

May 2009

Dear Parents/Carers

As you may have seen in the press the World Health Organisation (WHO) has stated that there is a strong signal that an Influenza Pandemic is imminent. The UK Government have been planning for this occurrence and we are currently at WHO Alert Level 5. This means that there has been human to human transmission in at least two countries; we also know this disease has reached the UK.

If the Pandemic reaches this area it may be necessary to close individual schools, though in our case the Government have indicated we should try to maintain schooling for the Sixth Form. There may be a need for borough wide (Southend on Sea) or even county wide closure of all establishments to try and stop the virus spreading amongst children, young persons. Individual establishments may also need to close if staffing levels reach critical mass due to staff being off work ill with the virus themselves.

Westcliff High School for Girls have pre-planned for this event and this communication is to keep you informed of the situation. Attached is a document from the Department for Children, Schools and Families (previously known as Department for Education and Skills) which details important information that you should make yourself familiar with.

Within the school we will be increasing cleaning regimes and practising infection control measures. We will be teaching and encouraging the children to:

- Wash their hands using soap and water on a regular basis throughout the day
- Cover their mouth when coughing or sneezing using tissues provided around the establishment
- Throw away dirty tissues quickly into bins provided around the establishment

We would strongly recommend that you consider this advice and continue these practices with the children when they are at home.

It is essential that we have up to date contact details for all parents and if you are aware of any changes to those held by us please complete the slip below and return it to the school office as soon as possible. Any decision to close the school will be clearly signalled via our website and local radio stations.

We will communicate with you again should the situation escalate.

If you have any concerns regarding pandemic influenza please see below for available resources:

- Department of Health:
<http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/PandemicFlu/index.htm>
- Teachernet
<http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/docbank/index.cfm?id=13524>

Yours sincerely

Dr Paul Hayman
Headteacher

WESTCLIFF HIGH SCHOOL FOR GIRLS

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Please return to the School Office

STUDENT'S NAME _____ FORM _____

ADDRESS _____

HOME TELEPHONE No. _____

1st CONTACT

NAME _____

EMERGENCY TELEPHONE No. _____

EMAIL. _____

2nd CONTACT

NAME _____

EMERGENCY TELEPHONE No. _____

EMAIL. _____