

# RUAHINE SCHOOL

## The Best I Can Do, The Best I Can Be

### PROCEDURE FOR PANDEMIC (NAG 5d.5)

A pandemic is an epidemic of infectious disease that spreads through human populations across a large region, for example multiple continents or even worldwide.

#### **RATIONALE:**

Ruahine School has an agreed procedure to follow if ever a pandemic alert occurred.

#### **WHY A NEED FOR A PANDEMIC PROCEDURE?:**

- To ensure that as a community we have a pandemic plan in place as a component of our emergency planning.
- To ensure that we maintain as full a service as possible for as long as possible during a pandemic emergency (consistent with [State Services Commission Guidelines](#)).
- To consider alternative means of delivering education to our students (for example, distance learning options) during such an event.
- To ensure that Ruahine School is part of [New Zealand's National Health Emergency Plan](#) to help prevent the influenza spreading.
- School closures aim to reduce close contact between children (children have been known to remain infectious for up to 21 days whereas the risk period is only eight days for adults).
  - Closures do not mean that facilities would be closed for quarantine. Staff may still go to work, work remotely, or carry out additional or alternative duties for their employer or another agency. Education facilities may be used for alternative purposes such as Community Based Assessment Centres (CBACs)<sup>1</sup>.
- To understand that a pandemic may come in several waves over a 6-8 month period. At the peak of the worst pandemic wave, up to 50% of the workforce may be sick, looking after sick dependents, or carrying out 'alternative duties' in priority areas for their employer or another agency (such as health or welfare roles).

#### **BACKGROUND INFORMATION:**

- It is not possible to predict how long a pandemic may last.
- State sector employees will be paid their normal salary during a pandemic, provided, with their employer's pre-approval, they:
  - come to work in their usual workplace (with rigorous personal hygiene, social distancing and cleaning regimes in place);
  - work remotely (for example from home);
  - carry out additional or alternative duties for their employer or another agency.
- State sector employees will be expected to use their leave entitlements (sick, domestic, annual or other, with ability to anticipate some sick leave) if they are sick or looking after sick dependents during a pandemic emergency. An employee who contracts pandemic influenza may be sick for up to two weeks. When sick leave entitlements and advances are exhausted, State Services employers may provide additional paid special leave during Stages 2 and 3 of a pandemic but only where this will contribute to preventing the arrival or spread of a pandemic. For an approach to leave usage during a pandemic see the [State Services Commission](#) .
- In the event of a pandemic or the possibility of a pandemic the principal (or her/his delegate) supported by the Senior leadership team and the BOT staff representative will manage the pandemic or likelihood of a pandemic.

<sup>1</sup> In a pandemic emergency people with influenza symptoms will be encouraged to stay away from hospitals and doctors' surgeries, and to seek assistance at a Community Based Assessment Centre (CBAC). Some District Health Boards may consult with governors or proprietors of some education providers about using their facilities for this purpose.

The **Pandemic Management Team (PMT)** will:

1. Establish a system to monitor staff who are ill or suspected of being ill, including contacting staff who are unexpectedly absent from work: Has their doctor been notified of their illness? Have they been in contact with anyone?
2. Ensure that our school has adequate supplies of tissues, medical and hygiene products, cleaning supplies and masks.
  - In the event of a pandemic or probability of a pandemic the school will liaise closely with the Public Health Nurse.

### **COMMUNICATION WITH THE SCHOOL COMMUNITY**

It is likely there will be anxiety during a pandemic and this is likely to contribute to increased absence and/or increased stress to the board of trustees, staff, parents/whānau and students. Accordingly we will:

- Communicate early, the possibility of a pandemic and our school's preparedness to manage it – to our board, staff, students, parents and whānau. [Ministry of Health](#) influenza advice will be useful.
- Discuss with staff possible health and safety issues, and leave arrangements for them if they are ill or need to look after dependents.
- Have a comprehensive plan (will be developed by the PMT in consultation with the PHN) in place which is clearly communicated to our board, staff, students, parents and whānau. Ensure that communications management during the pandemic is part of the plan. It will be important to have systems in place to allow our school to communicate effectively in a pandemic.
- In activating our plan, provide clear, timely and pro-active communications to our board, staff, students, parents and whānau explaining how our school is handling the situation.
- Establish a "communications tree" for our school to circulate important messages. Consider how we might maintain communication with:
  - board, staff, student, parents and whānau
  - other schools in our area/cluster
  - relevant agencies and community support networks
  - key suppliers and contractors.

### **New Zealand National Pandemic influenza alert status**

For planning purposes the different stages of the health response in an influenza pandemic have been grouped and defined with colour codes: Code White, Code Yellow, Code Red, and Code Green.

More information on these alert codes is included in the New Zealand Influenza Pandemic Action Plan.

In summary, the codes mean:

- **Code White** is information/advisory only, used in the planning stages of pandemic preparedness and for notification to the health sector of areas of concern overseas.
- **Code Yellow** is a standby phase, used to alert the health sector when there has been a significant development in the virus overseas, or single isolated cases in New Zealand.
- **Code Red** is the response phase, used to alert the health sector that they should activate their response plans.
- **Code Green** is to notify the health sector to stand down response and move into the recovery phase.

### **COVID-19**

<https://covid19.govt.nz/>

# Protect yourself and others against COVID-19



Cover your coughs or sneezes with tissues or your elbow



Put your used tissue in the rubbish bin or in a plastic bag

Wash and dry your hands often, especially after coughing or sneezing – use soap or hand sanitiser



Stay away from others if you're unwell



COVID-19 HEALTH ADVICE  
0800 358 5453

For international SMS call +64 9 358 5453

[health.govt.nz/COVID-19](https://health.govt.nz/COVID-19)

Protect your family/whānau from COVID-19 (coronavirus)

New Zealand Government

February 2020 | HP1212

## SYMPTOMS OF COVID-19, FLU AND COLD

	DRY COUGH	FEVER	RUNNY NOSE	SORE THROAT	BREATH-LESSNESS	HEADACHE	BODY ACHES	SNEEZE	FATIGUE	DIARRHOEA
COVID-19	✓✓✓	✓✓✓	✓	✓✓	✓✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	~	✓✓	✓
FLU	✓✓✓	✓✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✗	✓✓✓	✓✓✓	✗	✓✓✓	✓✓
COLD	✓	~	✓✓✓	✓✓✓	✗	~	✓✓✓	✓✓✓	✓✓	✗

FREQUENTLY  
 SOMETIMES  
 LITTLE  
 RARE  
 NOT

@SIOUXSIEW @XTOTL thespinoff.co.nz

SOURCE: WHO, CDC CC-BY-SA

FOR THE LATEST INFO PLEASE SEE [who.int](http://who.int) or [health.govt.nz](http://health.govt.nz)

20 MARCH 2020

# New Zealand COVID-19 Alert Levels

- These alert levels specify the public health and social measures to be taken.
- The measures may be updated on the basis of (i) new scientific knowledge about COVID-19 and (ii) information about the effectiveness of intervention measures in New Zealand and elsewhere.
- The alert levels may be applied at a town, city, territorial local authority, regional or national level.
- Different parts of the country may be at different alert levels. We can move up and down alert levels.
- In general, the alert levels are cumulative, e.g. Level 1 is a base-level response. Always prepare for the next level.
- At all levels, health services, emergency services, utilities and goods transport, and other essential services, operations and staff, are expected to remain up and running. Employers in those sectors must continue to meet their health and safety obligations.

LEVEL	RISK ASSESSMENT	RANGE OF MEASURES (can be applied locally or nationally)
<b>Level 4 - Eliminate</b> Likely that disease is not contained	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sustained and intensive transmission</li> <li>• Widespread outbreaks</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• People instructed to stay at home</li> <li>• Educational facilities closed</li> <li>• Businesses closed except for essential services (e.g. supermarkets, pharmacies, clinics) and lifeline utilities</li> <li>• Rationing of supplies and requisitioning of facilities</li> <li>• Travel severely limited</li> <li>• Major reprioritisation of healthcare services</li> </ul>
<b>Level 3 - Restrict</b> Heightened risk that disease is not contained	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community transmission occurring OR</li> <li>• Multiple clusters break out</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Travel in areas with clusters or community transmission limited</li> <li>• Affected educational facilities closed</li> <li>• Mass gatherings cancelled</li> <li>• Public venues closed (e.g. libraries, museums, cinemas, food courts, gyms, pools, amusement parks)</li> <li>• Alternative ways of working required and some non-essential businesses should close</li> <li>• Non face-to-face primary care consultations</li> <li>• Non acute (elective) services and procedures in hospitals deferred and healthcare staff reprioritised</li> </ul>
<b>Level 2 - Reduce</b> Disease is contained, but risks of community transmission growing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• High risk of importing COVID-19 OR</li> <li>• Increase in imported cases OR</li> <li>• Increase in household transmission OR</li> <li>• Single or isolated cluster outbreak</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Entry border measures maximised</li> <li>• Further restrictions on mass gatherings</li> <li>• Physical distancing on public transport (e.g. leave the seat next to you empty if you can)</li> <li>• Limit non-essential travel around New Zealand</li> <li>• Employers start alternative ways of working if possible (e.g. remote working, shift-based working, physical distancing within the workplace, staggering meal breaks, flexible leave arrangements)</li> <li>• Business continuity plans activated</li> <li>• High-risk people advised to remain at home (e.g. those over 70 or those with other existing medical conditions)</li> </ul>
<b>Level 1 - Prepare</b> Disease is contained	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Heightened risk of importing COVID-19 OR</li> <li>• Sporadic imported cases OR</li> <li>• Isolated household transmission associated with imported cases</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Border entry measures to minimise risk of importing COVID-19 cases applied</li> <li>• Contact tracing</li> <li>• Stringent self-isolation and quarantine</li> <li>• Intensive testing for COVID-19</li> <li>• Physical distancing encouraged</li> <li>• Mass gatherings over 500 cancelled</li> <li>• Stay home if you're sick, report flu-like symptoms</li> <li>• Wash and dry hands, cough into elbow, don't touch your face</li> </ul>

## APPENDICES:

### A. PROTECTING YOURSELF AND OTHERS AGAINST RESPIRATORY ILLNESS

#### HANDWASHING IS THE MOST IMPORTANT THING YOU CAN DO TO PROTECT YOURSELF

- Cover your nose and mouth when coughing or sneezing
- Use a tissue and dispose of this once used
- Always wash hands after coughing and sneezing or disposing of tissues

- Keep your hands away from your mouth, nose and eyes.
- Avoid contact with individuals at risk (eg, people with underlying or chronic illnesses such as immune suppression or lung disease) until the influenza-like symptoms have resolved.
- Avoid contact with people who have influenza-like symptoms.
- Ask students to use a tissue and cover their nose and mouth when coughing or sneezing and to wash and dry their hands afterwards.

Hand Hygiene with Soap and Water		
<p>1. Remove jewelry. Wet hands with warm water</p> 	<p>2. Add soap to palms</p> 	<p>3. Rub hands together to create a lather</p> 
<p>4. Cover all surfaces of the hands and fingers</p> 	<p>5. Clean knuckles, back of hands and fingers</p> 	<p>6. Clean the space between the thumb and index finger</p> 
<p>7. Work the finger tips into the palms to clean under the nails</p> 	<p>8. Rinse well under warm running water</p> 	<p>9. Dry with a single-use towel and then use towel to turn off the tap</p> 
<p>Minimum wash time 10-20 seconds.</p>		

Hand Hygiene with Alcohol-based Hand Sanitizer		
<p>1. Remove jewelry. Apply enough product to open palms.**</p> 	<p>2. Rub hands together palms to palms</p> 	<p>3. Rub in between and around fingers</p> 
<p>4. Cover all surfaces of the hands and fingers</p> 	<p>5. Rub backs of hands and fingers. Rub each thumb.</p> 	<p>6. Rub fingertips of each hand in opposite palm</p> 

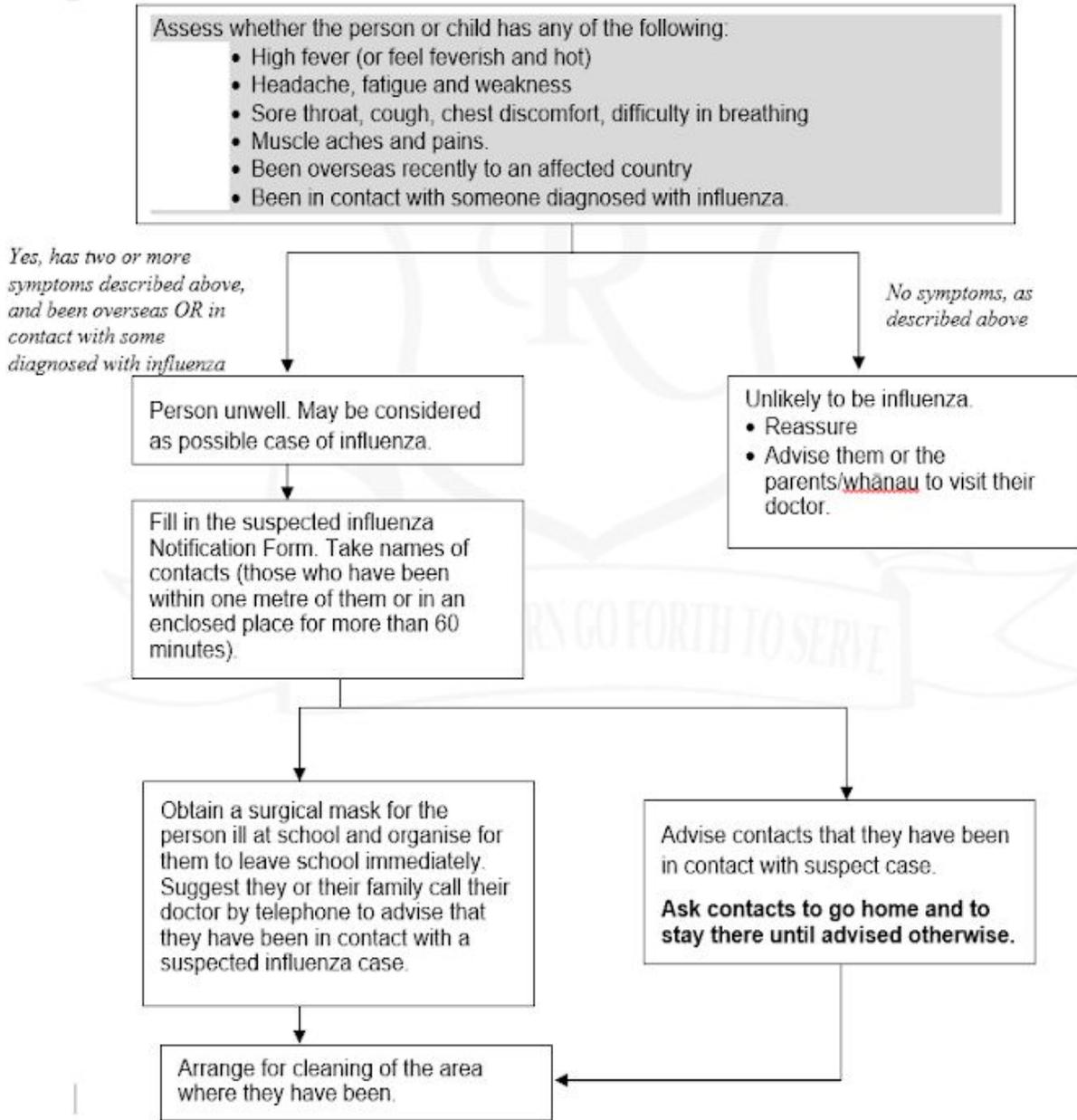
*Source: Vancouver Coastal Health's Regional Pandemic Influenza Response Plan*

## **B. Screening flowchart**

### **For detection and management of suspected pandemic influenza cases**

#### **Process**

1. Your school's influenza manager receives a call from a person suspecting they may have influenza, or from a staff member who has noticed a child who may be ill.
2. Avoid contact with the sick person if possible and manage the process over the telephone.
3. For someone at the school who is ill, follow the flowchart below:



### C. Influenza staff notice 1

#### INFLUENZA NOTIFICATION

Influenza is a contagious disease.

There is currently an increase in the numbers of people in New Zealand with influenza. To prevent the spread of influenza here:

**DO NOT ENTER** if you have:

- chills, shivering and a fever (temperature above 38°C)
- onset muscle aches and pains
- sore throat
- dry cough
- trouble breathing
- sneezing
- stuffy or runny nose
- tiredness

If you start to feel ill at school or are showing any of the symptoms listed above, **DO NOT** leave your area.

Call the influenza manager

..... Phone ext.....

#### ***D. Influenza student notice 2***

### **INFLUENZA NOTIFICATION**

Influenza is a contagious disease.

There is currently an increase in the numbers of people in New Zealand with influenza.

To prevent the spread of influenza in this school, you must **tell your teacher** if you have any of the following flu symptoms:

- chills, shivering and a fever
- onset of muscle aches and pains
- sore throat
- dry cough
- trouble breathing
- sneezing
- stuffy or runny nose
- tiredness

#### ***E. Closure notice***

### **RUAHINE SCHOOL CLOSED**

DUE TO THE INFLUENZA PANDEMIC,  
THIS SCHOOL IS CLOSED UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE

**DO NOT ENTER**

**For urgent enquiries, contact**

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**F. Suspected Influenza Notification Form**

**Details of Affected Staff/Students**

Name:	Site:	Location of isolation:
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Job title:	Nationality if visitor to site:	Date of birth: (optional)
Address:		
Telephone no:	(W)	(H) (M)
<b>Symptoms noticed:</b> Fever                      Body aches Headache                Fatigue Dry cough                Others                      Details: Cold  Time of fever on-set:  Time of isolation:		
Travel history over the past eight days:		
Countries visited		
Flights taken:		
Where referred:		
Contact List (See separate page)		

Where referred:
Contact List (See separate page)

**Details of Reporter**

Name:
Job title:
Telephone no:                      (W)                      (H)                      (M)

**G. Contact list**

The Ministry of Health currently defines pandemic influenza contacts as people who have had close physical (less than one metre), or confined airspace contact with an infected person, within four days of that person developing symptoms. These are likely to include family members and/or other living companions, workmates, other students in the class/school (if in close contact situations or confined airspace environments), and some recreational companions.



[preparedness.](#)

### **Suggested list**

The following generic list approved by the Department of Labour can be used as a starting point for your pandemic preparations. It is an 'over-the-top' list to cover all contingencies, so you will need to adapt it to your school's needs and requirements.

<b>Emergency Pandemic Supplies</b> <i>Suggested list - stock pile supplies for one to two weeks</i>
Breathing mask (box 50) 3 per person per day
Eye goggles (1 per staff dealing closely with sick person)
Latex / non-latex gloves (100s) 10 per staff per day
Disposable apron for staff (1 per staff per day)
Tissues (box 200) 3 boxes per person per week
Paracetamol (box 20) 1 box per adult per week;
Paracetamol (suspension) 50mls per child per week
Disinfectant (2 litres) 1 bottle per 15 people per day
Janola (2 litres) 1 bottle per 15 people per day
Cleaning fluid (1 litre) 1 bottle per 15 people per day
Toilet paper minimum 2 rolls per person per week
Paper towels (2 packets per person over 3 weeks)
Carton of Chux Cloths
Liquid soap/alcohol wash (1 litre)

You will need to consider staff education and training in the use of personal protection equipment:

- preventative guidelines
- staff awareness
- documentation.

Pandemic Stage 1

### **I. Sample letter 1**

#### **Letter to parents/caregivers: introduction to pandemic planning**

Dear Parents / Caregivers

Most of you will be aware that a '**bird flu**' virus, H5N1, is currently affecting birds and small numbers of people in countries overseas. Most of the people affected by the virus work with or live close to infected birds. Because New Zealand is off the flight paths of most migratory birds, the current spread of the virus is not seen as a big threat to our country.

But international health experts are concerned that the virus could mutate to pass easily between humans, leading to a global pandemic.

The government is preparing plans to protect the country from a possible influenza pandemic. As part of this nation-wide planning, schools have been asked to prepare their own pandemic plans.

Our school has an **emergency management plan** that covers most emergencies, such as fire and earthquake. Using resources provided by the Ministry of Education, we are now updating our emergency management plan to include plans for coping with a pandemic.

We will keep you informed as our **pandemic plan** develops. Meanwhile, you can reduce the risk of your child catching influenza:

- Teach your children the importance of hand washing – especially before meals and after toileting.
- Teach your children to use a disposable tissue when coughing or sneezing.
- Keep your children at home if they have the flu.

An important part of emergency planning is ensuring we have **up-to-date contact details** for all students and staff. Please ensure that you **complete and return the attached form**. Your personal details will not be used for any other purpose other than in the context of emergency management.

Find out more about pandemic planning and 'bird flu' on these websites:  
[www.moh.govt.nz/pandemicinfluenza](http://www.moh.govt.nz/pandemicinfluenza) and [www.minedu.govt.nz/goto/pandemicplanning](http://www.minedu.govt.nz/goto/pandemicplanning) .

If you have any questions or concerns at this stage, please contact me directly.

Yours sincerely

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Principal

## J. Sample letter 2

Pandemic Stage 2

Dear Parents / Caregivers

The government has announced that New Zealand is stepping up its pandemic influenza response plans.

This means that the situation overseas has changed and New Zealand's borders have been tightened in an attempt to stop the virus getting here.

Our school is talking with health and civil defence officials and we have been advised that there is no reason for alarm. Our school will remain open until further notice. Our own pandemic plans mean that we have systems in place to help us cope if anything changes.

The most important thing you can do as parents and caregivers is reinforce healthy messages:

- Teach your children the importance of hand washing and drying – especially before meals and after toileting.
- Teach your children to use a disposable tissue when coughing or sneezing.

We ask that all children showing flu like symptoms be kept home until checked and okayed by a doctor or nurse to return to school. **The symptoms of influenza and how they differ from common cold symptom are included with this letter.**

Our school is updating our **emergency contact details** for all students and staff. Please **complete the attached form and return it to your child's classroom teacher.**

The board of trustees and I are working closely with staff to ensure that all students at our school are kept as safe as possible.

If you have any questions or concerns please contact me directly. Thank you.

Yours sincerely

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Principal

#### K. The difference between influenza and a common cold

SYMPTOM	INFLUENZA	COMMON COLD
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Fever	Usual, sudden onset 38°-40° and lasts 3-4 days.	Rare
Headache	Usual and can be severe	Rare
Aches and pains	Usual and can be severe	Rare
Fatigue and weakness	Usual and can last 2-3 weeks or more after the acute illness	Sometimes, but mild
Debilitating fatigue	Usual, early onset can be severe	Rare
Nausea, vomiting, diarrhoea	In children over 5 years	Rare
Watering of the eyes	Rare	Usual
Runny, stuffy nose	Rare	Usual
Sneezing	Rare in early stages	Usual
Sore throat	Usual	Usual
Chest discomfort	Usual and can be severe	Sometimes, but mild to moderate
Complications	Respiratory failure; can worsen a current chronic condition; can be life threatening	Congestion or ear-ache
Fatalities	Well recognised	Not reported
Prevention	Influenza vaccine; frequent hand-washing; cover your cough	Frequent hand-washing, cover your cough

### **Further information**

#### **What is an “influenza pandemic”?**

Influenza pandemics are characterised by the spread of a novel type of influenza virus to many parts of the world, causing unusually high morbidity (illness) and mortality (deaths) for perhaps two to three years. Most people do not have immunity to the virus and therefore are susceptible to influenza infection. A pandemic can

overwhelm the resources of a society due to the exceptional number of those affected.

A pandemic may occur as a result of the emergence of a new viral sub-type with the capacity to spread efficiently from human to human.

### **What are the symptoms of influenza?**

Influenza is a highly contagious viral disease of the respiratory tract, characterised by rapid onset of respiratory and generalised signs and symptoms including: a high fever, headache, muscle aches and pains, fatigue, cough, sore throat, or a runny nose.

### **How is influenza spread?**

Influenza is spread from person to person in the respiratory droplets generated by coughs and sneezes. It can also be spread when a person comes into contact with the respiratory droplets of another person by touching items on which droplets are present, and then touches their own eyes, mouth or nose before washing their hands. The virus may enter through the eyes or more commonly through the nose or mouth, and into the throat and lungs where it begins to multiply. The time from first exposure to when symptoms begin is one to four days.

The disease damages the linings of the respiratory tract. Secondary bacterial infections, such as pneumonia, meningitis, sinus and ear infections can then take hold.

### **How long is the influenza virus infectious?**

It is not known for certain if people with influenza are infectious before developing symptoms. An adult with influenza is infectious once they show symptoms, and for some days after. Students have been shown to remain infectious for up to 21 days, long after symptoms have disappeared. Some individuals may become infected but never show symptoms.

Influenza viruses may be able to live for up to two days on hard surfaces such as doorknobs, handrails, toys, cups, utensils, telephones. Although it can live on these surfaces it is not as infectious as these surfaces are usually dry.

### **Where can we find international information updates?**

The [World Health Organisation](#) website provides updates on the global occurrence of avian influenza, risks to humans, vaccine and anti-viral developments. It also provides useful background information about the nature and characteristics of avian influenza and past pandemics.

The [World Organisation for Animal Health](#) provides an international perspective and updates on infection in birds.

The New Zealand [Ministry of Health](#) also provides much relevant information.