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29 April 2009

To all Headteachers and Chairs of Governing Bodies
of Maintained Schools in Lincolnshire
Principals of Colleges of Further Education
Heads of Independent Schools/Nurseries
Heads of PRUs
Heads of Children's Centres
Private and Voluntary Children's Organisations
Early Years Settings

Children's Services
County Offices
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Dear Colleague

Preparatory action to meet challenge of pandemic flu

As you will be aware, the flu outbreak that began in Mexico is considered by the Government and the Health Protection Agency (HPA) to be sufficiently serious to warrant preparatory measures.

I want to reassure you that the preparations in Lincolnshire for dealing with a potential pandemic (an outbreak which is generalised) are very well advanced, and are being coordinated by the NHS Tactical Co-ordinating Group (NHS/TCG) and the Lincolnshire Resilience Forum (LRF). The County Council's Children's Services Directorate is represented on these bodies.

I am enclosing with this letter two documents:

- * Draft Schools Flu Pandemic Contingency Plan
- * DCSF document 'Planning for a Human Influenza Epidemic'

I would be grateful if you and your senior management team and governing body would look carefully at the plan template provided and create your own version of the plan by populating the template with your own school/college information if you do not already have an agreed plan. Please keep the completed plan in both paper and electronic form.

I would draw your attention in particular to the sections of the template entitled 'school actions' and 'decisions to close the school'. The current guidance from the government is that schools and colleges themselves will take the decision on whether or not to close their institutions, unless and until the government or the County Council takes a decision to instruct closure. The operating principle is that services should continue wherever possible.

The guidance from the DCSF was issued some months ago and is still valid.

If you have queries regarding the flu plan, **contact us** for help or advice on completing the document.

If your query relates to any aspect of flu itself, or its effects or treatment, **do not contact us**, but go to the following websites, which are updated very regularly:

www.nhs.uk (comprehensive information -the portal will guide you further)

www.hpa.org.uk (the Health Protection Agency- general and specific advice)

www.nhs24.uk (medical and treatment information.)

Thank you for your help in this matter. If you have any queries on the plan, please contact david.robinson@lincolnshire.gov.uk or lin.oneill@lincolnshire.gov.uk.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'DB', written in a cursive style.

Debbie Barnes
Assistant Director
Children's Services