- Bleeding

Risk of infection at this time is very high and all body fluids (blood, vomit, faeces, saliva, and urine) are infectious. At this stage the pupil needs 999 transfer to hospital. Ensure Paramedics are made aware of recent country of travel in the early stages of the 999 call.

Careful monitoring of staff, parents and students who are known to have travelled to infected areas will be undertaken. If an outbreak is known to have occurred, pupils and their families will be encouraged to reduce risk of exposure to this illness by not travelling to the affected areas.

If an uncontained outbreak of Ebola occurs while a student is at home in any country, they will not be able to return to school after entering the UK, for 21 days. This will mean that the pupil will have to stay with a Guardian for this complete time and will need a medical assessment communicated to the Health Centre prior to return to school. These measures are taken to ensure that a pupil travelling back from any country outside the UK where an outbreak of Ebola has occurred is fully quarantined until there is absolutely no risk at all to the wider school population here at Godolphin.

Any girl who has travelled abroad to an affected area prior to the outbreak being confirmed and subsequently presents with a fever and symptoms of either sickness or respiratory distress will also be isolated until tests have been carried out.

Norovirus (winter vomiting bug)

Norovirus is a stomach bug that causes vomiting and diarrhoea. It can be very unpleasant, but usually goes away in about 2 days. The symptoms start suddenly within 1 to 2 days of being infected.

The main symptoms are:

- Nausea
- Diarrhoea
- Vomiting
- High temperature (>38C)
- Headache
- Aching arms and legs

Treatment includes the following:

- Rest
- Fluids (such as water or squash – taking small sips if feeling nauseous)
- Eat when able – little and often
- Paracetamol

Norovirus should clear up of its own accord with no need to seek medical assistance, while being mindful of the risk and signs of dehydration. Those affected should stay off school or work until symptoms have stopped for 48 hours as during this time the person will still be infected. Norovirus is highly infective and can be passed from person to person by:

- Close contact
- Touching surfaces or objects that have the virus on them, then touching mouth
- Eating food that's been prepared or handled by someone with norovirus

Washing hands frequently with soap and water is the best way to prevent it spreading. Alcohol hand gels **do not** kill norovirus. Due to how infective Norovirus is, initially a pupil will be isolated in the Health Centre or in House if the pupil has a single room and this is assessed as the lesser risk to others. Parents will be called to collect their child in order to minimise the risk of spreading Norovirus throughout the school.

Coronavirus COVID-19

Novel coronavirus (COVID-19) is a new strain of coronavirus first identified in Wuhan City, China in January 2020. As COVID-19 has only recently been identified, there is currently limited information about the precise routes of transmission therefore guidance is based on knowledge from previous outbreaks of mutated Coronavirus. The incubation period for COVID-19 is 14 days.

From what we know about other coronaviruses, spread of COVID-19 is most likely to happen when there is close contact (within 2 metres) with an infected person. It is likely that the risk increases the longer someone has close contact with an infected person.

There are 2 routes by which people could become infected:

- secretions can be directly transferred into the mouths or noses of people who are nearby (within 2 metres) or could be inhaled into the lungs
- it is also possible that someone may become infected by touching a surface or object that has been contaminated with respiratory secretions and then touching their own mouth, nose, or eyes (such as touching a doorknob or shaking hands then touching own face).

Typical symptoms of coronavirus include loss of taste and/or smell, temperature, aching body and a persistent cough that may progress to a severe pneumonia causing shortness of breath and breathing difficulties.

Generally, coronavirus can cause more severe symptoms in people with weakened immune systems, older people, and those with long-term conditions like diabetes, cancer and chronic lung disease. There is no evidence that children are more affected than other age groups.

If a case of COVID-19 (pupil, student or staff) is confirmed at Godolphin, the current government guidance and advice will be followed.

[Schools COVID-19 operational guidance - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/operational-guidance/schools-covid-19-operational-guidance) (updated Feb 2022)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/pandemic-flu-public-health-response> (accessed 24/08/22)

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/357401/Infection_control_in_healthcare_settings.pdf (accessed 24/08/22)

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/norovirus/> (accessed 24/08/22)