



School Policy on Pandemics

Sources of Guidance

This policy has been developed through guidance from the World Health Organisation (WHO), the Health Protection Agency (HPA), Departments of Health, and the National Institute for Clinical Excellence (NICE). The policy has been checked by Dr. A. Shabrawishi (BISC Board member) and Dr. D. Louis (BISC paediatrician) and approved by the Board of Directors.

Background to the Policy

Flu viruses are made up of tiny particles that can be spread through the droplets that come out of your nose and mouth when you cough or sneeze. Pandemic flu is different from ordinary flu because it's a new flu virus that appears in humans and spreads very quickly from person to person worldwide.

The BISC Policy on Pandemics is broken down into 3 sections:

Section A: School Information - Symptoms & Spreading of Influenza Viruses

Section B: BISC Protocols to Ensure High Standards of Infection Control

Section C: BISC Responses to WHO Phases on Pandemics

Section D: Children: how to avoid spreading lots of germs

Section E: Recent Revisions to the policy (as integrated into the main policy)

Section A: School Information - Symptoms & Spreading of (Influenza) Viruses

The symptoms of influenza are:

Most significant	Other
Fever	Aching muscles & Sore throat
Chills	Malaise (lethargy, listlessness)
Cough +/-shortness of breath	Runny nose, sneezing
Diarrhoea	Loss of appetite
	Headache

Important Guidance to school staff and parents: It is better to stay at home with what might turn out to be a normal cold than that they go into work or school with the early symptoms of pandemic flu and pass on the flu virus to other people.

The **incubation period:** from 1-4 days.

The **infectious period:** people are most infectious soon after they develop symptoms, and remain infectious until the symptoms disappear. Adults can continue to excrete viruses for up to 5 days: children for up to 7 days. Over this period, the amount of virus, and therefore the infection risk to others, will decline as symptoms improve, but it does not disappear until the symptoms themselves also disappear.

The disease is spread from **person to person** in the following ways:

- Via an infected person as large droplets when coughing, sneezing, or even talking within a close distance (one metre or less).
- Through direct contact with an infected person: e.g. if you shake or hold their hand, and then touch your own mouth, eyes or nose without first washing your hands.
- By touching objects (e.g. door handles, light switches) that have previously been touched by an infected person, then touching your own mouth, eyes or nose without first washing your hands.

Section B: BISC Protocols to Ensure High Standards of Infection Control

BISC has protocols & guidelines to ensure high standards of infection control:

Infection Control & Personal Hygiene Protocol:

Parents

- Children, staff and parents given regular and effective guidance (see appendix 1) at registration, in the BISC Bulletin & school website
- Parents are under a duty to keep children at home if any symptoms are present.
- Parents to inform school if they have travelled to affected areas
- During the period of any school holiday, parents have a duty to return to Cairo a 5 days before the school returns in order to avoid infectious periods. All parents should complete a 5-day temperature chart to be presented at school on 30 August 2009. Any child who does not have this information will be checked by the school doctor and sent home as necessary.
- Parents are obliged to provide the school with full information regarding the medical condition of their children. The school will, in turn, be open and forthcoming with all parents should any students become infected.
- Parents are recommended to have their child vaccinated against the seasonal flu virus; the school will be making a special announcement on this at the start of the autumn term.

Visitors to School

- Restrict visitors to school once school re-opens; this will include parents who should only come into school by appointment
- Visitors to school must complete a questionnaire before they enter the campus; this will be emailed to them beforehand in most cases. No walk-in visitors allowed.
- Visitors will be issued with packs of tissues upon entry to the school

Adults in School

- All people in school will carry packs of tissues.
- Hand cleansers introduced to all classrooms: used by adults at prescribed times.
- All adults to cleanse hands on entry to the school (teachers, parents, administrators and ancillary support staff).
- Bus supervisors to ensure that drivers cleanse hands & children have tissues. Bus supervisors to take temperatures of each child using electronic thermometers: any child with a temperature above 37.5°C will not be allowed to travel. There will be an emphasis on open ventilation on the school buses. Bus supervisors will wear masks as a protective measure.

Children in School

- New students to BISC: not allowed to join school without declaration that they are medically fit to join and have spent > 5 days in Cairo.
- All children will have their temperatures checked on a daily basis at school, at the start of the school day.
- Children to clean their hands after carpet work.
- Sharing of pencils, crayons and pens discouraged by teachers & assistants.
- The wiping and cleaning of hands and objects when passing round objects like musical instruments or toys will be encouraged.
- Communal soft toys from school will be removed.
- Children are not allowed to share wind instruments.

Cleaning Protocol

- Cleaning Inspector appointed to general service staff.
- Strict hygiene standards in school kitchens, bathrooms & classrooms.
- Cleaning products in good supply in all areas of the school.
- Focused & regular cleaning of all hard surfaces in kitchens, bathrooms and classroom. Door handles, telephone headsets, toilet seats and flushes are to be wiped over with an approved (chlorine based) anti-septic solution on a daily basis.
- Waste bins are to be emptied on a daily basis with the contents being sealed in plastic bags prior to disposal. Open waste bins to be replaced by closed-lid bins.
- Secure disposal of cleaning waste products in labelled areas of school (away from people).
- Cleaning staff issued with non-powdered latex gloves for cleaning duties.
- All cleaning staff are to be issued with medicated face-masks which are to be worn when employed on cleaning duties.
- The GSM is to ensure that receptacles containing sealable plastic bags are deployed around the school for the collection of used paper tissues. They are to be emptied on a daily basis and disposed of in sealed plastic bags: if practical, they should be burnt.

Sickness Protocol

- Children should be kept at home if they are ill or showing signs of illness. Temperature must be recorded regularly so that parents know a child is able to return to school.
- Parents should give the school full information about the medical fitness of their children. Parents may seek advice from the BISC Medical Centre; mobile number is xxxxxxxxxx
- Children will be sent home straight away if they are sent to school when they are ill or showing signs of illness.
- Children should not return to school until they are clear of the infectious period.

- Two Isolation rooms set up in the school Medical Centre for any child who falls ill during the school day and shows the symptoms of the disease.
- Special care procedures: use of surgical masks, proper isolation, all waste materials disposed of in a controlled way.
- Effective hand washing techniques used by health professionals.

Education Protocol

- All educational activities will be kept under review during the period of any pandemic.
- The school will seek to remain open during the period of any pandemic. The decision to close and on what scale will be framed by the traceability of the virus.
- The Principal in liaison with the Chairman of the Board of Directors will take the decision to close the school should the need arise.
- In circumstances where the school premises have had to close for a period, teachers will maintain courses via the BISC intranet: *intranet.bisc.edu.eg*
- Should the school be obliged to close, this will be regarded as *Force Majeure*.

Section C: BISC Responses to WHO Phases on Pandemics

The World Health Organisation (WHO) has set out six phases of a pandemic:

- Phase 1: No viruses circulating among animals reported to cause human infections
- Phase 2: Viruses circulating among animals known to have caused human infections
- Phase 3: New sub-type of virus but no human-to-human transmission or rare instances of spread to a close contact;
- Phase 4: Small clusters of infection, but limited human-to-human transmission;
- Phase 5: Large clusters of infection but human-to-human spread is localised;
- Phase 6: Pandemic Phase; increased/sustained transmission between humans.

BISC approach to pandemics will be framed around the WHO phases, from Phase 3.

Phase 3 WHO announcement

Health & Welfare: Liaison with government authorities and school doctor to monitor and share up-to-date information.

Communication: Letter informing parents of school policy & procedures if a flu pandemic reaches the Egypt to be issued; information to staff and Board members; web page on school website to be set up to share information for running of the school commitments to be received from school guardians on looking after non Egypt students during pandemic; regular checking of WHO through website; update contact details of all parents.

Education: staff planning for distance learning; ICT resources for staff examined.

WHO Phase 4 announcement

Health & welfare: Medical staff to advise about the feasibility of obtaining vaccines and other prophylactic measures; ex-patriate students from infected areas around the world to stay away from BISC for 3 days prior to being examined and monitored by medical staff; re-join BISC on receiving an all clear. Appropriate posters & other information material to be distributed. New cleaning measures operational.

Communication: Communicate with parents updating them on WHO information and school policy; update website.

Education: Staff planning & resourcing for distance learning; no school tours to be allowed to or from countries where human-to-human; infection has been diagnosed; travel advice to be issued to staff and pupils.

WHO Phase 5 announcement

Health & welfare: as for phase 4 and: implementation of new hygiene standards in school; liaise with the local agencies about disposal of infected materials.

Communication: more rigorous communication of pupil/staff hygiene measures around school; daily monitoring of WHO and government websites for up-to-date information of spread of flu pandemic.

Education; as for phase 4

WHO Phase 6 announcement

Health and welfare: BISC policy will be to continue to teach until such time as the first case of pandemic flu is in school or as instructed by the Board of Directors to close the school; if available, the latest flu vaccination shall be administered to the school medical staff who will meet regularly with the Senior Management Team & nominated Board members to assess situation requirements.

Communication: SMT to meet as agreed to be updated on the school and the local situation; arrangements made to man phone lines and post messages on the relevant area of the school website; staff to be kept informed as appropriate; school suppliers to be contacted and deliveries postponed.

Education: to continue as normal until the first case of flu is diagnosed in school; distance learning procedures to be enacted for all year groups via the BISC intranet; cancellation of school tours & sporting fixtures. In the event of an outbreak occurring during a school holiday SMT will meet to discuss the school's policy in light of national advice and instruction.

Section D: Children: how to avoid spreading lots of germs

A - Cover Your Cough

B - Wash Your Hands Frequently

A - Cover your cough

- when you cough or sneeze, cover your nose and mouth with a tissue;
- throw away your tissue, into a proper bag or bin, as soon as you've used it.
- Wash your hands

B - Wash your hands frequently:

On days when you are coughing, sneezing or blowing your nose, frequently wash your hands often with soap and water; or, if you can't use soap and water, use wipes or gels.

How to wash and dry your hands with soap and water

- 1 Wet your hands with warm water, then add soap.
- 2 Rub in the soap, while you count to fifteen. Make sure you rub the soap into:
the backs of your hands; the backs of your fingers; your finger-nails;
your finger-tips; the skin between your fingers.
- 3 Rinse your hands under running water.
- 4 Dry your hands with a disposable paper towel or a hot-air blower.

[If you are wearing any rings or bracelets, remove them before washing your hands. If you have any cuts or scratches, cover them with a clean dressing]

Section E: Recent Revisions to the Policy (Integrated above)

1. Bus Supervisors will use electronic thermometers on school buses. Trained in use by Dr. Dalia Louis. Students with a temperature above 37.5°C will not be allowed to travel on the school bus. Parents are obliged to accept this. Students traveling to school by private car will have their temperature checked upon arrival at school.
2. Parents are required to complete 5-day temperature chart for a child's return to school, to be presented to the first class teacher. Any pupil without a chart will go to the school doctor for a check-up.
3. Bus supervisors will wear masks on buses. There will be open ventilation in buses and classrooms as much as possible.
4. Two isolation rooms established at BISC medical centre.
5. Break times – students in segregated groups to maintain traceability in case of an outbreak.
6. School will be open & forthcoming with parents on all developments.
7. Normal flu vaccination – the school recommends a BISC-wide program or that parents provide certification if done privately.
8. Class teachers reiterate good hygiene practices regularly. All pupils are obliged to use the gel dispensers at times determined by the teacher and especially before lunch.
9. Ill children will be sent home straight away. Parents are under an absolute duty not to send ill children to school
10. Dedicated Medical Centre Hotline for BISC Parents with defined hours for parents to ring Dr. Dalia Louis for individual guidance on H1N1.

Guidance to Schools from the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention. Issued 07.08.09	
Under Conditions with similar severity as in spring 2009	Under conditions of increased severity compared with spring 2009
Stay home when sick	Active screening
Separate ill students & staff	High risk people stay at home
Hand hygiene & respiratory etiquette	Students with ill household members stay at home
Routine cleaning	Increase distance between people at school
Early treatment of high risk people	Extend the period for ill persons to stay at home
Consideration of selective school dismissal	School dismissals