

May 2009

Dear Parents/Carers,

As you may have seen in the press, the World Health Organisation (WHO) is making appropriate preparations in the event of an Influenza Pandemic. The UK Government has been planning for this occurrence and we are currently at WHO Phase 5. We have been working closely with Essex County Council in planning for the local impact of Influenza in our area.

Should an Influenza outbreak or Pandemic reach the county of Essex it may be necessary to consider closing public establishments. This may be either a particular establishment or, should the Pandemic become more prevalent, a county wide closure to try and stop the virus spreading amongst children or young persons. Individual establishments may also need to be closed should/if staffing levels be adversely affected due to staff being off work with the virus themselves.

St Peter's High School have pre-planned for such events and this is the first in a series of communications to keep you informed of the situation. Attached is a document from the Health Protection Agency which details important information that you should make yourself familiar with.

Within the establishment we will be increasing cleaning regimes and practising infection control measures in accordance with the national guidance being sent to all homes. We will be teaching and encouraging the children to:

- Wash their hands using soap and water on a regular basis throughout the day
- Cover their mouth when coughing or sneezing using tissues provided around the establishment
- Throw away dirty tissues quickly into bins provided around the establishment

We would strongly recommend that you consider this advice and continue these practices with the children when they are at home.

Please ensure that you continue to provide up to date contact details. This will assist the school in ensuring you receive correct information should an outbreak occur within our establishment and can contact you if we are advised to close.

We will communicate with you again in the near future should the situation within Essex change.

For further information and advice the National Swine Flu Hotline is **0800 1513513**. For immediate medical advice call NHS Direct on **0845 4647**.

In the event of a school closure during examination periods, all exams will be cancelled. We are awaiting further information from the Department for Children, Schools and Families to assist us in this matter.

If you have any concerns regarding pandemic influenza please see below for available resources:

- Department of Health:
<http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/PandemicFlu/index.htm>
- Health Protection Agency Questions and Answers:
http://www.hpa.org.uk/webw/HPAweb&HPAwebStandard/HPAweb_C/1240812255916?p=1240812233855
- Essex County Council
 - <http://www.essexcc.gov.uk/vip8/ecc/ECCWebsite/dis/gui.jsp?channelOid=17176&guideOid=70442>
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- SureStart
<http://www.surestart.gov.uk/surestartservices/healthrelated/healthandfamilysupport/pandemicflu/>