

Maronite College of the Holy Family

Pandemic Plan



Maronite College of the Holy Family policies have a commitment to Maronite Catholic ethos and values, and should be read in conjunction with other policies and procedures and with relevant legislation.

POLICY REVIEW

The policy will be reviewed not less frequently than once every three years.

POLICY DATES

<i>Implemented</i>	27/3/2020	<i>Reviewed</i>	N/A
<i>Next Review Due</i>	AS NEEDED		

POLICY AUTHORISATION

Sr Irene Boughosn
PRINCIPAL

POLICY DETAILS

Policy Number: 0075

Policy Version: 0001

Reference: NSW Government Education Influenza Pandemic Plan Health and Safety
Directorate March 2020

INTRODUCTION

Maronite College of the Holy Family is committed to ensuring a safe and healthy working and learning environment for staff, students and visitors.

In line with this commitment, the College must plan for possible events or emergencies that might impact on students and staff, so it can respond quickly and effectively if required.

The College's plan has been developed to ensure the College's preparations and planning is consistent with national and state plans in the event of a pandemic.

A pandemic is an occurrence of a strain of virus on a global scale. The potential threat of a pandemic presents challenges for Australian society. Should it eventuate, a pandemic would arise rapidly, spread quickly and would likely come in waves. If this occurred, many Australians would be affected by the pandemic.

Through an appropriate level of advanced preparation, the College aims to put systems in place that can be activated, if required, to effectively respond in the event of a pandemic.

WHAT ARE INFLUENZA/CORONAVIRUS PANDEMICS?

The influenza virus is very common amongst humans. Its symptoms, such as chills, high temperatures, tiredness and breathing difficulties, are well known. At any one time there are several strains of influenza virus circulating amongst humans, birds and animals, in various parts of the world. Some strains of the virus are peculiar to bird or animal species and some are peculiar to humans. Some strains of the virus pass between different species of birds, animals and humans, with varying degrees of efficiency. Influenza/coronavirus pandemics occur when a new strain emerges to which no one is immune. In the absence of immunity, a new influenza/coronavirus strain can rapidly spread across the globe. An influenza/coronavirus pandemic would develop quickly, and may cause widespread illness and death. It would also generate high levels of fear and anxiety in the community. It will require full mobilisation of the community to respond to the emergency. In recent years, the outbreak of a highly pathogenic avian influenza (bird flu) has led to the World Health Organisation recommending countries prepare for a possible influenza pandemic.

For further information concerning pandemic influenza, visit the Federal Department of Health website at: <http://www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/ohp-ahmppi.htm>

WHAT WILL THE COLLEGE BE RESPONSIBLE FOR IN THE CONTEXT OF WHOLE OF GOVERNMENT PLANNING?

The College will cooperate with relevant government agencies to slow the spread of the pandemic through a range of planned measures such as communicating information and alerts to staff and parents and quarantine. Implement prevention procedures to protect staff and students from becoming sick as much as possible. Support the NSW community by reinforcing messages from NSW Health to staff, students and parents/carers. Continue to provide educational services, either at the College or through appropriate home schooling arrangements as necessary. Prepare for restoring the College to return to normal through an effective recovery phase.

A decision for the College to temporarily cease operations will be made on the recommendation of NSW Health depending on the emerging situation. If the pandemic becomes widespread in Australia and no vaccine is yet available, then it is possible that all schools will temporarily cease operations for a period of time as part of the pandemic response, and to limit the spread of infection.

The College will need to make provisions for the likelihood of increased numbers of staff being absent from work due to illness. In some areas, parents may wish to keep their children at home. If the College temporarily ceases operations, the College will need to ensure ongoing schooling and education takes place, through online or other appropriate mechanisms. The College will also need to prepare to provide appropriate support and counselling during and after the pandemic.

PANDEMIC MANAGEMENT PLAN

This plan sets out the level of preparation, decision making and response actions required by the College should a pandemic occur. It recognises the need for flexibility depending on the circumstances arising during a pandemic. The actions set out in the management plan are based on the key actions by phase set out in the Australian Health Management Plan for Pandemic Influenza.

Key principles of the pandemic plan are:

- The College maintains compliance with key health and safety requirements through its Infection Control Procedures;
- As the provider of education and consistent with its commitment to support the health and safety of all staff and students working in the College, the College will work with lead agencies to implement appropriate management strategies' across all phases of a pandemic;
- Good communication and co-operation are recognised as key elements in effectively implementing action in response to a pandemic; and
- Response will be proportionate to the level of risk, taking into account advice from relevant authorities such as NSW Health, in regards to matters such as population risk and severity, e.g. to reduce the risk to vulnerable people.

Key actions by phase

The Australian Health Management Plan for Pandemic Influenza (April 2014) divides action in relation to a pandemic into several key stages.

The College's pandemic plan is based on these key stages, aligning with the national approach but reflecting the inter-dependencies and operational decisions that will be required by the College to effectively respond in the period leading up to, during and after a pandemic.

The Australian Health Management Plan for Pandemic Influenza (April 2014)

Preparedness

Monitor the emergence of diseases with pandemic potential

Ensure resources are available and ready for rapid response

Response	Standby	Identify and characterize the nature of the disease <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare to commence enhanced arrangements • Communicate to raise awareness and confirm governance arrangements
	Action	Action is divided into two groups of activity Initial – prepare and support health system needs; manage initial cases; identify nature of disease in the Australian context, provide information to support best practice and manage risk of exposure, support effective governance Targeted – support and maintain quality care, ensure proportionate response, communicate to build confidence in community; provide a coordinated and consistent response
	Stand down	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support and maintain quality care • Cease activities that are no longer needed • Monitor for second wave of outbreak • Communicate to support return to normal business services • Evaluate systems and revise plans and procedures

MCHF PANDEMIC MANAGEMENT PLAN

The following action plan sets out key steps to be considered and taken, as appropriate, in the event of a pandemic. As recognised in the Australian Health Management Plan for Pandemic Influenza, it is important that plans may be updated or amended to ensure that there is flexibility to respond to emerging or changing situations.

Australian Phase	Description of actions at the national level	Key actions for the College	Responsibility
PREPAREDNESS	Monitor the emergence of diseases with pandemic potential. Ensure resources are available and ready for rapid response.	Monitor NSW Health as required e.g. to update plan, seek comments on draft plan <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor NSW Health at the local level in relation to the outbreak of illnesses and appropriate infection control precautions • Participate in any discussion or planning • Consider pandemic scenario as part of its business continuity planning/ exercises • Discuss online learning options for large numbers of students in the event of social distancing being implemented • Clarify arrangements if staff are to work from home or are absent from work 	Executive
STANDBY	Identify and characterise the	Consultation and planning <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor NSW Health for updates, including identified clinical severity, transmission, and any 	Executive

	<p>nature of the disease. Prepare to commence enhanced arrangements. Communicate to raise awareness and confirm governance arrangements.</p>	<p>other relevant information about the virus or pandemic</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cooperate with NSW Health with respect to circulation of any communication • Participate in any education and WHS planning committees • Consider the notification in terms of the school year and any potential areas of major disruption e.g. HSC <p>Communications and Monitoring</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor the development of the illness/ and or development of vaccine • Consider need to notify staff of key actions including implementation of infection control. Provide accurate and up to date advice as required, in consultation with NSW Health • Identify essential workforce requirements within The College in the event of a pandemic. 	
ACTION (INITIAL)	<p>Prepare and support health system needs. Manage initial cases.</p> <p>Identify nature of disease in the Australian context.</p> <p>Provide information to support best practice and manage risk of exposure.</p>	<p>Planning and reporting</p> <p>Monitor the pandemic issues and brief the College Board.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As part of the Business Continuity Plan, consider a range of factors identified in relation to pandemic planning • Monitor the situation in the event that it should escalate. • Continue to use the Excursions Policy including approval processes for school excursions and conducting risk assessments. • In the event of World Health Organisation issuing alert for Global Phase 4 or above, provide initial advice to staff. • Review all excursions overseas to affected countries. Following information provided by NSW Health, provide advice to staff and students likely to travel overseas with information on how to prevent them from getting ill • Regularly check travel advisories from DFAT • Consider issuing specific advice to areas of the College flagging the need to prepare in the event of a pandemic. <p>Communications and monitoring</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop strategy for updating website content for pandemic information • Develop communication strategy for advice on emerging issues and directions • Disseminate health information concerning infection control through appropriate policies and procedures and in line with government departments 	Executive

<p>ACTION (TARGETED)</p>	<p>Support quality and maintained care.</p> <p>Ensure proportionate response.</p> <p>Communicate to build confidence in community</p> <p>Provide a coordinated and consistent response</p>	<p>Targeted response</p> <p>Monitor NSW Health, the lead agency responsible for pandemic management, to implement all appropriate infection control measures</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop arrangements for alternative curriculum delivery • If advised by NSW Health, consider purchase and appropriate access of personal protective equipment <p>Escalation of actions proportionate to situation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Issue updated information, including specific advice to Board Directors • Each Leadership team follow up and provide necessary support • Act on all Federal and State government directives concerning workforce management as appropriate. Consider if some workers should not attend work. Discourage non-essential workers from attending work • Conduct major communications campaign with parents and carers including website updates of advice • Consider increased social distancing and the possibility of closure. • Consider and arrange, as appropriate, infection control measures (such as additional cleaning of facilities) • Distribute personal protective equipment and ensure use. • Put in place security arrangements in case of College closure • Identify response support capabilities for the community during a pandemic. <p>Additional actions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage home quarantining for suspected cases • Non-essential workers to stay at home (access to leave or through use of stand down provisions) • Maintain regular advice to staff through website • Establish a register of all staff and students who have contracted the virus through existing incident notification systems • Secure sites where work has been suspended • Plan for business recovery taking into account the potential for further waves of infection. 	<p>Executive Leadership Teams</p>
<p>STAND DOWN</p>	<p>Support and maintain quality care.</p> <p>Cease</p>	<p>Recovery actions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where advised by NSW Health, review staffing arrangements • Advise parents and carers of return to school arrangements, if applicable 	

	<p>activities that are no longer needed.</p> <p>Monitor for second wave of outbreak.</p> <p>Communicate to support return to normal business services.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Although immune staff may be protected from an initial strain, a variant may cause them to catch a mutated virus. Maintain social distancing and personal health preventative measures <p>Action repair and recovery of critical services as a matter of urgency.</p> <p>Implement plan for resumption to full service delivery</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arrange vaccines for staff, if available, to provide protection • Work with health authorities to assist student population in terms of immunisation <p>Additional Support</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arrange counselling where required due to the impact of the pandemic <p>Review and evaluation</p> <p>The College is to conduct a formal evaluation and provide a report for future action</p>	
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RISKS TO DELIVERY AND MITIGATION STRATEGIES

Risk factors	Mitigation
<p>Lack of communication concerning pandemic</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multiple major impacts on infrastructure (e.g. health, transport, financial) • Industrial issues arising concerning arrangements during pandemic 	<p>Stay in contact with relevant agencies concerning updates on the progress of the pandemic</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project and program plans and governance controls established • Consultation processes with unions implemented from an early stage • Online learning options explored
<p>External dependencies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unions – PSA, Teachers Federation • NSW Health • Other emergency services e.g. Ambulance, Police • Safe Work NSW • CCI Insurance 	<p>Policy Dependants</p> <p>DET NSW Pandemic Plan National and State Influenza pandemic plans</p>

FURTHER INFORMATION

Australian Health Management

https://www.health.gov.au/?utm_source=health.gov.au&utm_medium=callout&utm_content=404&utm_campaign=digital_transformation

NSW Health

<https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/>

NSW Influenza Pandemic Plan

https://www1.health.nsw.gov.au/pds/ActivePDSDocuments/PD2016_016.pdf

NSW Department of Education

<https://education.nsw.gov.au/>

Headspace

<https://headspace.org.au/young-people/how-to-cope-with-stress-related-to-covid-19/>

Beyond Blu

<https://www.beyondblue.org.au/get-support/national-help-lines-and-websites>

Lifeline

<https://www.lifeline.org.au/about-lifeline/about-lifeline-overview>

Emerging Minds

<https://emergingminds.com.au>