

# St. Mary's College



## Pandemic Illness Policy

College, Preparatory School

&

Early Years Department

(All sites collectively referred to in this document as the 'College')

# 2024/2025

Reviewed by: M. Kennedy - September 2024

Date of Next Review: September 2025

This policy has been written in consultation with staff and governors of The College and Prep and with due regard to the school's mission statement:

**Our Mission is to provide an independent Catholic education for boys and girls of all faiths aged 0-18; to provide individual challenge towards holistic and balanced development, service and achievement for life and beyond; and to try to show our Faith by the way we live, showing care and consideration for each other, those around us and the environment.**

### **Objective**

This policy is intended to ensure that St Mary's College continues to keep its students and staff safe from the direct risk of harm from contracting Pandemic Flu whilst minimising the risk of spreading the virus. St Mary's College intends to ensure the minimum disturbance to its student's education during this time. The College's policy is therefore to remain open to healthy pupils during the pandemic so long as this remains advisable, taking into account the latest advice from the local Health Protection Agency teams, government and World Health Organisation, and to provide as safe and educationally stimulating environment as possible during this time. The College will ensure pupils who are able to study from home, but are unable to come to College, will be able to access a range of teaching materials and to contact their teachers via the internet and email. The College will endeavour to support all members of its community in what will be a time of national crisis.

Inevitably much of the policy will be decided on a day to day basis during a pandemic, but the following indicates how the College is planning for a Pandemic and the College's approach to a range of issues.

### **Pre planning (For WHO pandemic phases 1-3)**

The Member of the Leadership Team acting as The Safeguarding Children Officer will be responsible for

- Liaison with local Health Protection Agency teams and College doctors to monitor and share up-to-date information and regular checks with World Health Organisation through their website.
- Letter informing parents of College policy and procedures.
- Ensure that contact details of all parents and carers are up to date.
- Information, policy and procedures shared with staff and governors.
- Web page on College website to be set up to share information.
- Agree system for management and decision making during the pandemic if one or more of the Leadership Team are infected and unable to work. The command structure will follow the existing system but a flu committee will meet each morning during the pandemic.

- Agree system for covering staff absence and maintenance of learning should College remain open e.g. prioritising exam classes. The Vice Principal will use existing systems where possible and prepare instructions in case of their absence.
- Staff lesson planning to enable distance learning or where lessons have to be covered.
- Consider ways of keeping student learning ongoing if the College has to be closed for a period and homework can therefore be set, distributed, received and marked. This includes ensuring all staff and pupils can access College email accounts, the College's website/learning platform and that it is feasible for teaching to continue remotely.
- Ensure that all contact details for staff are correct and up to date. These details should be available to all Leadership Team.
- Compile a list of key contacts including: College's Local Authority liaison, local health authority liaison and others.
- Service departments e.g. catering, maintenance, accounts put in place plans for staff absence and contingency measures should key areas such as heating systems break down and usual help is unavailable.
- Draw up plan for maintaining IT facilities, especially the internet including cover for absence of some or all IT specialists.
- Check insurance cover and contractual agreements with parents. Discuss with insurers any cover for losses suffered as a result of a flu pandemic.
- Agree policy for travel, trips, non-essential visits, fixtures and interviews.
- Prepare hygiene protocol for all College facilities.
- Order additional supplies of disinfectant hand-rub, plastic gloves, paper towels and cleaning equipment
- Plan cleaning routines including prioritising areas of the College when there are staff shortages.
- Ensure that the medical room is well stocked and prepared for pupils with the symptoms of flu.

### **At WHO pandemic phases 4 - 6**

If WHO pandemic phase 4 is reached (*'small clusters with limited human to human transmission but spread is highly localised, suggesting that the virus is not well adapted to humans'*) plans should be checked.

The following action will be taken if WHO phases 5 and 6 are reached:-

- The College's response to the potential pandemic to be managed by a crisis team / flu management committee to include the Chairman of Governors, the Principal, the Vice Principal, the Services Manager, other members of the Leadership team, any other relevant staff member. The Principal will be the first contact for the Media and the Marketing Director will be responsible for arranging the necessary communications network and the Services Manager will be responsible for speaking to the College's insurers. The exact roles and responsibilities of the various members of the team will be decided at the time. This will include responsibility for contacting parents and staff, arranging cover for teaching and non-teaching staff, keeping up to date with Government guidance and ensuring adequate training is carried out.
- Issue letter to parents giving specific details of the College's plan e.g. not to send sick children to College, to be prepared to collect children from College during the day and to provide contact numbers so this is possible, to use the College website as a source of information, procedures for students and reminders of the importance of hygiene routines.
- Appropriate posters, leaflets and other information material to be distributed. Travel advice to be issued to staff and pupils. Students or staff returning from countries with high rates of human to human infection not to return to the College until the end of the incubation period and only once they have been given the all clear by their GP or an appropriate clinician.
- Issue and enforce hygiene protocol in College e.g. disinfectant hand rub in all classrooms, hand washing by all pupils and staff at break and lunchtime, ensuring supplies of tissues and arrangements for quick and safe disposal. The College will follow the DfE/Public Health England guidance on infection control.
- The Member of the Leadership Team responsible for Safeguarding Children to obtain vaccines and other prophylactic measures. Ensure College is sufficiently stocked and prepared for pupils with the symptoms of flu.
- Consider whether extra space is required for effective quarantine of suspected victims and make the necessary plans or preparations.
- Make it clear that pupils or staff who feel unwell must not come into College as they will only exacerbate the problem by spreading infection.
- Maintain website so that parents can see ongoing news.
- Teaching staff to draw up lesson plans and resources to cover at least a 3 week period. This should include plans that are for use in class and by remote access from the intranet site, also lessons that can be delivered by a non specialist. Publish plans to staff and parents regarding procedures during the pandemic e.g. isolation areas, meal provision, College chain of command and contact numbers, staff coming into College, returning staff and pupils, closing and re-opening the College, bereavement support.
- Review plans for covering lessons and bringing classes together.

## **Pandemic reaches St Mary's College**

If the pandemic reaches St Mary's College the College will have to consider temporary closure. The Governors will ultimately be responsible for deciding when to close (and re-open) the College if the need arises, though this responsibility may be delegated to the Principal. In making this decision the College will act upon the latest advice from the local health authority, the local authority, central government and the World Health Organisation.

If the College is closed and teaching suspended then the following actions will be taken:

- The College will maintain regular contact with the local health authority and act upon its advice as regards to the College's re-opening.
- Crisis team / flu management committee to maintain communication to keep all parties updated as to the College and the local situation.
- Distance learning procedures to be enacted for all year groups if possible or prioritised if necessary for those year groups approaching key examinations.
- Pupils, parents, staff and suppliers to be kept informed as appropriate as to the College's closure, the current situation pending re-opening, and date for re-opening.
- If the College is closed before or during public examinations it may be possible for the College to open so that pupils can take their examinations, this decision will be taken by the crisis team/ Flu Management Committee in discussion with the Local Health Protection Agency team. If this is not possible then the College will consider whether it is appropriate for candidates to take the examination at an alternative location. If not then the College will apply for 'special consideration' for the candidates affected through the Joint Council for Qualifications or the relevant awarding body.
- Arrangements to be made to man phone lines and post messages/updates on the relevant area of the College website.

If the College is to remain open the following measures will be taken in addition to those set out above:

- The College will maintain daily contact with the local health authority/ Public Health England and act upon its advice.
- Daily early morning flu management meeting to plan for that day with consideration of government and local area advice, staff and pupil absence and any pressure points in the operating of the College.
- The College's crisis team / flu management committee to agree the posting on the website with current advice and then review at lunchtime and end of College.
- Notices posted in control centre frequently, as required.
- Dedicated phone line set up or electronic portal may be deemed necessary.

No whole College assemblies. Registration in form or year groups, as appropriate to enable effective registration whilst staffing for the day is being organised. Messages to pupils before lessons begin are also effectively transmitted as pupils will be together in form or year groups.

- Pupils who are sent home through ill health do so via an allocated isolation area to enable effective records to be kept.
- All extra-curricular activities, non essential visits and visitors are cancelled.

## **Post-Pandemic**

- Depending on the severity and outcome of the pandemic the Leadership Team will meet to take appropriate measures to discuss:
- Strategic planning for the recovery of lost learning time and subsequent management of this recuperation, including possible cancellation of fixtures until the Leadership Team is clear that the College community has caught up with any potential lost education;
- College reopening shall be communicated by the College website and email;
- Leadership Team to coordinate counselling and other services if required;
- Review of the current policy in preparation for any future outbreaks.

## **Implementation and Monitoring**

Monitoring of Policy Implementation is the responsibility of the Leadership Team and ultimately the Principal.

This Policy should be read in conjunction with the following College policies, protocols and guidelines:

- Health and Safety Manual, in particular the 'Emergency Disaster, Critical Incidence Policy'
- First Aid Policy
- Staff Handbook

Further reading:

[www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-education>  
<https://www.isc.co.uk/> Independent Schools Council [www.nice.org.uk](http://www.nice.org.uk)  
– NICE  
<https://www.jcq.org.uk/> - Joint Council for Qualifications (Exam Boards) [www.qca.org.uk](http://www.qca.org.uk)  
– Qualifications and Curriculum Authority

Useful contacts:

NHS Direct on 0845 4647 or 111

If you are planning to travel abroad, check the Foreign and Commonwealth Office travel advice at <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/foreign-commonwealth-office> [www.fco.gov.uk/travel](http://www.fco.gov.uk/travel) or call 0845 850 2829.

Reviewed by Principal 24/2/20

Next review August 21

Reviewed 06/06/21

Reviewed 07/08/22 &

04/08/23

Reviewed 01/09/24

Next review 01/09/25