

WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL

Report by Joint Secretaries to the LNCT

Local Negotiating Committee for Teachers: 15 December 2009

SUBJECT : “Swine Flu Pandemic: Maintaining the Continuity of Education”

1. Purpose

- 1.1 This report seeks agreement from the Committee on the procedures to be followed in relation to occurrences of AH1N1 (Swine Flu) in Educational Establishments.

2. Background

- 2.1 The SNCT circular issued on 25 September 2009 contained advice on the main issues (This circular is attached as Appendix 1).
- 2.2 The Schools Directorate branch of Scottish Government also issued updated advice on 19 October 2009 (Appendix 2).
- 2.3 The main thrust of the advice issued is to maintain continuity of Education wherever possible.
- 2.4 This action seeks to limit the disruption to pupils’ education and to reduce disruption to frontline services where staff may have to be absent from work in the event of schools’ closures.

3. Main Issues

- 3.1 The SNCT Circular (Appendix 1) sets out a number of key principles which suggest that there could be temporary relaxation of working hours, class size maxima and of relocation of staff if a school is closed.
- 3.2 The relaxations in 3.1 are offered in return for sympathetic treatment of vulnerable staff and for staff who have to take time off to care for a child or elderly relative. Special Leave enhancements may be considered such as granting leave with pay.
- 3.3 It is anticipated that any outbreak of swine flu would affect pupil numbers more than staff. This should mean that schools could remain open and the safety of staff and pupils should not be compromised.

4. Personnel Issues

- 4.1 Some of the principles contained within this circular will result in temporary variations to standard departmental policies and procedures and the

conditions of service contained within the SNCT Handbook and local agreements.

5. Financial Implications

- 5.1** The financial implications cannot be quantified at present. In the event of absences potentially affecting the opening of establishments additional supply staff may be required and this will incur additional costs. Costs would be funded from the individual establishment affected and from the centrally held cover budget.

6. Risk Analysis

- 6.1** If the recommendations in 8.1 & 8.2 are not agreed it may not be possible to maintain continuity of education in affected establishments.

7. Conclusions and Recommendations

- 7.1** The LNCT is required to consider the content of the SNCT circular 09/15 and to agree implementation locally.
- 7.2** It is recommended that the LNCT agrees to adopt the SNCT 09/15 circular (Appendix 1).
- 7.3** It is recommended that the LNCT also agrees that, in the event of an outbreak of AH1N1 in any educational establishment, the LNCT Joint Secretaries will meet with the Head Teacher or Head of Centre along with the Union Representative or nominee to discuss how best to respond to the outbreak.
- 7.4** As part of this response the Joint Secretaries will issue advice on the key principles contained in Appendix 1.

This may include seeking advice from the department's Health & Safety Co-Ordinator with regard to risk assessment to ensure the safety of all in the establishment.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: SNCT 09/15 – Swine Flu Pandemic:
Maintaining Continuity of Education

Appendix 2: Pandemic Flu AH1N1 (SWINE FLU) update,
Scottish Government

Wards Affected

All Wards