



CALIFORNIA
DEPARTMENT OF
EDUCATION

JACK O'CONNELL
STATE SUPERINTENDENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

April 29, 2009

Dear County and District Superintendents and Charter School Administrators:

PROPER PROCEDURES IN RESPONSE TO FLU OUTBREAK

The number of confirmed cases of H1N1 Influenza, commonly known as the swine flu, is increasing in California. As a result, local educational agencies (LEAs) must move quickly to ensure they are prepared to handle a possible flu outbreak in their communities. It is critical that district, school, and preschool emergency plans be reviewed immediately and updated if necessary to include procedures for addressing a possible influenza pandemic.

The California Department of Education (CDE) has important information and links to the latest information about the swine flu on the CDE Flu Prevention Web page at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ls/he/hn/fluinfo.asp>. The Web page also provides:

- A listing of resources and information on preparing for and responding to a potential pandemic influenza.
- Frequently asked questions and answers about how schools can prepare in the event of pandemic influenza.
- Checklists that provide assistance to LEAs, childcare agencies, and preschools in preparing for pandemic influenza. The checklists can be used to ensure that all relevant issues are covered in a school safety plan. The sections of the checklist cover all phases of a disease outbreak and are labeled: Mitigation and Prevention, Preparedness, Response, and Recovery.
- Sample flu notification letters and information for parents including how to protect their family and what to do in the case of school closure. The sample letters are in multiple languages and can be customized to district and school needs and used for any type of influenza, including the current swine flu outbreak.

Although some of the resources were developed during preparation for responding to avian flu, the precautions and procedures are the same for the current swine flu outbreak, including, but not limited to:

- School personnel who are sick should stay home.

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- Students who are sick should stay home.
- Cover coughs and sneezes.
- Wash hands often and properly—for at least 20 seconds. **It is essential that you ensure that all school sites have soap and/or hand sanitizers for both student and staff use.**

The California Department of Public Health (CDPH) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) have recommended that local public health officers should order the dismissal of students from any public school if there is one confirmed or one strongly suspected case of swine flu. If a local public health officer orders a school closure, then school officials should also cancel other school gatherings and advise parents to warn their children not to get together with other children during the time school is dismissed. Schools should resume normal operations only after no other confirmed cases have been reported for seven days after the last confirmed case of swine flu from that school.

Please continue to work closely with your local health officials to monitor the situation in your county and the state. You can also review the latest updates through your local news sources and on the following Web sites:

- CDE at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/>
- CDPH at <http://www.cdph.ca.gov/Pages/default.aspx> (Outside Source)
- CDC at <http://www.cdc.gov/> (Outside Source)

I will continue to keep you updated with any relevant information related to the swine flu outbreak and the impact the illness may have on our students, schools, and education community.

If you have any questions regarding this subject, please contact Linda Davis-Alldritt, School Health Education Consultant, School Health Connect and Healthy Start Office, at 916-319-0914 or by e-mail at Schoolhealth@cde.ca.gov.

Sincerely,



JACK O'CONNELL

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