

H1N1 Action Steps for Parents to Protect Your Child and Family from the Flu this School Year

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends 4 main ways you and your family may keep from getting sick with the flu at school and at home:

1. **Practice good hand hygiene** by washing your hands often with soap and water, especially after coughing or sneezing. Alcohol-based hand cleaners are also effective.
2. **Cover your mouth and nose** with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. If you don't have a tissue, cough or sneeze into your elbow or shoulder; not into your hands.
3. **Stay home if you or your child is sick** for at least 24 hours after there is no longer a fever or signs of a fever (without the use of fever-reducing medicine). Keeping sick students at home means that they keep their viruses to themselves rather than sharing them with others.
4. **Get your family vaccinated** for seasonal flu and 2009 H1N1 flu when vaccines are available.

If flu conditions become **MORE** severe, parents should consider the following steps:

- **Extend the time sick children stay home** for at least 7 days, even if they feel better sooner. People who are still sick after 7 days should continue to stay home until at least 24 hours after symptoms have completely gone away.
- **If a household member is sick, keep any school-aged brothers or sisters home for 5 days** from the time the household member became sick. Parents should monitor their health and the health of other school-aged children for fever and other symptoms of the flu.

Follow these steps to prepare for the flu during the 2009-2010 school year:

- Plan for child care at home if your child gets sick or their school is dismissed.
- Plan to monitor the health of the sick child and any other children in the household by checking for fever and other symptoms of flu.
- Identify if you have children who are at higher risk of serious disease from the flu and talk to your healthcare provider about a plan to protect them during the flu season. Children at high risk of serious disease from the flu include: children under 5 years of age and those children with chronic medical conditions, such as asthma and diabetes.
- Identify a separate room in the house for the care of sick family members.
- Update emergency contact lists.
- Collect games, books, DVDs and other items to keep your family entertained if schools are dismissed or your child is sick and must stay home.

Talk to your school administrators about their pandemic or emergency plan.

For more information:

- **Visit:** www.flu.gov
- **Contact CDC 24 Hours/Every Day**
 - 1-800-CDC-INFO (232-4636)
 - TTY: (888)232-6348
 - cdcinfo@cdc.gov

Action Steps for Parents if School is Dismissed or Children are Sick and Must Stay Home

- Be prepared to support home learning activities if the school makes them available. Your child's school may offer web-based lessons, instructional phone calls, and other types of distance learning. Have school materials, such as text books, workbooks, and homework packets available at home.
- Have activities for your children to do while at home. Pull together games, books, DVDs and other items to keep your family entertained.
- Find out if your employer will allow you to stay at home to care for sick household members or children dismissed from school. Ask if you can work from home. If this is not possible, find other ways to care for your children at home.
- If school is dismissed, monitor the school's website, local news, and other sources for information about returning to school.

Tips for taking care of children (and other household members) with the flu

- **Stay home if you or your child is sick** until at least 24 hours after there is no longer a fever or signs of a fever (without the use of a fever-reducing medicine). Keeping sick students at home means that they keep their viruses to themselves rather than sharing them with others. Stay home even if taking antiviral medicines.
- **Cover coughs and sneezes. Clean hands** with soap and water or an alcohol-based hand rub often and especially after coughing or sneezing.
- **Keep sick household members in a separate room** (a sick room) in the house as much as possible to limit contact with household members who are not sick. Consider designating a single person as the main caregiver for the sick person.
- **Monitor the health of the sick child and any other household members** by checking for fever and other symptoms of flu. A fever is a temperature taken with a thermometer that is equal to or greater than 100 degrees Fahrenheit (37.8 degrees Celsius). If you are not able to measure a temperature, the sick person might have a fever if he or she feels warm, has a flushed appearance, or is sweating or shivering.

Watch for emergency warning signs that need urgent medical attention. These warning signs include:

- Fast breathing or trouble breathing
- Bluish or gray skin color
- Not drinking enough fluids
- Not urinating or no tears when crying
- Severe or persistent vomiting
- Not waking up or not interacting
- Being so irritable that the child does not want to be held
- Pain or pressure in the chest or abdomen
- Sudden dizziness
- Confusion
- Flu-like symptoms improve but then return with fever and worse cough

- **Check with your doctor about any special care** needed for household members who may be at higher risk for complications from flu. This includes children under the age of 5 years, pregnant women, people of any age who have chronic medical conditions (such as asthma, diabetes, or heart disease), and people age 65 years and older.
- **Have the sick household member wear a facemask** – if available and tolerable – when sharing common spaces with other household members to help prevent spreading the virus to others. This is especially important if other household members are at high risk for complications from flu.
- **Ask your doctor about antiviral medicines or fever-reducing medicines** for sick household members. Do not give aspirin to children or teenagers; it can cause a rare but serious illness called Reye's syndrome
- **Make sure sick household members get plenty of rest and drink clear fluids** (such as water, broth, sports drinks, electrolyte beverages for infants) to keep from being dehydrated.
- **If your health department says that flu conditions have become more severe**
- **Extend the time sick children stay home** for at least 7 days, even if they feel better sooner. People who are still sick after 7 days should continue to stay home until at least 24 hours after symptoms have gone away.
- **If a household member is sick, keep any school-aged brothers or sisters home** for 5 days from the time the household member became sick. Parents should monitor their health and the health of other school-aged children for fever and other symptoms of the flu.

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Date:

Dear Parent/Guardian:

As you may know, flu can be easily spread from person to person. Therefore, we are taking steps to reduce the spread of flu in the Worcester Public Schools. We want to keep the schools open to students and functioning in a normal manner during this flu season. But, we need your help to do this.

For now, we are doing everything we can to keep our schools functioning as usual. Here are a few things you can do to help.

- **Teach your children to wash their hands** often with soap and water or an alcohol-based hand rub. You can set a good example by doing this yourself.
- **Teach your children not to share personal items** like drinks, food or unwashed utensils, and to cover their coughs and sneezes with tissues. Covering up their coughs or sneezes using the elbow, arm or sleeve instead of the hand when a tissue is unavailable.
- **Know the signs and symptoms of the flu.** Symptoms of the flu include fever (100 degrees Fahrenheit, 37.8 degrees Celsius or greater), cough, sore throat, a runny or stuffy nose, body aches, headache and feeling very tired. Some people may also vomit or have diarrhea.
- **Keep sick children at home** for at least 24 hours *after* they no longer have a fever or do not have signs of fever, without using fever-reducing drugs. Keeping children with a fever at home will reduce the number of people who may get infected.
- **Do not send children to school if they are sick.** Any children who are determined to be sick while at school *will* be sent home.

If the flu becomes more severe, we may take additional steps to prevent the spread such as:

- conducting active fever and flu symptom screening of students and staff as they arrive at school,
- making changes to increase the space between people such as moving desks farther apart and postponing class trips, and
- dismissing students from school for at least 7 days if they become sick.

Sincerely

Principal

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Please call the main office at the school if you would like this document translated into a language other than English.

Por favor, contate a secretaria central da escola caso deseje que este documento seja traduzido para o português.

Por favor, llame a la oficina central de la escuela si usted desea que este documento sea traducido al español.

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Xin gọi điện thoại cho văn phòng nhà trường nếu quý vị muốn tài liệu này được dịch ra một ngôn ngữ khác hơn tiếng Anh

Take the following steps to help keep students, teachers, and staff from getting sick with flu.

These steps should be followed ALL the time and not only during a flu pandemic.

- **Educate and encourage students and staff to cover their mouth and nose** with a tissue when they cough or sneeze. Also, provide them with easy access to tissues and running water and soap or alcohol-based hand cleaners. Remind them to cover coughs or sneezes using their elbow instead of their hand when a tissue is not available.
- **Remind teachers, staff, and students to practice good hand hygiene** and provide the time and supplies for them to wash their hands as often as necessary.
- **Send sick students, teachers, and staff home** and advise them and their families that sick people should stay at home until at least 24 hours after they no longer have a fever or signs of a fever (without the use of fever-reducing medicine).
- **Clean surfaces and items** that are more likely to have frequent hand contact such as desks, door knobs, keyboards, or pens, with cleaning agents that are usually used in these areas.
- **Move students, teachers, and staff to a separate room** if they become sick at school until they can be sent home. Limit the number of staff who take care of the sick person and provide a surgical mask for the sick person to wear if they can tolerate it.
- **Have Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) such as masks** available and ensure the equipment is worn by school nurses and other staff caring for sick people at school.
- **Encourage early medical evaluation for sick students and staff** at higher risk of complications from flu. People at high risk of flu complications who get sick will benefit from early treatment with antiviral medicines.
- **Stay in regular communication with local public health officials.**

If the flu conditions become MORE severe, schools should consider adding the following steps:

- **Extend the time sick students, teachers, or staff stay home** for at least 7 days, even if they feel better sooner. Those who are still sick after 7 days should continue to stay home until at least 24 hours after symptoms have gone away.
- **Allow high-risk students, teachers, and staff to stay home.** These students, teachers, and staff should make this decision in consultation with their physician and/or health professional.
- **Conduct active fever and symptom screening** of students, teachers, and staff upon arrival at school. Any sick students, teacher, or staff should be separated from others, offered a surgical mask, and sent home.
- **Find ways to increase social distances** (the space between people) at school such as rotating teachers between classrooms while keeping the same group of students in one classroom, moving desks farther apart, or postponing class trips.
- **Consider how and when to dismiss students** by working closely with your local and state public health officials. If you decide to dismiss all students, notify CDC and your state health and education agency by reporting a school or school district dismissal at www.cdc.gov/FluSchoolDismissal.

Follow these steps to prepare for the flu during the 2009-2010 school year:

- Review and revise existing pandemic plans and focus on protecting high-risk students, teachers, and staff.
- Update student, teacher, and staff contact information as well as emergency contact lists.
- Identify and establish points of contact with the local public health and education agencies.
- Develop a plan to cover key staff positions, such as the school nurse, when staff stay home because they are sick.
- Develop communication tools (e.g., letters to parents, Web site postings) that can be used to send sick students home, dismiss students, and to remind parents and staff how long sick students and staff should remain at home. Check out *Preparing for the Flu: A Communication Toolkit for Schools (Grades K-12)* for basic information and communication resources such as letters and flyers for parents. The toolkit is available at www.flu.gov.
- Review school policies and awards criteria to encourage social distancing and avoiding any incentives for students or staff to go to school when sick (e.g., cancel perfect attendance awards).
- Develop a school dismissal plan and options for how school work can be continued at home (e.g., homework packets, Web-based lessons, phone calls), if school is dismissed or students are sent home when sick.
- Collaborate with the local health department, community organizations, local businesses, and social services on a plan for flu response.
- Help families and communities understand the important roles they can play in reducing the spread of flu in schools.

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Teacher Fact Sheet

Action Steps for Teachers to Prevent the Spread of Flu

Take the following steps ALL the time and not only during a flu pandemic to help keep your students and yourself from getting sick with flu.

- **Educate and encourage students to cover their mouth and nose with a tissue** when they cough or sneeze. Also, provide them with easy access to tissues. Remind them to cover coughs or sneezes using their elbow instead of their hand when a tissue is not available.
- **Remind students to practice good hand hygiene** and provide the time and supplies (easy access to running water and soap or alcohol-based hand cleaners) for them to wash their hands as often as necessary.
- **Be a good role model** by practicing good hand hygiene and covering your mouth and nose when coughing or sneezing.
- **Keep an eye out for sick students and send them to the school health office for further evaluation.** Sick people should stay at home until at least 24 hours after they no longer have a fever or signs of a fever (without the use of fever-reducing medicine).
- **Clean surfaces and items** that are more likely to have frequent hand contact such as desks, door knobs, keyboards, or pens, with cleaning agents that are usually used in these areas.
- **Teachers should also stay home when sick.** Stay home until at least 24 hours after you no longer have a fever or signs of a fever (without the use of fever-reducing medicine).
- **If you are pregnant, have asthma, diabetes, or other conditions that put you at higher risk for complications from the flu,** you should **speak with your doctor as soon as possible** if you develop symptoms of flu-like illness. People at high risk of flu complications who develop flu can benefit from early treatment with antiviral medicines.
- **If you have children,** plan ahead for child care if your child gets sick or his or her school is dismissed.
- **Be prepared in case the flu becomes more severe.**
 - **Develop options for how school work can be continued at home** (e.g., homework packets, Web-based lessons, phone calls), if school is dismissed or your students are home because someone in their household is sick.
 - **Be prepared for sick students or staff stay home for at least 7 days,** even if they feel better sooner. Those who are still sick after 7 days should continue to stay home until at least 24 hours after symptoms have gone away.
 - **Allow high-risk students to stay home.** These students should make this decision in consultation with their physician or other health professional.
 - **Find ways to increase social distances** (the space between people) in your classroom. For example, you might rearrange desks so that there is more space between students, consider canceling classes that bring students together from different rooms, or postpone class trips.

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