

Lowther Hall

ANGLICAN GRAMMAR SCHOOL

All about the girl

Pandemic Preparedness and Response Plan

Date of last review:
Review cycle:
Review and approval responsibility:
Category:
VRQA required:
Locations:

2024
3 yearly
Executive
Medical
Yes
O:Drive, LowtherLink



1. DEFINITIONS

Pandemic

A pandemic is an epidemic of disease that has spread across a large region, multiple continents or worldwide.

2. PURPOSE

The purpose of this Plan is to outline Lowther Hall's response to a pandemic. The aim of this Plan is to provide direction in formulating a response by the School to any biological agent threatening to cause a pandemic within the community.

3. SCOPE

This Plan addresses Lowther Hall's preparedness and emergency response to a pandemic most likely caused by a novel strain of virus to which the human population has not developed any immunity.

It includes those actions Lowther Hall would take to minimise morbidity and mortality and protect the health and safety of our community.

The policy applies to all members of the Lowther Hall Community and to visitors to the site.

4. GUIDING PRINCIPLES

In responding to and managing a Pandemic, the School will be guided by the following principles:

- The Principal and the Executive Team are the primary decision makers in managing a Pandemic
- The School Council will sign off on:
 - Changes to policy affecting health or safety of stakeholders
 - Changes to fees and charges to parents as a result of the pandemic
 - Changes to staffing levels or remuneration flowing from the pandemic
- Preservation of life and health is the highest priority
- The School will act on advice to inform its decisions
- As much as possible, teaching and learning and cocurricular experiences will be maintained if they can be undertaken safely
- Business continuity should be maintained as far as possible in the interests of the long term future of the School and the delivery of education
- Regular communication with all stakeholders should be maintained throughout the pandemic
- Where possible, existing policies, procedures and structures should be utilised to manage the situation

Throughout a pandemic, the School's response will be informed by advice from:

- State and/or Federal Government
- Department of Health
- Independent Schools Victoria
- Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade

5. RESPONSE

The Pandemic Response Plan is set out in Appendix 1.

It adopts five stages of pandemic preparedness and response:

- Preparedness
- Stand-By Response
- Initial Action Response
- Targeted Action Response and
- Stand-Down Response.

At each stage, actions are identified in the following categories:

- Emergency Management
- Incident Response
- Prevention/Containment
- Hygiene measures
- Communication
- Travel advisories
- Business Continuity

6. COMMUNICATION

The School will communicate the Pandemic Preparedness and Response Plan to relevant stakeholders in the event of a Pandemic.

The Plan will be reviewed by the Executive Team every 3 years.

7. RELATED DOCUMENTS

Emergency Management Policy
Infection Control Policy

PANDEMIC RESPONSE PLAN STAGED WITH KEY ACTIONS

OVERVIEW	
Stage	Description
1. Preparedness	No novel strain detected (or emerging stage under initial detection)
2. Stand-By	Sustained community person-to-person transmission detected overseas
3. Initial Action	Cases detected in Australia – information about the disease is scarce
4. Targeted Action	Cases detected in Australia – enough is known about the disease to tailor measures to specific needs
5. Stand-Down	The public health threat can be managed within normal arrangements and monitoring for change is in place

1. PREPAREDNESS STAGE

Description – No novel strain detected (or emerging strain under initial detection)

The scale and nature of preparedness activities is the same for all possible levels of clinical severity. Preparedness should be incorporated into business as usual activities. This includes incorporating a comprehensive emergency management strategy that takes an 'all hazards' approach and includes pandemic as a specific hazard that needs to be considered. Regularly review, exercise and update plans. Communicate plans with staff.

Category	Key Actions
Emergency Management Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure the following are up to date: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Communication tree – Contact lists of staff, local and emergency services.
Prevention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote basic hygiene measures within the School by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Providing students and staff with information about the importance of hand hygiene – Providing convenient access to water and liquid soap and alcohol-based hand sanitiser – Educating staff and students about covering their cough with a tissue or their inner elbow to prevent the spread of germs – Ensuring careful disposal of tissues • Exercise appropriate home-based exclusion from school among staff and students with relevant symptoms • Encourage staff to seek immunisation or enforce if mandated.
Communications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communicate personal hygiene messages to staff and students. • Convey health messages as appropriate.
Travel advisories	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage staff and parents/guardians to access the smartraveller website prior to all international travel being undertaken. For School related travel this advice is to be incorporated into travel risk assessment and mitigation strategies for pandemic.
Business continuity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure currency of business continuity plan which: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Identifies minimum requirements and key staff for continued operations, including planning for the absence of the Principal – Consider workforce strategies to enable continued operations if pandemic affects a portion of staff.

2. RESPONSE STAGE – STAND-BY

Description – Sustained community person-to-person transmission detected overseas

Category	Key Actions
Emergency Management Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> At the time of overseas detection: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure emergency numbers and key contacts are up to date Ensure contact lists of staff, local and emergency services are up to date Circulate communication tree to Critical Incident Management Team (CIMT)
Incident response	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prepare to enact relevant sections of the Emergency Management Plan with stakeholders and prepare to activate CIMT.
Hygiene measures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reinforce basic hygiene measures within the School by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Providing students and staff with information about the importance of hand hygiene Providing convenient access to water and liquid soap and alcohol-based hand sanitiser Educating staff and students about covering their cough with a tissue or their inner elbow to prevent the spread of germs Ensuring careful disposal of tissues Encourage or enforce wearing of masks. Exercise appropriate home-based exclusion from school among staff and students with relevant symptoms Purchase necessary PPE Ensure germicidal wipes are available for staff to clean administrative areas, telephones etc.
Communications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> At the time of overseas detection, consider providing information sessions or written communications for staff and parents/guardians to communicate: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The status of the situation The risk of illness and how to identify pandemic symptoms and cases of possible illness based on the current, up-to-date case definition by the World Health Organisation Best practise hygiene measures Measures for vulnerable students Ensure consistent messaging to staff, students, parents/guardians right across the School Encourage staff and parents/guardians to obtain seasonal flu vaccination as appropriate Prepare sample letters for parents/guardians for the next stage.
Travel advisories	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advise staff and parents/guardians to access the smartraveller website prior to all international travel Consider implementing procedures to repatriate staff and students who are overseas on a School trip if there is a risk of pandemic in a nearby country Support students unable to return to School due to travel restrictions Implement procedures to repatriate staff and students who are overseas on a School trip if there is the risk of pandemic in that country
Business continuity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure currency of business continuity plan which: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identifies minimum requirements and key staff for continued operations, including planning for the absence of the Principal Consider workforce strategies to enable continued operations if pandemic affects a portion of staff.

3. RESPONSE STAGE – INITIAL ACTION

Description – Cases detected in Australia – information about the disease is scarce

Category	Key Actions
Emergency Management Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> At the time of overseas detection: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure emergency numbers and key contacts are up to date Ensure contact lists of staff, local and emergency services are up to date Circulate communication tree to Critical Incident Management Team (CIMT)
Incident response	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Activate the relevant section of the Emergency Management Plan with stakeholders and activate CIMT
Hygiene measures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reinforce basic hygiene measures within the School by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Providing students and staff with information about the importance of hand hygiene Providing convenient access to water and liquid soap and alcohol-based hand sanitiser Educating staff and students about covering their cough with a tissue or their inner elbow to prevent the spread of germs Ensuring careful disposal of tissues Encourage or enforce wearing of masks. Ensure germicidal wipes are available for staff to clean administrative areas, telephones, etc.
Communications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Follow and distribute information and advice from the World Health Organisation, VRQA, relevant government agency and/or ISV including information about: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The local status Personal hygiene measures Containment measures, including any plans for closure if applicable to staff, parents/guardians. Communicate the risk of illness and how to identify case of possible pandemic illness based on current, up-to-date case definition by the World Health Organisation.
Containment Strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Seek advice on the appropriate containment strategy depending upon the level of clinical severity as determined by the relevant government agency. Advise staff who develop relevant symptoms to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leave school immediately and seek medical attention Stay away from school until completely well as supported by a Fitness for Work Certificate Identify a designated area to keep sick students quarantined from the general school population until they can be taken home by parents/carers Follow the advice from the relevant government agency regarding service closures and exclusion periods for infectious diseases Consider the need to reduce non-essential school activities and mass gatherings such as sports days Consider enacting 'silos' to separate groups of students and reduce contact If the School is required to close: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inform all staff of their obligations during school closure Provide students with access to education materials and online learning.
Travel advisories	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advise staff and parents/guardians to access the smartraveller website prior to all international travel Consider implementing procedures to repatriate staff and students who are overseas on a School trip of there is a risk of pandemic in a nearby country Support students unable to return to School due to travel restrictions Implement procedures to repatriate staff and students who are overseas on a School trip if there is the risk of pandemic in that country
Business continuity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement business continuity plan to promote adequate workforce supply and capacity to continue service by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prioritising work functions to ensure adequate workforce available to deliver education Implementing contingency strategy, which may include employing replacement staff and modifying programmes Enabling staff to work from home.

4. RESPONSE STAGE – TARGETED ACTION

Description - Cases detected in Australia – enough is known about the disease to tailor measures to specific needs

Category	Key Actions
Emergency Management Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enact Emergency Management Plan • Establish Critical Incident Management Team
Hygiene measures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reinforce basic hygiene measures within the School by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Providing students and staff with information about the importance of hand hygiene – Providing convenient access to water and liquid soap and alcohol-based hand sanitiser – Educating staff and students about covering their cough with a tissue or their inner elbow to prevent the spread of germs – Ensuring careful disposal of tissues. • Exercise appropriate home-based exclusion from School among staff and students with relevant symptoms • Ensure germicidal wipes are available for staff to clean administrative areas, telephones, etc.
Communications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Follow and distribute information and advice from the World Health Organisation, VRQA, relevant government agency and/or ISV including information about: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – The local status – Personal hygiene measures – Containment measures, including any plans for closure if applicable to staff, parents/guardians • Communicate the risk of influenza and how to identify case of possible pandemic influenza based on current, up-to-date case definition by the World Health Organisation.
Containment Strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seek advice on the appropriate containment strategy depending upon the level of clinical severity as determined by the relevant government agency • Advise staff who develop relevant symptoms to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Leave school immediately and seek medical attention – Stay away from school until completely well as supported by a Fitness for Work Certificate • Identify a designated area to keep sick students quarantined from the general school population until they can be taken home by parents/carers • Follow the advice of the relevant government agency regarding containment activities and exclusion periods for infectious diseases • Help lower risk of exposure by reducing non-essential school activities and mass gatherings such as sports days • Operate in “silos” to reduce contact across different parts of the School • Encourage mask wearing and enforce if necessary • If the School is required to close: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Inform all staff of their obligations during school closure – Provide students with access to education materials and online learning where possible.
Travel advisories	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advise staff and parents/guardians to access the smartraveller website prior to international travel • Revise all organised off-campus activities to determine new risk level and course of action (eg: cancellation) • Consider implementing procedures to repatriate staff and students who are overseas on a School trip if there is a risk of pandemic in a nearby country or risk of travel restrictions and overseas border closures • Implement procedures to repatriate staff and students who are overseas on a School trip if there is the risk of pandemic in that country or risk of travel restrictions and overseas border closures
Business continuity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement business continuity plan to promote adequate workforce supply and capacity to continue service by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Prioritising work functions to ensure adequate workforce available to deliver education – Implementing contingency strategy, which may include employing replacement staff and modifying programmes – Provide support, including counselling where deemed necessary • Enabling staff to work from home.

5. RESPONSE STAGE – STAND-DOWN

Description – The public health threat can be managed within normal arrangements and monitoring for change is in place.

Category	Key Actions
Containment strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Be aware that multiple waves of the pandemic may occur.
Communications	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Communicate the updated status of the situation to staff and parents/guardians and offer support that is available.
Travel advisories	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Continue to encourage staff and parents/guardians to access the smartraveller website prior to international travel.
Business continuity	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Implement business continuity plan for resumption of full business capacity which may involve:<ul style="list-style-type: none">– Restoring workforce capacity– Following procedures for re-opening– Providing supports including counselling– Monitoring cumulative effects of pandemic and identifying those who may need assistance• Conduct final debrief and de-activate CIMT• Review effectiveness of CIMT and update if necessary.• Undertake investigations to gather information about impact on students and staff.