

MODEL PANDEMIC INFLUENZA HUMAN RESOURCES POLICY FOR SCHOOLS

This applies to: all staff employed within schools, including teachers and school support staff.

This policy was adopted by the Governing Body of _____

School _____ on _____ (Date)

Once this policy has been adopted, please email the Schools Personnel Helpline and advise us of the following:

Name of School:

Date Adopted:

Email: schoolspersonnelhelpline@devon.gov.uk

Policy Date: May 2009

Human Resources
Policy & Strategy Team
Personnel & Performance Directorate

If you require further help in the interpretation of this policy you can contact the Schools Personnel Helpdesk at schoolspersonnelhelpline@devon.gov.uk

If this document has been printed please note that it may not be the most up-to-date version.

For current guidance please refer to The Source. Version date: 10.07.09

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CONTENTS

POLICY

1	INTRODUCTION	3
2	PURPOSE	3
3	SCOPE	3
4	ACTIVATION OF THIS POLICY	3
5	REVIEW	4
6	COMMUNICATION	4

PROCEDURES

7	STAFF WHO REMAIN AT WORK DURING A PERIOD OF PANDEMIC 'FLU	5
8	STAFF SICKNESS ABSENCE DURING A PERIOD OF PANDEMIC 'FLU	9
9	STAFF REQUESTS TO MAKE TEMPORARY CHANGES TO THEIR WORKING ARRANGEMENTS AND OTHER TYPES OF ABSENCES DURING A PERIOD OF PANDEMIC 'FLU	12
10	HEATH, SAFETY AND WELLBEING	14
11	CONDUCT, CAPABILITY AND GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES	15
12	EQUALITY	15
13	HR INFORMATION, ADVICE AND SUPPORT	15

Associated guidance:

[DCC Children & Young People's Service - Guidance for Schools in Dealing with an Influenza Pandemic](#)

Pandemic Influenza – [Question and Answer Sheet for Devon County Council School Staff - Teachers and School Support Staff](#)

[HS0061 DCC Pandemic Influenza Health and Safety Guidance Note](#)

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Pandemic influenza ('flu) is a natural global phenomenon. It arises because a new strain of 'flu, to which few people are immune, spreads rapidly to affect large numbers of people in most countries and regions around the world. Unlike 'ordinary' seasonal 'flu, pandemic 'flu can strike at any time of year.

2 PURPOSE

- 2.1 The objective of this policy is to address human resources (HR) issues and to promote the health, safety and wellbeing of all staff while seeking to sustain the school's and DCC's key functions and services during a period of pandemic 'flu, as far as is practicable and can currently be envisaged.

3 SCOPE

- 3.1 These policy and procedures apply to all Devon County Council (DCC) staff employed within schools, including teachers and support staff.
- 3.2 **This policy only applies when it has been activated – see Section 4 below 'Activation of this Policy'**

4 ACTIVATION OF THIS POLICY

- 4.1 The activation of this policy and procedures is linked to the World Health Organisation (WHO) International Phases for the development of pandemic 'flu and the UK Alert Levels that apply when a pandemic is declared. (See table on following page)

Activation of this HR policy will be endorsed within DCC by Corporate Management Board (CMB). The operation of different parts of the policy will be dependent on local circumstances at any given time.

	International Phases	Significance for the UK
0	No cases worldwide	
Inter-pandemic Period		
1	No new influenza virus sub-types detected in humans	
2	Animal influenza sub-type poses substantial risk	
Pandemic Alert Period		
3	Human infection(s) with a new subtype, but no new human to human spread	UK not affected
4	Small clusters with limited human-to-human transmission but spread is highly localised, suggesting the virus is not well adapted to humans	UK has strong travel/trade connections with affected areas
5	Large clusters but human-to-human spread still localised, suggesting the virus is becoming increasingly better adapted to humans	UK affected
Pandemic Period		
6	Increased and sustained transmission in general population	UK Alert Level 1 Virus/cases outside UK 2 Virus isolated in UK 3 Outbreaks in the UK 4 Widespread activity across the UK
Post Pandemic Period		

5 REVIEW

- 5.1 As the pandemic evolves, the Government will issue additional public health information which DCC will reflect in further information and advice to staff. This policy will therefore be updated as soon as practicable, necessary and appropriate.

6 COMMUNICATION

- 6.1 DCC acknowledges that effective communication arrangements with staff and service users will be of paramount importance throughout the period of a pandemic. Communication arrangements are detailed in the DCC Pandemic Influenza Communication Plan for Teachers and School Support Staff.
- 6.2 [A 'Pandemic Influenza – Question and Answer Sheet for Devon County Council School Staff – Teachers and School Support Staff'](#) has been prepared that responds to some of the questions that staff are likely to ask in the event of pandemic 'flu.

7 STAFF WHO REMAIN AT WORK DURING A PERIOD OF PANDEMIC 'FLU

7.1 Throughout the period of pandemic 'flu, DCC in conjunction with the Governing Body will expect staff, if they are well, to continue to work, as normal for as far as possible, while taking additional precautions to protect themselves from infection, e.g. with regards to personal hygiene measures, and to lessen the risk of spread to others. While managers, and Headteachers (or the person standing in for him/her), will make every effort to support staff and take into account individual personal circumstances, any unexplained absences may be dealt with under the Conduct Procedure for Schools Policy
<http://staff.devon.gov.uk/pp/gap/schoolspersonnel/conductschools.htm>

7.2 Temporary Working Arrangements

7.2.1 While seeking to sustain the School's key functions and services, and, in order to reduce the risk of spread of infection throughout the period of pandemic 'flu, a number of temporary working arrangements will be identified and implemented, where appropriate and practicable. All staff may therefore need to review the way that they work as well as the duties and responsibilities that they undertake with a view to becoming more flexible.

7.2.2 Social Distancing Measures

In order to reduce the spread of infection, a range of social distancing responses will be introduced, where practicable e.g. the use of teleconferencing, videoconferencing and electronic means of communication, to avoid face-to-face contact. It is also likely that non essential training will be cancelled.

7.2.3 Temporary Deployment Elsewhere

If the school is closed to pupils, the LA has a legal duty to continue to provide education "at school or otherwise". Therefore, while it might not be possible to provide the usual full service, LAs must provide a reasonable level of education to those students. Teaching staff will be advised of the specific arrangements for the School by the Headteacher (or the person standing in for him/her), and the Governing Body.

In addition, there are roles and functions that are identified within the school as critical and every effort will be made to sustain these during a pandemic flu outbreak. Other less crucial functions could be suspended for a period of time.

As such, DCC in conjunction with the Governing Body reserves the right to temporary redeploy staff as the need arises. Managers, and Headteachers (or the person who is standing in for him/her) may request staff to work in a different post (possibly within a different School or DCC

Service), and/or at a different locality and/or work different hours, from those stated in individual Statements of Particulars.

Such requests will take into account individual skills and personal circumstances balanced against the needs of DCC as a whole. Training will be provided, health and safety risk assessments completed and additional personal protective equipment (PPE) will also be provided, as appropriate. All requests will be reasonable.

Those staff at high risk of 'flu complications will be deployed from direct student care to minimise the risk of infection. These staff will include, for example, pregnant women, and those who have pre-existing respiratory disease or compromised immune systems. Staff who believe they fall into this category should inform their manager, or Headteacher, (or the person standing in for him/her) immediately who will make the necessary arrangements for deployment.

The School and DCC will continue to carry out safeguarding checks (e.g. Criminal Record Bureau (CRB) Disclosures and Independent Safeguarding Checks (ISA) checks) where staff are temporarily redeployed into roles working in an unsupervised capacity with children or vulnerable adults if they have not been previously checked to the level required for the type of role and nature of the client group that they will be working with, as set out in the Corporate/ Model School CRB Disclosure Policy <http://staff.devon.gov.uk/criminalrecordsbureau.htm>

Management requests to make changes to working arrangements on a temporary basis will not be unreasonably refused by staff and they will be for the duration of the pandemic only. There will be no change to individual Statements of Particulars and normal terms and conditions of employment will resume at the end of the crisis.

7.2.4 Voluntarily Aided, Foundation Schools and Trust Schools

In schools where DCC is not the employer, the Governing Body [will / will not] expect staff to participate in the temporary redeployment process as set out above in Section (7.2.3).

Schools will need to consider their own employer's liability with respect to the temporary redeployment of their staff into other schools and DCC Services. DCC is not able to provide advice in this respect.

7.2.5 Support Staff - Special Pandemic Influenza Leave

If some functions and services within the school are suspended for a period of time, it is likely that staff who normally work in these areas will be temporarily deployed as set out in Section 7.2.3. Where there is no immediate deployment requirement managers, and Headteachers (or the person standing in for him/her), will have the authority to permit members of staff to stay away from work, i.e. have some time off, for a fixed period

of time on normal pay (i.e. full pay plus allowances, not overtime and other one-off payments). Decisions will be made on an individual basis, and will be reviewed on a regular basis. Such absences will be categorised as 'Special Pandemic Influenza Leave'.

Where this type of leave has been authorised, staff will have to be continually available for work (and so cannot arrange leave or be out of travelling distance from work without going through the normal request for leave process) and may be called into work at short notice. Managers and staff will be expected to keep in regular contact, as far as is practicable. For example, staff should make reasonable effort to contact their manager (or the person standing in for him/her) in order to keep abreast of the latest situation.

Schools should keep a record of all absences and follow the normal procedures, as set out in the Maximising Attendance and Managing Sickness Absence Policy. 'Special Pandemic Influenza Leave' should be recorded under absence reason 'Paid special leave' with a sub category/ type of leave 'Other paid leave'

7.2.6 Homeworking

In order to reduce the spread of infection, where practicable, some members of staff may be requested to work from home. All homeworking arrangements must be authorised by the staff member's manager, or Headteacher (or the person standing in for him/her), and the Informal Homeworking Guidance for Schools available through the local authority Intranet site should be followed.

<http://staff.devon.gov.uk/pp/gap/schoolspersonnel/workingschools/informal homeworking.htm>

7.2.7 Honorarium payments

Honorarium payment(s) will be made to support staff who are required to carry out duties and responsibilities of a higher level in addition to their substantive post, as set out in the Corporate Honorarium Policy

<http://staff.devon.gov.uk/honorariumpolicy.htm>

Teachers covered by the School Teachers' Pay and Conditions Document, who may be asked to carry out additional work outside of the school day by DCC in conjunction with the Governing Body, may be entitled to an additional payment as set out in Section 2 paragraph 52 of the aforementioned document, and in line with the School's Model Pay Policy.

7.2.8 Travel claims

If staff are required to work at a different location to their normal place of work, they should submit travel claims in respect of any additional expenses that they incur in the normal manner, as set out in the Corporate Travel and Subsistence Allowances Policy

<http://staff.devon.gov.uk/travelpolicy.htm> . Payment will be made for excess travel time as outlined in the Corporate Reimbursement Policy <http://staff.devon.gov.uk/reimball.doc>

7.2.9 Non-standard patterns of work

If support staff are required to work outside of their normal contractual hours and this includes non-standard patterns of work, they will be compensated in accordance with the provisions as set out in the Corporate Working Time Policy <http://staff.devon.gov.uk/workingtime.htm>

7.2.10 Corporate working time

Support staff should continue to refer to the Corporate Working Time Policy with regard to avoiding working excessive hours in any particular week and ensuring adequate rest breaks are taken <http://staff.devon.gov.uk/workingtime.htm>

Teachers working hours are covered in the School Teachers Pay and Conditions Document, Section 2 paragraph 77.

7.2.11 Lone working

Staff should continue to refer to the Lone Working Policy where staff are required to work alone or unsupervised as part of their work <http://staff.devon.gov.uk/pp/er/healthsafetywellbeing/healthsafety/loneworking.htm>

7.2.12 Use of communication systems

In order to reassure those members of staff who remain at work, they will be allowed reasonable use of communication systems (e.g. email, internet and phone facilities), as far as practicable, to remain in contact with their families during their working hours so long as they comply with the respective policies (e.g. published e-mail and internet policies) in all other respects.

7.2.13 Annual leave entitlements

With regard to those staff with annual leave arrangements, staff should follow the guidance as set out in the Corporate Leave Policy <http://staff.devon.gov.uk/leave.htm> , as far as it is practicable. It may, however, be necessary to limit annual leave to sustain services. Managers, and Headteachers (or the person standing in for him/her), will therefore consider requests for leave made by members of staff on their merits on a case-by-case basis. Pre-booked leave should be allowed unless there are exceptional circumstances. (See also Section 9.3 of this policy).

8 STAFF SICKNESS ABSENCE DURING A PERIOD OF PANDEMIC 'FLU

8.1 Staff With 'Flu-Like Symptoms

As far as it can currently be known, the symptoms of pandemic 'flu will be the same as for seasonal 'flu, but may be more severe, as it is unlikely that people will have any resistance to it. Details of the likely symptoms of pandemic 'flu are outlined in the [HS0061 DCC Pandemic Flu Health and Safety Guidance Note](#).

During a pandemic the School will positively encourage staff who feel ill to stay at home until they are fully recovered. Indeed, it is of paramount importance that staff with any 'flu-like symptoms stay at home until the symptoms disappear, both for their own wellbeing and to reduce the risk of spread to other members of staff.

Staff who feel that they are developing 'flu-like symptoms at work are also required to go home straight away. Managers, and Headteachers (or the person standing in for him/her), will be responsible for ensuring that staff with 'flu-like symptoms, as far as they are aware, do not remain at work.

8.2 Staff who have been in recent close contact with others with 'flu, including confirmed cases, but do not have flu-like symptoms themselves

Staff who have been in recent close contact with others with 'flu, including confirmed cases, but do not have flu-like symptoms themselves are required to continue to work unless they are unwell.

8.3 How sickness absence will be managed during a pandemic and how this links to the Model Maximising Attendance and Managing Sickness Absence Policy for Schools.

8.3.1 As far as possible, staff who are absent as a result of illness (whether it is directly related to pandemic 'flu or not) should follow the procedures as set out in the Model Maximising Attendance and Managing Sickness Absence Policy for Schools. However, the following further guidance has been prepared to accommodate the unique circumstances that a pandemic may present, as far as it can currently be envisaged.

8.3.2 Managers, and Headteachers (or the person standing in for him/her), will handle sickness absence with care and sensitivity, and any concerns will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis and take into account the difficulties that staff may encounter with regards to complying with procedures during the period of a pandemic. Managers, and Headteachers (or the person standing in for him/her), will make every effort to support staff, especially those that have been bereaved.

8.3.3 Notifying absence

Staff should continue to follow the school's policy for notifying absence. When notifying absence, if a member of staff finds that it is not possible to speak to their manager, Headteacher (or the person standing in for him/her), details of the absence (in person if possible or through a third party if not) should be reported to [a central number that will be operated by the School] during the period of the pandemic.

Staff who feel that they are developing 'flu-like symptoms at work will be required to go home immediately. They should advise their manager and leave in a way that minimises face-to-face contact with anyone to reduce the risk of spread of infection.

8.3.4 Certification

In order to reduce the pressure on GP and other medical services, the School will extend the self-certification period for up to 14 consecutive days (including part days and regardless of whether these are working days or school holidays) during any period that this policy is implemented (see Section 4). A self-certification for the entire period of sickness absence should be completed in the normal manner using Report of Absence Form.

For absences over 14 consecutive days, if an individual member of staff encounters difficulties in obtaining a doctor's certificate(s), for instance, in light of the high demand for GP and other medical services, they should refer the matter to their line manager who will decide if it will be possible for him/her not to submit a medical certificate for the respective period of sickness absence. If it is agreed that a medical certificate does not need to be submitted, a self-certification for the entire period of sickness absence should be completed in the normal manner using Report of Absence Form.

If the difficulty with regard to obtaining medical certificates becomes widespread, DCC in conjunction with the Governing Body may decide to extend the period of self-certification during the period of pandemic 'flu beyond 14 consecutive days.

Under normal circumstances, where an end date is not specified on a medical certificate for an absence exceeding 14 consecutive days, a certificate of fitness to resume work must be obtained from a GP and given to the manager on the first day back at work. To avoid adding to the high demand for GP and other medical services during a pandemic, this requirement will be suspended bringing these staff into line with staff who have self certified for absences of up to 14 days, or longer where this has been approved.

If a manager has concerns about a member of staff's fitness for work, the member of staff should be asked to provide a medical certificate of fitness

for work and the manager should follow the guidance as set out in the Maximising Attendance and Managing Sickness Absence Policy. If an individual member of staff encounters difficulties in obtaining a doctor's certificate(s), they will remain on normal pay (i.e. full pay plus allowances, not overtime and other one-off payments), not sick pay, until the manager can arrange an appointment with WellBeing@Work to review the case.

Throughout the period of a pandemic, staff will be required to complete a Report of Absence Form for each period of sickness absence, as set out in the Maximising Attendance and Managing Sickness Absence Policy.

8.3.5 Keeping in contact

Managers and staff should keep in contact during periods of sickness absence, as far as is practicable.

8.3.6 Return to work meetings

By the time a member of staff is no longer showing symptoms and starts to feel better they are no longer likely to be infectious and can return to work.

Throughout the period of a pandemic, return to work meetings should be held as set out in the Maximising Attendance and Managing Sickness Absence Policy.

8.3.7 Monitoring levels of absence/ formal sickness absence review procedure

When managers review the sickness absence history of an individual member of staff, the unusual circumstances of absences directly related to a pandemic will be taken into account.

8.3.8 Sick pay entitlements

Throughout the period of a pandemic, there will be no changes to the period during which sick pay shall be paid, and the rate of sick pay, in respect of any period of absence due to personal illness, as set out in the Sickness Pay Scheme for support staff in the NJC for Local Government Services (commonly known as the Green Book), or Conditions of Service for School Teachers in England and Wales (commonly known as the Burgundy Book).

Entitlement to sick pay during a pandemic will however take into account that, in some instances, staff may need to follow the guidance as set out in this policy rather than the procedures that would normally apply as set out in the respective sickness policies, for example, in respect of the conditions for certifying sickness absence.

9 STAFF REQUESTS TO MAKE TEMPORARY CHANGES TO THEIR WORKING ARRANGEMENTS AND OTHER TYPES OF ABSENCES DURING A PERIOD OF PANDEMIC 'FLU

- 9.1 During a pandemic, in addition to staff being absent from work due to personal illness, there are a number of other reasons why individual members of staff may not be able to attend work such as family member sickness, bereavement, and possible disruption to nurseries and schools.
- 9.2 Managers will handle all absences and temporary working arrangements requests made by staff with care and sensitivity, and any concerns will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis. They will make every effort to support staff, especially those that have been bereaved.

9.3 Staff requests to make temporary working arrangements during a period of pandemic 'flu

As already stated in this policy (Section 7.2), while seeking to sustain key functions and services, and, in order to reduce the risk of spread of infection throughout the period of a pandemic, a number of temporary working arrangements (e.g. temporary deployment including homeworking) will be identified and implemented, where appropriate and practicable.

At the same time, it is acknowledged that the duty to sustain key functions and services will need to be balanced with the pressures that will fall on members of staff that have caring responsibilities and their work commitments. In light of this, an individual member of staff may make a request for a temporary change to their place of work/location, and/or, their hours of work/ working pattern, providing that their request is made in order that they can fulfil a caring role.

In addition, if an individual member of staff wishes to take their annual leave in order to fulfil a caring role, managers will take this into account when they consider their leave request (see Section 7.2.13).

Any requests of the nature outlined above made by members of staff who do not have caring responsibilities but have special circumstances that they feel should be taken into account will also be considered.

All requests should be made by individual members of staff to their manager (or the person standing in for him/her) and decisions will be made on their merits on a case-by-case basis.

Requests to make these temporary working arrangements will be for the duration of the pandemic only, there will be no change to individual Statements of Particulars and normal terms and conditions of employment will resume at the end of the crisis.

9.4 Special Pandemic Influenza Leave

As already outlined in Section 7.2.5, if some school functions and services are suspended for a period of time during a pandemic and there is no immediate requirement for some members of support staff to be temporarily deployed elsewhere, managers may permit some individuals to stay away from work, i.e. have some time off, for a fixed period of time and this will be treated as 'Special Pandemic Influenza Leave'.

9.5 Other types of absence - existing emergency time off for dependents, compassionate leave provisions, and, additional paid leave and unpaid leave arrangements

In addition to the special provisions that will apply during a pandemic outlined in the above sections (Section 9.3 and 9.4), Schools have existing provisions to support staff with caring responsibilities with regard to managing their caring role alongside their work commitments, as well as those who have been bereaved. These provisions will apply as normal during a pandemic and are outlined in the Schools' Model Staff Leave and Absence Policy for Schools

<http://staff.devon.gov.uk/pp/gap/schoolspersonnel/managingattendancestaff/modelstaffleave.htm>

9.6 Keeping in Contact

Managers and staff should keep in contact during periods of absence, as appropriate and as far as is practicable.

9.7 Recording Absences

Schools should keep a record of all absences and follow the normal procedures as set out in the Maximising Attendance and Managing Sickness Absence Policy.

9.8 Unexplained Absences

All members of staff will be expected to attend work throughout the period of a pandemic unless their absence is authorised by their manager (or the person standing in for him/her), or, they are sick and they have complied with the procedures as set out in the respective sickness absence policy and/or the guidelines set out in this pandemic 'flu policy.

Managers will handle unexplained absences with care and sensitivity, and any concerns will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis and take into account the individual personal circumstances as well as any difficulties that staff may be encounter with regards to complying with procedures during the period of a pandemic. However, any absence from work that is not in accordance with the above, may be dealt with under the Conduct Procedure for Schools Policy, and result in loss of pay.

10 HEALTH, SAFETY AND WELLBEING

- 10.1 Pandemic 'flu is first and foremost a public health matter. There are, however, clear health and safety requirements to protect staff and clients who come into contact with infectious micro-organisms such as the influenza virus.
- 10.2 To support managers and employees, all services and establishments should follow the guidance produced in the HS0061 DCC Pandemic Flu Health and Safety Guidance Note [HS0061 DCC Pandemic Flu Health and Safety Guidance Note](#), which provides the necessary information on assessing risks, training requirements and information to employees and volunteers. Additional information on [infection control](#) and [teleworking](#) (e.g. hot desking and working in a different location) is also available from the Devon Health and Safety Services on 01392 382027 and via the [Source](#)
- 10.3 Throughout the period of a pandemic, Wellbeing@Work will continue to provide services to all staff on health and wellbeing issues affecting employment, as far as practicable. Access to services will be available through the normal channels as detailed on the Source <http://staff.devon.gov.uk/wellbeing.htm> , and as set out below, however it is likely that services will not be provided face-to face in order to reduce the spread of infection.
- Referral Co-ordinator
Wellbeing@Work Centre
Falcon Road
Exeter
EX2 7LB
- Telephone: 01392 383277
- Email: wellbeingreferral@devon.gov.uk
- Teachers can also seek information and support from the Teacher Support Network at: www.teachersupport.info
- 10.4 Bereavement support leaflets are also available from Wellbeing@Work and The Intranet [Bereavement support in the event of a Flu Pandemic](#). In addition, the national website for the Bereavement Services Association (BSA) is <http://www.bsauk.org/>
- 10.5 It is acknowledged that in the aftermath of a pandemic it will be likely that staff may be tired and need some time before they can return to ordinary performance at work. This will be taken into account, for example, where the capability of an individual member of staff is in question. Each situation will be handled with care and sensitivity on a case-by-case basis.

11 CONDUCT, CAPABILITY AND GRIEVANCE

- 11.1 Throughout the period of a pandemic, the operation of conduct, capability and grievance procedures may need to be amended, as for example, conducting investigations and hearings is likely to be impracticable. Timescales may also need to be adjusted by mutual agreement. The respective processes may therefore be suspended as a precautionary measure pending return to normal conditions. Each situation will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

12 EQUALITY

- 12.1 The School is committed to equality in its policy.
- 12.2 No employee will be unlawfully disadvantaged on the grounds of age, race or ethnicity, disability, gender and marital status, gender identity, sexual orientation, religion or belief under the operation of this policy.

13 HR INFORMATION, ADVICE AND SUPPORT

- 13.1 Throughout the period of a pandemic, where practicable, information, advice and support on all HR matters and on the interpretation and application of this policy will be available from the Schools' Personnel Helpdesk, 9.00am to 5.00pm – Monday to Friday, telephone number is 01392 384567. Email schoolspersonnelhelpline@devon.gov.uk
- 13.2 Latest developments will also be available via the County Council's website and through national websites including:
www.nhs.uk
www.direct.gov.uk/swineflu

POLICY HISTORY

Policy / Version Date	Summary of change	Contact	Implementation Date	Review Date
01.05.09	New Schools' HR policy to support the DCC Pandemic Influenza Plan.	Schools' Personnel Helpline	13.07.09	As necessary and appropriate