

## **GL337 – Microbiology – What to do if your school closes**

If you are due to start a microbiology teaching cycle, bear in mind the amount of time needed to prepare, incubate, show the students the results, and dispose of the resources. If your school closes there may be a limited amount of time to deal with any inoculated media e.g. broths, plates or slopes.

- Talk to your line manager about what needs to be sterilised and how long this will take (i.e. length of the sterilising cycle and the number of batches you will need to carry out).
- If there is not sufficient time to complete this job before the school closes:
  - Negotiate if you or another trained person can return to school to complete sterilisation (consider lone working protocols)
  - Make sterilising inoculated broths a priority – they cannot be left.
  - If you don't have time to also sterilise inoculated plates leave them taped shut in an open autoclave bag on the side in a locked prep room (avoid leaving on a windowsill). These will remain safe to handle for a considerable amount of time. Sterilise these as soon as possible once you have access to school again.
- Slopes stored in the fridge can be left where they are. If they have been there for more than 3 months you will need to steam sterilise them and buy in new for use when you return to school.
- Place freshly made un-inoculated agar plates into a general rubbish bag, tie the bag up and put it into the bin that is directly handled by the refuse collector. Avoid storing plates in the fridge as this encourages condensation to form. For further guidance on how to store plates see guidance GL277 *Pouring sterile agar plates and making slopes*.
- Freshly made un-inoculated broths sterilised in conical flasks can be poured down the drain. If the broth was sterilised in a universal bottle, tighten the lid and store this for later use.

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