

October 2008

The possibility of a worldwide influenza epidemic (a pandemic) presents a real and daunting challenge to the economic and social wellbeing of any country, as well as a serious risk to the health of its population. Such influenza pandemics have occurred from time to time over the centuries and although they are by no means inevitable, history and science suggest that we are highly likely to face others this century, though the timing is impossible to predict.

The flu is a respiratory illness and is caused by a virus which is spread by aerosol (small droplet) transmission. The organisms can be spread from the infected person via droplets in the air caused by coughing or close conversation and then inhaled by another person, thus infecting them. For most people influenza infection is just a nasty experience, but for some it can lead to more serious illnesses. The most common complications are bronchitis and secondary bacterial pneumonia which may become life threatening.

Merchant Taylors' Schools will always endeavour to implement the highest standards in terms of Health and Safety for all pupils and employees. In view of recent information from the World Health Organisation and the Department of Health, Merchant Taylors' Schools have a 'Pandemic Flu Management Team' and have developed a 'Pandemic Flu School Policy'. We will ensure that all members of the school community are kept informed as appropriate.

All staff and pupils should not come into school if they suspect they are ill with the following symptoms, and it is vital that staff or parents contact the school immediately.

Signs and Symptoms of Flu

- Abrupt onset of a high fever and dry cough
- Headache, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, aching muscles and joints, extreme tiredness, a shivering feeling
- Adults can be ill for a day before symptoms begin, but young children can be infectious for several days prior to showing symptoms.
- You will be infectious for around 7 days after symptoms first appear
- The flu could make you feel ill and have a temperature for up to a week, but you could feel weak and 'washed out' for several weeks longer

Any concerns please do not hesitate to contact the School Nurse

Yours sincerely

Miss Anne Dalton
School Nurse
Merchant Taylors' Schools