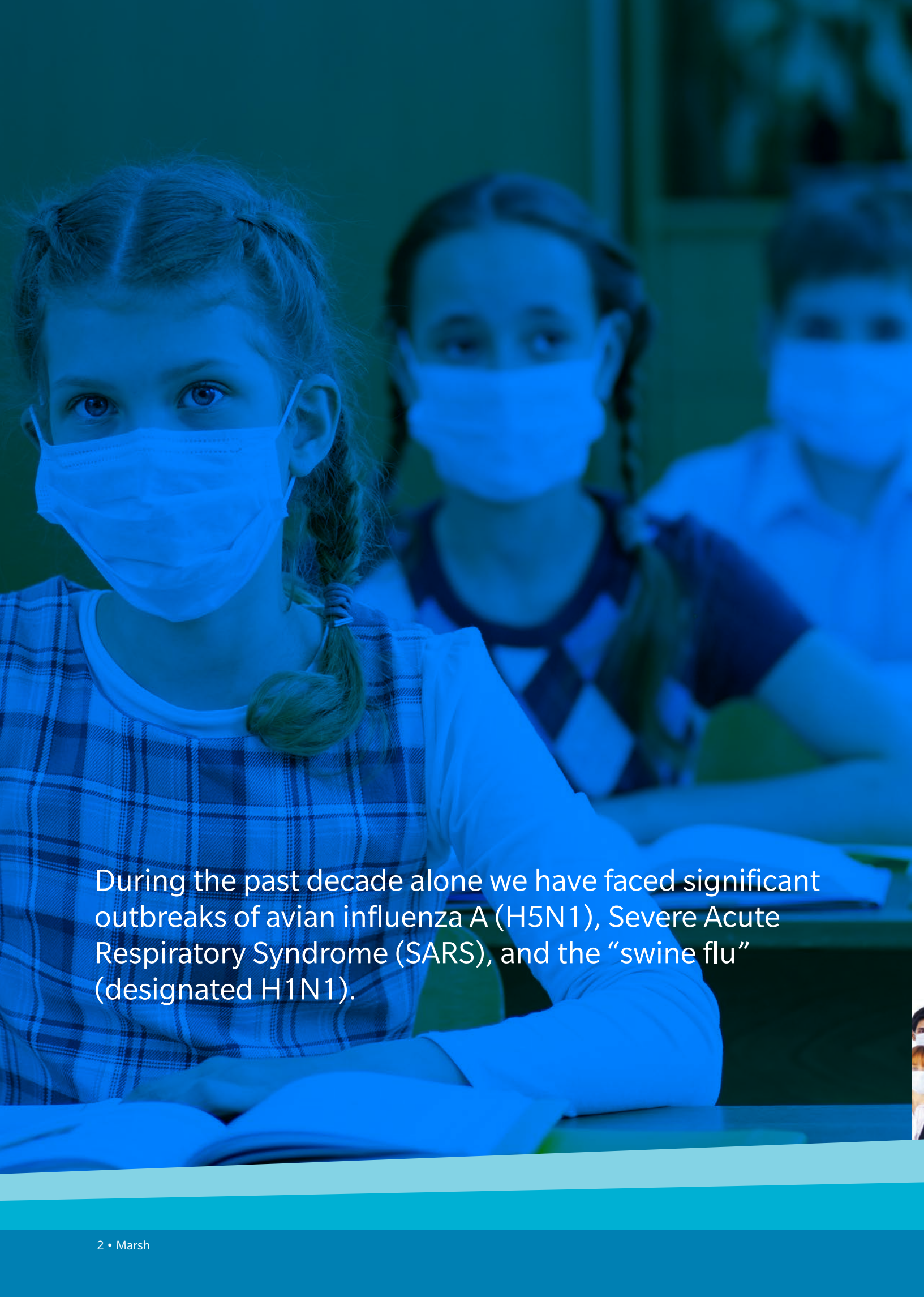


PANDEMIC PREPAREDNESS A GUIDE FOR SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES





During the past decade alone we have faced significant outbreaks of avian influenza A (H5N1), Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS), and the “swine flu” (designated H1N1).

PANDEMIC PREPAREDNESS

DON'T PANIC, HAVE A PLAN

Recent outbreaks of viruses such as avian influenza A (H7N9) in China, the novel coronavirus Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS-CoV), and Ebola (Zaire strain) in West Africa bring to light an emerging threat that schools and colleges should be prepared to address. How ready is your school?

Unlike regional events such as hurricanes, earthquakes, or terrorist attacks, a pandemic is a recurring global event. In today's world, where travel is readily available, what may start as a localised event can quickly spread across the country and across continents. During the past decade alone we have faced significant outbreaks of avian influenza A (H5N1), Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS), and the "swine flu" (designated H1N1). The latter began in Mexico and spread to most countries, causing more than 18,000 deaths and disrupting travel and commerce around the world.

These outbreaks present governments and health officials with unique challenges. Properly diagnosing the viruses early can be difficult as symptoms mimic those of other ailments, as well as each other. Often the source of new strains can be difficult to identify, making control efforts challenging. Furthermore, if a virus has never been seen in humans before, there are no existing preventative treatments in place. Even for "known viruses" such as Ebola, often there is no available vaccine or a specific course of treatment.

Consider these questions:

- Is my school equipped to operate with a reduced staffing capability?
- What policies and procedures does my school need to put in place should we become short staffed for a prolonged period of time?
- What measures do we need to put in place to continue the provision of education in the event large numbers of pupils are unable to attend?

The answers to these and related questions will give you an indication of your organisation's current level of preparedness and may suggest areas where you need to update your planning.

Protecting Your Good Name

FAST FACT

Crisis communications cover of up to £25,000 is included in Marsh's education public liability policy*.

* Terms and conditions apply.



BUSINESS CONTINUITY PLAN

Whilst pandemics are high profile, wide impact events, your school can also be impacted by localised infectious disease outbreaks that will also require your response and management, for example norovirus or measles. These can have just as wide an impact on your school and staffing capability but often without the wider external support that may be available in a pandemic incident. Therefore, it is important to develop an infectious disease plan that can respond to both local and pandemic outbreaks as well as ensuring it integrates with existing crisis communications, crisis management, emergency response, and continuity plans. In order for a school to be pandemic ready, it should:

- Validate current pandemic preparedness and management plans and procedures.
- Define or integrate plans within an existing overall crisis management structure and process to guide rapid and coordinated decision making at appropriate levels.
- Develop the necessary policies to support pandemic response efforts in relation to:
 - What should our attendance policy be?
 - Should employees come to work if a family member is sick?
 - What additional cleaning and precautions are necessary?
 - How will we continue the provision of education with a reduced staffing capability?
 - Will we encourage staff to use personal protective equipment such as masks and gloves?
 - How are we monitoring the spread of an outbreak? Where do we get reliable information from and who should we be liaising with?
- Orchestrate and align all related incident response plans, including business continuity, emergency response, communications, human impact, and others.
- Train personnel to help ensure the effective execution of the plan as circumstances dictate.

The Marsh UK Education Forum is a dedicated group on LinkedIn for all Marsh education clients.

FAST FACT

Longer term, it may be appropriate for your school to develop a broad-based overarching crisis management plan designed to address not just pandemic risk, but an array of events – human, environmental, physical, financial, legal, or regulatory – that can affect your employees, the school’s ability to continue providing an education environment, and the reputation of your school.

The ability to plan successfully for a crisis and mitigate the impacts on your business is the result of a full understanding of risks, comprehensive planning, regular training and exercises, and a strategy for maintaining these capabilities over time.

BUSINESS INTERRUPTION AND PANDEMICS – IS YOUR SCHOOL COVERED?

It is likely that a school’s insurance for business interruption arising from disease applies to specific, individually-listed diseases only, as itemised within the policy wording. For example, while Ebola may not appear on the defined list of “specified diseases”, it could still be covered because Ebola is one of a group of viruses causing viral haemorrhagic fever, which may well be a specified disease type listed under the policy wording.

For any Marsh school and college policy holder, the above is the case. As a consequence, insurers will regard interruption or interference with the business arising from Ebola as falling for due consideration, subject to all the existing terms and conditions of the school’s insurance policy.

SUGGESTED FURTHER READING

- www.gov.uk/pandemic-flu
- www.hse.gov.uk/biosafety/diseases/pandemic.htm
- Marsh UK Education Forum on LinkedIn
- uk.marsh.com/education



IF THE WORST HAPPENS: CRISIS COMMUNICATIONS

There is no doubt that the closure of a school due to a serious disease outbreak is a crisis, and a crisis can negatively impact reputation, no matter where the blame lies. What's more, in an ever more competitive education sector, reputation is increasingly important to long-term success.

With that in mind, it is very important to keep people informed during the outbreak or school closure – keeping parents and the local community in the dark is likely to undermine goodwill and, ultimately, affect the school's reputation. However, communicating with the media, and directly with parents – be it via the school website, text messages, or email – will always be very difficult for any school that does not have a clear communications plan in place before the onset of a pandemic.

The success of crisis communications is very much dependent upon prior planning and well-defined processes – all of which should be designed to enable the school to move very quickly in keeping everyone informed.

An effective plan should consider how staff members will stay in touch in the event of a quarantine response or sudden school closure, how parents will be kept informed, and a whole host of other issues – for instance, will it be possible to post messages on the school website remotely? It should also set out “chains of command”, outlining who will prepare statements, who needs to approve their content, and who will distribute or deliver them?

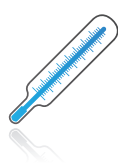
DO NOT WAIT FOR A CRISIS TO HAPPEN – HERE IS WHAT YOU SHOULD DO NOW

- Assemble a crisis communication team.
- Appoint the following: a head; a spokesperson for internal communications; and a different spokesperson for external communications. Appoint deputies for these positions – it might be that one of the appointees is the member of staff at the centre of the very scandal you need to communicate about.
- Devise a media protocol for the external communications spokesperson. Include who needs to agree statements before they are issued.

- Put your local regional media on a database, including telephone, fax, and email.
- Rehearse how you would deal with communications.
- Include crisis communications in staff training sessions, not forgetting induction training.
- Identify stakeholders and their potential involvement.

ACTION POINTS FOR COMMUNICATIONS HAVING IDENTIFIED A CRISIS

- Draw up a plan for the immediate future and assign responsibilities.
- Log all enquiries and answers.
- Enlist experienced support staff, including an IT manager.
- Draft holding statements.
- Know the whole situation, write it down, including definitions of terms, and circulate to the crisis communication team.
- Agree the extent of stakeholder involvement.
- Decide on and prioritise your audiences, e.g. staff, parents, pupils, media, etc.
- Anticipate questions and prepare answers.
- Consider communication requirements for the longer term, including media monitoring and direct communication with those affected.
- Be wary about making comments that might have repercussions later.
- Think pictures not just words: What is going on behind you during a television interview? What photograph will the local newspaper use to illustrate the story?
- Do not neglect the running of your school or college – crises can absorb a great deal of management and teaching time.
- Agree on non-jargon terminology.



WIDESPREAD PANDEMIC OUTBREAKS OF THE LAST CENTURY

While the World Health Organization (WHO) and other health organisations, and governments have established differing pandemic “phases” to classify widespread outbreaks, pandemic is generally defined as an epidemic that becomes very widespread and affects a whole region, a continent, or the world.

Past pandemics of note include:

2009-2010:

Influenza A (H1N1), commonly known as swine flu, infected as many as 576,000 people worldwide and resulted in more than 18,000 deaths.

2003:

Avian influenza A (H5N1) emerged from Southern China. Though not officially designated a pandemic, the virus spread to 15 countries in Asia and the Middle East. The WHO confirmed 628 human cases, resulting in 374 deaths.

2003:

According to the WHO, there were nearly 8,100 probable cases of SARS reported in 29 countries before the outbreak was contained by the end of the year. Worldwide, 774 people died.

1977-1978:

Dubbed the “Russian Flu,” a version of the H1N1 strain primarily affected people born after 1950 who had not developed anti-bodies following an outbreak of a similar strain a few decades earlier.

1968-1969:

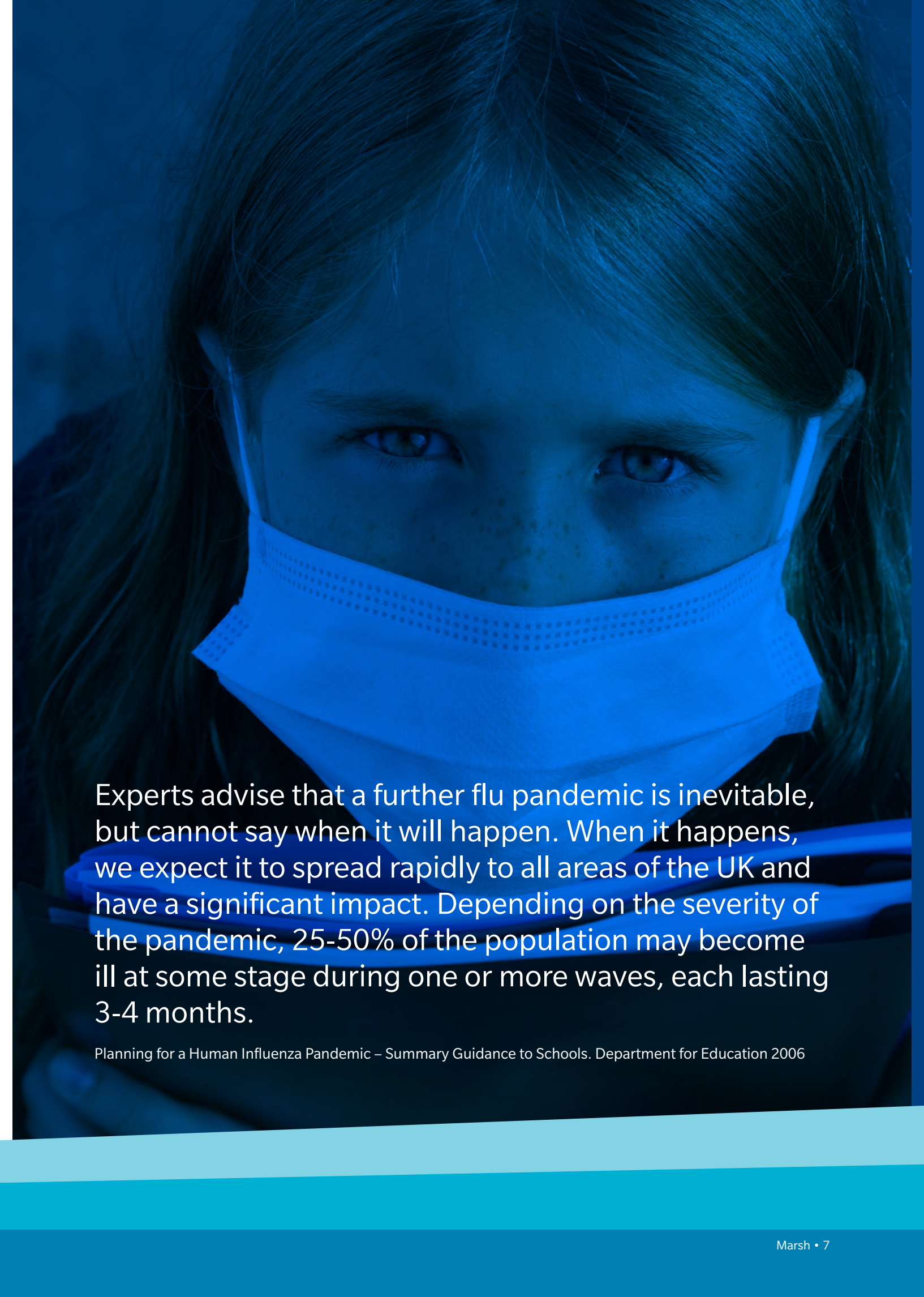
A strain of influenza A (H3N2), originating in the Hong Kong area, went on to kill an estimated one million people worldwide.

1957-1958:

The “Asian Flu” originated in ducks and combined with a pre-existing human flu strain. First seen in Guizhou, China, it spread to Singapore, Hong Kong, and then the US, where the death toll reached approximately 70,000. It is estimated that one to four million deaths occurred worldwide.

1918-1920:

The “Spanish Flu,” as it is commonly known, was a Category 5 pandemic caused by an unusually severe strain of the H1N1 virus. It was seen in every country, even the Arctic and remote island nations. Fatality estimates vary, but as many as 50-100 million people, mostly young adults, were said to have perished.



Experts advise that a further flu pandemic is inevitable, but cannot say when it will happen. When it happens, we expect it to spread rapidly to all areas of the UK and have a significant impact. Depending on the severity of the pandemic, 25-50% of the population may become ill at some stage during one or more waves, each lasting 3-4 months.

Planning for a Human Influenza Pandemic – Summary Guidance to Schools. Department for Education 2006



ABOUT MARSH

Marsh is a global leader in insurance broking and risk management. In more than 130 countries, our experts help clients to anticipate, quantify, and more fully understand the range of risks they face. In today's increasingly uncertain global business environment, Marsh helps clients to thrive and survive.

We work with clients of all sizes to define, design, and deliver innovative solutions to better quantify and manage risk. To every client interaction we bring a powerful combination of deep intellectual capital, industry-specific expertise, global experience, and collaboration. We offer risk management, risk consulting, insurance broking, alternative risk financing, and insurance programme management services.

Since 1871 clients have relied on Marsh for trusted advice, to represent their interests in the marketplace, make sense of an increasingly complex world, and help turn risks into new opportunities for growth. Our more than 27,000 colleagues work on behalf of our clients, who are enterprises of all sizes in every industry, and include businesses, government entities, multinational organisations, and individuals around the world.

We are a wholly owned subsidiary of Marsh & McLennan Companies (NYSE: MMC), a global professional services firm offering clients advice and solutions in the areas of risk, strategy, and people. With 57,000 colleagues worldwide and annual revenue exceeding \$13 billion (as of 31 December, 2014), Marsh & McLennan Companies also include global leaders Guy Carpenter, Mercer, and Oliver Wyman.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT:

Marsh Ltd, Education Practice, Capital House, 1–5 Perrymount Road, Haywards Heath, West Sussex RH16 3SY



01444 335100



development.team@marsh.com



uk.marsh.com/education



Join our group

The information contained herein is based on sources we believe reliable and should be understood to be general risk management and insurance information only. The information is not intended to be taken as advice with respect to any individual situation and cannot be relied upon as such.

Marsh Ltd is authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority.

Copyright © 2016 Marsh Ltd. All rights reserved.

