

Action Steps for School Staff Regarding Pandemic Flu

1. **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.
2. **Remind students to practice good hand hygiene** and provide the time and supplies (easy access to running water and soap or alcohol-based hand sanitizers) for them to wash their hands as often as necessary. Children should be supervised during use of hand sanitizers.
3. **Be a good role model** by practicing good hand hygiene and covering your mouth and nose when coughing or sneezing.
4. **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).
5. **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. These items should be cleaned at least daily.
6. **School staff 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).
7. **If you are pregnant, have asthma, diabetes, or other conditions that put you at higher risk for complications from the flu,** you should **call 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.
8. **If you have children,** plan ahead for child care if your child gets sick or his or her school is dismissed.
9. **Avoid any incentives for students to go to school when sick** (e.g. cancel perfect attendance awards).
10. **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.
11. **Check that student contact information (parent and alternate emergency phone numbers) is correct and current** for the students you have responsibility for. Check this information anytime you have parent/guardian contact.
12. **Healthy children stay in school!**
13. **Get Vaccinated** for seasonal and H1N1 flu.

If Flu conditions become MORE severe in our community as determined by the CDC and DOH your school may be directed to take the following steps:

- a. **The NM DOH and PED, in collaboration with the district, may determine to extend the time sick students, teachers, or staff stay home** to at least 7 days,

even if they feel better sooner. Those who are still sick after 7 days will need to continue to stay home until at least 24 hours after symptoms have gone away.

- b. **If you are pregnant, have asthma, diabetes, or other conditions that put you at higher risk for complications from the flu, you should call your doctor/health care provider 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.
- c. **Monitor students in your class upon arrival to school for flu like symptoms (fever, cough, and sore throat).** Send these students to the Health Office for evaluation. Any sick students, teacher, or staff should be separated from others, offered a surgical mask, and sent home (if fever plus at least cough or sore throat). Students, teacher, or staff sent home with these symptoms one day may not return to school the next day (must be without a fever 24 hours or more without the use of fever reducing medication).
- d. **If a household member is sick with flu-like illness, 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 (remember this is for severe outbreak conditions in the community only, as determined by the DOH).
- e. **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.
- f. **The Department of Health and Public Education Department will be working closely with your school district to consider how and when to dismiss students from individual schools should the need arise.**