



## Arizona Department of Health Services' Guidance for State and Local Public Health Officials and School Administrators for School (K-12) Responses to Influenza during the 2009- 2010 School Year

August 18, 2009

*This document provides guidance to help decrease the spread of flu among students and school staff during the 2009-2010 school year. Based on the severity of 2009 H1N1 flu-related illness thus far, this guidance also recommends that students and staff with influenza-like illness remain home until 24 hours after resolution of fever without the use of fever-reducing medications.*

*For the purpose of this guidance, "schools" will refer to both public and private institutions providing grades K-12 education to children and adolescents in group settings. The guidance applies to such schools in their entirety, even if they provide services for younger or older students. Guidance for child care settings and institutions of higher education will be addressed in separate documents.*

This guidance is designed to decrease exposure to regular seasonal flu and 2009 H1N1 flu while limiting the disruption of day-to-day activities and the vital learning that goes on in schools. The Arizona Department of Health Services will continue to monitor the situation and update the current guidance as more information is obtained on 2009 H1N1 influenza.

The decision to dismiss students should be made locally by school and public health authorities. These decisions should also balance the goal of reducing the number of people who become seriously ill or die from influenza with the goal of minimizing social disruption and safety risks to children sometimes associated with school dismissal.

### Recommended school responses for the 2009-2010 school year

#### **Under conditions with similar severity as in spring 2009**

- **Stay home when sick:**

Those with flu-like illness should stay home for at least 24 hours after they no longer have a fever or chills, without the use of fever-reducing medicines. Fever-reducing medications, which include medications containing acetaminophen or ibuprofen, are appropriate for use in individuals with influenza-like illness. Aspirin (acetylsalicylic acid) should not be given to children or teenagers who have influenza; this can cause a rare but serious illness called Reye's syndrome. The determination of readiness to return to school should be made when at least 24 hours have passed since the ill person's temperature first remained normal (below 100 ° F) without the use of these medications. (For more information, see

at <http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/guidance/exclusion.htm> ).

- **Separate ill students and staff:**  
Students and staff who appear to have flu-like illness should be separated (preferably in a separate room) from others until they can be sent home. CDC recommends that they wear a surgical mask, if possible, and that those who care for ill students and staff wear protective gear such as a mask
- **Hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette:**  
The new recommendations emphasize the importance of the basic foundations of influenza prevention: stay home when sick, wash hands frequently with soap and water when possible or use alcohol based hand sanitizer, and cover noses and mouths with a tissue when coughing or sneezing (or a shirt sleeve or elbow if no tissue is available).
- **Routine cleaning:**  
School staff should follow their routine cleaning protocol using the cleaners they typically use with special attention to areas that students and staff touch often. Special cleaning with bleach and other non-detergent-based cleaners is not necessary.
- **Attention to high-risk students and staff:**  
Those at high risk for influenza complications who become ill with influenza-like illness should speak with their health care provider as soon as possible. People at high risk include those who are pregnant, have asthma, diabetes, or underlying heart or lung disease, have compromised immune systems, or have neuromuscular diseases.
- **Consideration of selective school dismissal:**  
Although there are few schools where all or most students are at high risk (for example, schools for medically-fragile children or for pregnant students), a community might decide to dismiss such a school to better protect these high-risk students.

**NOTE:** These recommendations may change if the severity of influenza increases or changes.