



**THE STATE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT
UNIVERSITY OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK**
Carole F. Huxley
Interim Commissioner



**NEW YORK STATE
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH**
Richard F. Daines, M.D.
Commissioner

TO: District Superintendents of Schools
Superintendents of Public and Nonpublic Schools
Administrators of Charter Schools
School Principals
Directors of School-Based Health Clinics
Local Health Department Officials

FROM: Interim Commissioner Carole F. Huxley, NYS Education Department
Commissioner Richard F. Daines, M.D., NYS Department of Health

SUBJECT: 2009-2010 School (K-12) Guidance: Novel H1N1 Influenza (Flu) Virus

DATE: August 31, 2009

The New York State Education Department and the New York State Department of Health continue to collaborate on guidance for educational institutions in New York State (outside of New York City). We are writing to provide you with the latest guidance on ways schools can help to reduce the spread of the novel H1N1 influenza virus.

The guidance expands and modifies previous guidance and focuses on numerous non-pharmaceutical, community-based measures that should be useful in reducing disease transmission and associated illness during the outbreak of novel H1N1 flu virus. The guidance is based on the novel H1N1 influenza continuing to exhibit the same severity that was observed during the spring of 2009. If novel H1N1 influenza exhibits greater severity the State Department of Health and State Education Department may issue additional guidance recommending additional non-pharmaceutical interventions.

We continue to emphasize that the primary means to reduce spread of flu in schools is to focus on early identification of ill students and staff who should be excluded from school and all school-related activities when ill, and to encourage good hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette. The overall impact of novel H1N1 flu this fall is likely to be greater than in the spring. School closures and student dismissals may be warranted, depending on the disease burden and other conditions. Decisions related to measures taken in response to human infections with novel H1N1 flu virus remain at the discretion of the local board of education/superintendent in consultation with local health officials, taking into account the impact of school absenteeism and staffing shortages along with the identified health needs of the community.

Please find the New York State "2009 - 2010 School (K-12) Guidance: Novel H1N1 Influenza (Flu) Virus," our guidance pertaining to non-pharmaceutical, community-based measures aimed at reducing disease transmission and associated illness during this outbreak of novel H1N1 flu virus.

Preventing the spread of flu requires that everyone take personal responsibility to embrace the adoption of effective mitigation measures and to work collaboratively at the community level to implement them. Thank you for your continued cooperation in this matter.

Attachment:

NYSDOH Advisory, "2009 - 2010 School (K-12) Guidance: H1N1 Influenza (Flu) Infections"