

Pandemic Influenza Response Plan
for
Our Lady of Hope Catholic School

PANDEMIC INFLUENZA

A pandemic is a global outbreak of a disease.

INFLUENZA

Influenza, or the “flu”, is caused by the influenza virus which infects the respiratory tract (nose, throat, lungs). Influenza spreads easily from person to person when an infected person coughs, sneezes, or talks, and the virus is expelled into the air.

According to the World Health Organization (WHO):

“An influenza pandemic occurs when a new influenza virus appears against which the human population has no immunity, resulting in several, simultaneous epidemics worldwide with enormous numbers of deaths and illness. With the increase in global transport and communications, as well as urbanization and overcrowded conditions, epidemics due to the new influenza virus are likely to quickly take hold around the world.”

PREVENTION

Our Lady of Hope School employs cleaning contractors who are responsible for the cleaning of the school facility everyday. The cleaning crew is under supervision of the facility manager who is responsible for maintaining a clean and safe environment for our school community.

The school nurse is responsible for identifying and communicating to the students, parents and teachers ways of preventing and reducing the spread of viruses within our school community. Students are asked to stay home if sick and to report any illness they have been diagnosed with to the school. The nurse follows procedures identified by the health department in identifying and managing a communicable illness.

The lunch room staff in conjunction with the janitor maintains a clean and safe environment for the students to eat in as well as using good hygiene measures in food distribution and storage.

Our Lady of Hope Catholic School faculty and staff are annually trained and use universal standard precautions in their daily practice to prevent the spread of infectious disease in the school setting.

PREPAREDNESS

- Any case of student/staff absenteeism as a result of a confirmed communicable disease is reported to the health department and Office of Catholic Schools. Parents are thereby informed of the disease and measures that have been taken to prevent its spread.
- The principal working in conjunction with the Office of Catholic Schools and the health department will determine if school closing is deemed necessary.
- The facility manager supervises the disinfection and wipe down of the school facility.
- Under the direction of the Principal and faculty, educational services and other activities which will be maintained during the pandemic are identified and communicated as planned to the students and parents.
- Communication between the parents, students, teachers and school would be via the one-touch phone system, school website and electronic Friday folder. Teachers will create a plan whereby the students are able to continue with their school work during the pandemic period. During this period communication amongst the faculty and staff will be maintained on a bi-weekly basis or more as determined by the Principal.
- Employees responsible for maintaining the functioning of certain services are identified by the Principal.
- Create a back up plan for all faculty/staff absences.
- Create a plan whereby the necessary supplies are stocked and up to date during the pandemic period.
- The resource teacher will keep the lines of communication open between the students receiving services from the county and the public school including the rescheduling of any missed appointments or meetings.
- The school nurse will periodically communicate any health updates as is received from the health department and Office of Catholic Schools to the school community during the pandemic period.
- A plan is put in place to coordinate the return of students and faculty to school. The school will make sure that all the necessary criteria as determined by the health department under supervision of the Office of Catholic Schools are observed prior to the resuming of school.
- For parents, plan for an extended stay at home. Ask your employer if working from home during a pandemic is feasible. If not, it is prudent to plan for back up child care. Plan for a possible reduction in finances due to days absent from work as a result of illness in the home. It is always a good idea to be up to date with your employer's leave policies. While family life will slightly change, it is a good idea to try to keep a familiar routine as much as possible during a pandemic such as continuing daily exercise and doing different learning activities. Do not forget to store non-perishable foods, health and emergency supplies in your home.

