



Mark Parkinson, Governor
Roderick L. Bremby, Secretary

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
AND ENVIRONMENT

www.kdheks.gov

Division of Health

August 7, 2009

Dear Local Health Department Partner:

Updated Interim Guidance on Student Dismissal for 2009 H1N1 Flu

This letter is to replace the guidance we sent you on May 5 regarding dismissal of students due to suspected or confirmed cases of infection with the 2009 Influenza A (H1N1) virus. This updated guidance is consistent with new advice received from the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and reflects our current understanding of the severity and spread of the outbreak.

These are our recommendations, effective immediately:

- School closure is not advised for a suspected or confirmed case. In general, closure is not advised for multiple cases unless there is a magnitude of faculty or student absenteeism that interferes with the school's ability to function.
- Students, faculty or staff with influenza-like illness (fever with a cough or sore throat) should stay home and not attend school or go into the community except to seek medical care until at least 24 hours after they are free of fever (100F or 37.8C), or signs of fever without the use of fever-reducing medications.
- Students, faculty and staff who appear to have an influenza-like illness at arrival or become ill during the school day should be isolated promptly in a room separate from other students and sent home.
- Parents and guardians should monitor their school-aged children, and faculty and staff should self-monitor every morning for symptoms of influenza-like illness.
- Ill students should not attend alternative child care or congregate in settings other than school.

School administrators should communicate regularly with you in local public health departments to obtain guidance about reporting of influenza-like illnesses in the school. KDHE is also ready to consult with you and school districts on this matter.

The new recommendations focus on keeping potentially infectious persons out of schools, rather than suspending classes. This means that school-aged household contacts of confirmed or probable cases must continue to be advised not to return to school until at least 24 hours after they are free of fever (100F or 37.8C), or signs of fever without the use of fever-reducing medications.

Schools can help serve as a focus for educational activities aimed at promoting ways to reduce the spread of influenza, including hand hygiene and cough etiquette. Students, faculty and staff

should stringently follow sanitary measures to reduce the spread of influenza, including covering their nose and mouth with a tissue when coughing or sneezing (or coughing or sneezing into their sleeve if a tissue isn't available), frequently washing hands with soap and water, or using hand sanitizer if hand washing with soap and water is not possible.

We appreciate the efforts that you have taken with Kansas educators to protect students, staff and the wider community from infections with this new virus. As our scientific and medical understanding grows, we will continue to communicate with you about the role that educational institutions in your communities have in reducing the transmission of this virus.

Thank you for your can-do spirit in working with us during this event.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jason Eberhart-Phillips MD". The signature is written in a cursive style with a clear "MD" at the end.

Jason Eberhart-Phillips, MD, MPH
State Health Officer and Director of Health, KDHE