

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>	19/8/2020
<i>Next Review Due</i>	AS NEEDED		
POLICY AUTHORISATION			
Sr Irene Boughosn PRINCIPAL			
POLICY DETAILS			
Policy Number: 0075			
Policy Version: 0002			
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.

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.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Executive team participates in preparation <p>The Principal will:</p> <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 - Have arrangements in place to inform the MCHF Board of Directors of any developments <p>Business Manager will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ensure pandemic scenario is part of the College Business Continuity Plan - Ensure maintenance team have contacts in the event of deep cleaning requirements <p>Liaison Officer will have the following policies in place:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Work from Home Policy if staff are to work from home - MCHF Pandemic Plan - WHS Pandemic Plan <p>Head of Primary and Secondary will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Develop with the assistance of the IT Manager online learning options for large numbers of students in the event of social distancing being implemented 	Executive

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Have a list of casual staff availability in the event high risk staff cannot attend work - Have templates prepared for communication to staff and parents in the event of a Pandemic announcement. 	
STANDBY	<p>Identify and characterise the nature of the disease. Prepare to commence enhanced arrangements. Communicate to raise awareness and confirm governance arrangements.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Executive team participates in consultation and communication <p>The Principal will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Monitor NSW Health for updates, including identified clinical severity, transmission, and any other relevant information about the virus or pandemic - Cooperate with NSW Health with respect to circulation of any communication <p>The Business Manager will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Communicate with relevant administration staff and maintenance staff their responsibilities in the event of a Pandemic announcement <p>The Liaison Officer will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - convene the WHS committee to monitor the development of the illness and update WHS /Pandemic Policies and Procedures as needed <p>Head of Primary and Secondary will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Provide accurate and up to date advice to teaching staff and parents as required, in consultation with NSW Health - Communicate with relevant administration staff their responsibilities in the event of a Pandemic announcement - Consider the notification in terms of the school year and any potential areas of major disruption e.g. HSC - Identify essential teacher workforce requirements within the College in the event of a pandemic. 	Executive
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>Executive team participates planning initial response</p> <p>The Principal will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - monitor the pandemic issues and brief the College Board. - Monitor the situation if it should escalate. - Consider issuing specific advice to areas of the College flagging the need to prepare in the event of a pandemic. <p>The Business Manager will:</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 <p>The Liaison Officer will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Disseminate health information concerning infection control through appropriate policies and procedures and in line with government department advise - Communication strategy for all external visitors/workers to relevant administration team on emerging issues and directions <p>The Head of Primary and secondary will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 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. 	Executive

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 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 - Provide information to update website content for educational response to the pandemic situation 	
ACTION (TARGETED)	<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>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Executive Team begin targeted response: Escalation of actions proportionate to situation <p>The Principal will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Implement advice from NSW Health, the lead agency responsible for pandemic management, to implement all appropriate infection control measures including but not limited to social distancing, close contacts, casual contacts, school activity restrictions, cleaning and hygiene, PPE, and school closures - Issue updated information, including specific advice to Board Directors - 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 <p>The Business Manager will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - If advised by NSW Health, approve purchase and appropriate access of personal protective equipment - Arrange with Maintenance to organise, as appropriate, infection control measures (such as additional cleaning of facilities) - Instruct maintenance to secure sites where work has been suspended - Plan for business recovery considering the potential for further waves of infection <p>The Liaison officer will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Put in place security arrangements in case of College closure - Establish a register of all staff and students who have contracted the virus through the NSW Health notification system <p>The Head of Primary and Secondary will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Implement alternative curriculum delivery - Work with relevant Leadership team to provide necessary curriculum support - Provide administration staff with educational information for parents and carers including website updates of advice - Maintain regular advice to parents and staff 	<p>Executive Leadership Teams</p>
STAND DOWN	<p>Support and maintain quality care.</p> <p>Cease activities that are no longer needed.</p> <p>Monitor for second wave of outbreak.</p>	<p>The Executive team will implement recovery actions</p> <p>The Principal will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Where advised by NSW Health, review staffing arrangements for vulnerable employees working from home - 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 as required by NSW Health. <p>The Business manager will:</p>	<p>Executive</p>

	Communicate to support return to normal business services.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Communicate to the Executive the strategy included in the Business Continuity plan for resumption to full-service delivery <p>The Liaison Officer will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Arrange for the provision of counselling services where required due to the impact of the pandemic - Lead the process of a formal evaluation of the Pandemic Plan and provide a report for future action <p>The Head of Primary and Secondary will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Advise parents and carers of return to school arrangements, if applicable - Arrange vaccines for staff, if available, to provide protection - Work with health authorities to assist student population in terms of immunisation 	
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RISKS TO DELIVERY AND MITIGATION STRATEGIES

Risk factors	Mitigation
Lack of communication concerning pandemic <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multiple major impacts on infrastructure (e.g. health, transport, financial) • Industrial issues arising concerning arrangements during pandemic 	Stay in contact with relevant agencies concerning updates on the progress of the pandemic <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
External dependencies	Policy References
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unions – PSA, Teachers Federation • NSW Health • Other emergency services e.g. Ambulance, Police • Safe Work NSW <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CCI Insurance 	DET NSW Pandemic Plan National and State Influenza pandemic plans

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](https://www.health.gov.au/?utm_source=health.gov.au&utm_medium=callout&utm_content=404&utm_campaign=digital%20transformation)

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>