



From the Head Master Dr. Ian Walker
Lay Canon Emeritus of Rochester Cathedral

11th May 2009

HUMAN FLU EMERGENCY MAY 2009

Dear Parents & Guardians,

I am writing to inform you about special measures we may need to take because of this worldwide emergency. Information and the School's Policy are available on the School website. I also enclose two information sheets. Please consult these together with this letter. The School remains determined to balance the requirements of local health and government authorities in this matter with the well-being of our pupils. Boarders are a major part of our School! Boarder parents and guardians are welcome to contact the School by e-mail for advice or enquiries on walker@kings-school-rochester.co.uk Parents and guardians of boarders need to know the following:

Boarders who develop flu-like symptoms at School will have to leave School. UK based boarders will need to go home. Overseas boarders may either go home or go to stay with guardians. It is hoped they may stay with guardians, if going home will mean protracted absence from School since this will disrupt your child's education.

Boarders returning to School from an infected area must arrive in the UK ten days before they return to school and be free of symptoms for that period.

All boarders returning to School from home or from their guardians must see Sister (the School Nurse) before returning to their House.

In the event that the School has to close for a period, all boarders must return home or to guardians. Once again, it is hoped overseas pupils will stay, at least initially, with guardians.

The School website (<http://www.kings-school-rochester.co.uk>) will be kept up to date and parents & guardians should consult this for information. Please note there is also a link on the Website to a Boarders' Area with information specifically for boarder parents and guardians. Very exceptionally, boarders may be accommodated at School during closure. However, this will only be in very exceptional circumstances agreed by me as Head Master. Parents and guardians should not depend on this when making decisions.

British Government advice has stated that parents of overseas boarders should be offered the opportunity to have their children sent home immediately now that the World Health Organisation Pandemic Alert has reached Phase 5. This may disrupt badly a pupil's education but parents wishing to exercise this option are requested to contact Mr Chris White, the Head of Boarding (cjw@ksr.org.uk).

The role of guardians is crucial in this emergency. Parents who for any reason do not have up-to-date and working arrangements in place are, of course, risking that their sons and daughters may experience huge difficulties. Please contact guardians to make sure they are ready to help!

Yours sincerely,



FLU EMERGENCY INFORMATION SHEET FOR PARENTS

Introduction. This sheet is available to inform parents of how the School is planning to deal with the current emergency. The School has a *King's School Flu Policy* available to view in full on the School's Internet site.* There is a government leaflet for parents at http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/_doc/13528/informationforparents.doc The School is keeping the situation under review in consultation with local and national authorities and the School Medical Officer and Nurse. The Head Master, Dr. Walker, meets regularly with senior staff and will continue to do so frequently to ensure the School's response to flu ensures the safety and care of pupils, their families and School staff whilst ensuring as fully as possible the continuity of pupils' teaching and learning.

Infection Control

When at School, pupils must:

- wash their hands using soap and water frequently,
- bring tissues to School,
- cover their mouth when coughing or sneezing – using a tissue,
- throw dirty tissues away quickly into bins.

In the event of a child being ill, please ensure the following if your child exhibits any of coughs, sneezes, runny noses, headaches, muscular discomfort and general debility:

- **Sufferers of these symptoms** at home must not come to School but must contact the School urgently to pass on details of their symptoms.
- **Sufferers of these symptoms** during the School day must see Sister (or contact her) and be sent home.
- **Please ensure our contact details** for parents during the day are up to date.
- **Never send your child to school to see the Nurse** if you think he or she may be ill: keep your child at home.
- **No child should return to School** until free of symptoms for ten days.
- **On returning, they should report to the School nurse** before anything else.

Emergency measures These will be put in place if illness or absence at School makes them necessary or if local or national authorities advise them; they may include the suspension of certain activities such as visits or even partial or complete closure of the School (although King's will always remain open if it is safe to do so).

Communication Please log on to the School website where information will be available. Here will be up-to-date details and advice. Please use this and do not depend on messages from pupils or friends. Such advice is well intentioned but often inaccurate. *The School website is:

www.kings-school-rochester.co.uk

Telephones or letters may also be used but regular use of the website is the best way to ensure you are kept in the picture!

British Government Department for Children, Families & Schools information for schools with boarders.

In past flu pandemics infection rates in closed communities such as boarding schools have been significantly higher than attack rates in the general community. We also recognise that boarding schools face logistical tasks additional to those in day-schools, in the event of school closures; issues may be different for different groups, e.g. maintained boarding schools, or special schools. We urge boarding schools to put in place contingency plans for closure including dispersal of pupils, and to revise these urgently when a pandemic is imminent.

Boarding schools should consider to what extent they can supply an education service remotely. Schools should strongly advise all families of their pupils who are based outside the UK to put in place a guardianship arrangement and those guardians are aware of their responsibilities, in the event that their child is unable to return home in a pandemic which might involve the closure of boarding schools.

Where a pupil from an overseas family has no guardianship arrangement in the UK, the school should, at the start of WHO alert phase 4 (see annex i), ask the parents whether they wish immediately to repatriate the pupil. Any pupil remaining in the UK into phase 4 would risk being unable to travel overseas at phase 5 or phase 6, due to possible disruption of international travel.

If a pandemic were to arrive in an area during term-time, and if a school closed following Government advice, some pupils may be unable to travel home and may not have guardianship arrangements in place. In these circumstances the school should continue to accommodate those pupils, and should split them into small groups to limit social mixing, this would also require the school to consider its staffing plans.

If a pandemic starts during a school holiday and schools do not re-open because of Government advice to close, pupils should remain with their families. If a holiday period starts during a pandemic, schools might require guardians to take care of any pupil unable to return home.

DCFS will publish infection control guidance for boarding schools on the same web pages as this guidance: www.teachernet.gov.uk/humanflupandemic.