



Answers to Frequently Asked Questions for Administrators of Schools and Child Care Programs

**From the New Hampshire Department of Education (NHDOE) and the New Hampshire
Department of Health and Human Services (NHDHHS)**

We are providing answers to frequently asked questions for school and child care personnel about the current H1N1 influenza (swine flu). School and child care personnel should call 603-271-4496 with any questions.

There is a separate public inquiry line that is available to parents and other members of the public: 1-888-330-6764 that is available 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. daily.

What are the current recommendations for influenza like illness control measures for New Hampshire schools or child care programs?

- Rather than continuing to advise individual schools or child care programs on closure based on the diagnosis of cases of influenza A H1N1 in students or staff, we will instead implement a statewide policy that focuses on keeping all students with symptoms of influenza out of school during their period of illness and recuperation, when they are potentially infectious to others. This change in policy is an enhanced version of the approach that we use during our yearly influenza season.
- Schools or child care programs will not be routinely ordered closed by DPHS on the basis of a diagnosis of suspected or confirmed cases of influenza A H1N1. As is our practice with seasonal influenza, schools may be closed if larger numbers of students or faculty become ill and school functioning becomes disrupted.
- As always, school nurses or facility leaders should report higher than normal absenteeism to NH DHHS Communicable Disease Section 603-271-4496.
- We do not recommend canceling any events or closing any schools at this time. We recommend consulting with NH DHHS Communicable Disease Section before considering any actions outside of your standard protocols and outside the scope of this guidance.

What are some basic resources on healthy habits to prevent H1N1 influenza infection?

At this time, NHDHHS recommends following the CDC's "*Preventing the Flu: Good Health Habits Can Help Stop Germs*" (<http://www.cdc.gov/flu/protect/habits.htm>). This website contains links to printable materials including posters for use in your school. There are also materials available on the DHHS website at www.dhhs.nh.gov.

What are the symptoms of H1N1 influenza?

It is a respiratory disease. Symptoms of H1N1 influenza may include fever >100°F and at least one of the following: rhinorrhea or nasal congestion, or cough, or sore throat.

What should a school or childcare program do if a child shows possible symptoms of influenza during the school day?

Take these immediate actions:

- Contact parent or guardian
- Isolate the child from other children, under supervision of an adult
- Have the child wear a surgical mask if tolerated
- Limit the number of people who come into contact with the child
- Adults in contact should use a surgical mask and continue to wash hands frequently
- Dismiss the child from school or childcare.
- Guide parents with questions to the public inquiry line at **1-888-330-6764**.

If a child or other household member is diagnosed with H1N1 influenza, should other children who have had close contact be allowed to return to school or childcare?

If they are not symptomatic they may go to school.

See also CDC's "*Interim Guidance for Swine influenza A (H1N1): Taking Care of a Sick Person in Your Home*" (http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/guidance_homecare.htm).

Should schools be interviewing faculty and students to determine whether they traveled to affected areas?

No, The probable cases we have seen in New Hampshire demonstrate that travel is not a determining indicator of the H1N1 virus.

It is more critical to look for flu-like symptoms in students and staff, and to instruct those with symptoms stay home from school or work, and to consult with their health care providers as they usually would.

Should we exclude children from school/child care programs who are returning from affected areas, or had contact with people who traveled to affected areas?

No, the probable cases we have seen in New Hampshire demonstrate that travel is not a determining indicator of the H1N1 virus. It is more critical to look for flu-like symptoms in students and staff, and to instruct those with symptoms to not come to school or work, and to consult with their health care providers.

When can children/staff/faculty return to school/child care programs when they have been ill with influenza like illness or confirmed H1N1?

- All students, staff or faculty with influenza-like illness (fever and cough or sore throat) should stay home and not attend school. Students should stay home for 24 hours after major symptoms have resolved (fever, rhinorrhea).
- All students, staff and faculty with probable or confirmed H1N1 influenza should stay out of school for at least 7 days even if their symptoms resolve sooner. Students and faculty who are still sick at 7 days should continue to stay home from school until at least 24 hours after they have completely recovered.

Are schools and childcare programs required to report to parents if there is a potential or diagnosed case of H1N1 influenza?

If a case is confirmed, NHDHHS will provide recommended actions.

Are there any special cleaning procedures for facilities related to H1N1?

- School custodians should follow routine cleaning and disinfection procedures for all buildings.
- No special cleaning or disinfection products are recommended. Custodial staff should use appropriate personal protective equipment including gloves when using chemical cleaners or disinfectants.
- Childcare providers are required to follow NH Child Care Program Licensing cleaning and sanitation rules.

What should residential schools do if they have a student with influenza symptoms?

- Students should be voluntarily isolated either at home, in the infirmary, or another setting separate from non-affected students.
- Residential schools and programs and residential group homes should contact the school public inquiry line for NH DHHS for consultation on specific students.

These recommendations are subject to change as additional epidemiological and clinical data become available.

