

May 5, 2009 CDC Recommendations for Schools K-12; *additional Denton ISD comments/requirements in italics*

Introduction - the goal in any unusual event like we have just recently experienced in our Denton ISD community is "to return to normal as quickly as is feasible."

The following recommendations from the CDC with *district comments* will be followed as the operating standards for resuming classes with due consideration for safety, good health and appropriate caution. These standards have been reviewed and approved by the Denton County Health Authority.

- School closure is not advised for a suspected or confirmed case of novel influenza A (H1N1) and, in general, is not advised unless there is a magnitude of faculty or student absenteeism that interferes with the school's ability to function. *The H1N1 strain is proving to produce mild to moderate symptoms at this time, and the numbers of affected people within the district is relatively small. The CDC and our local health authority will keep the district informed of any changes in that status, and the district will, in turn, continue to keep parents informed of any changes. The district will closely monitor absentee rates through the end of the school year, note any unusual trends and respond accordingly.*
- Schools that were closed based on previous interim CDC guidance related to this outbreak may reopen. *Denton ISD is resuming all classes and activities on Thursday, May 7, 2009.*
- Students, faculty or staff with influenza-like illness (fever with a cough or sore throat) should stay home and not attend school or go into the community except to seek medical care for at least 7 days even if symptoms resolve sooner. *District nurses will revert to the usual standard of care* with the exception noted above - those seven days start from the day the symptoms begin; this standard applies if the ill person has been to see a physician or not, unless the physician provides documentation to the school that the condition is not contagious. District nurses will recommend contacting a healthcare provider for anyone assessed with flu-like symptoms or any other symptoms of contagious disease.*

** Usual Standard of Care - anyone returning to school after being sent home with **any** symptoms of contagious disease must either:*

1. bring a note from their healthcare provider stating that the person does not have a condition that is contagious to others and may return, or

2. be symptom-free for 24 hours without the use of medication.

- Students, faculty and staff who are still sick 7 days after they become ill should continue to stay home from school until at least 24 hours after symptoms have resolved. *Those who have been ill must be symptom-free without the use of medication to reduce symptoms for those 24 hours before they may return.*

- Students, faculty and staff who appear to have an influenza-like illness at arrival or become ill during the school day should be isolated promptly in a room separate from other students and sent home. *Parents will be contacted right away to pick up their child, and any siblings or other family members within the district will be monitored closely for the next seven days to determine as early as possible if any symptoms of flu-like illness are developing. All people excluded from school by the nurse for flu-like symptoms will be sent home with a special note to take to their health care provider for a signature if they do go to see one.*

Siblings or other family members who had been excluded before because of a family member being ill but do not have any symptoms themselves may return to school/work on Thursday when classes resume. Just being exposed to the flu does not require exclusion.

- Parents and guardians should monitor their school-aged children, and faculty and staff should self-monitor every morning for symptoms of influenza-like illness. *This means checking for fever, cough and/or sore throat at the beginning of each school day. Parents should also make the school nurse aware of any children at home who are ill.*
- Ill students should not attend alternative child care or congregate in settings other than school. *This is an important parent responsibility.*
- School administrators should communicate regularly with local public health officials to obtain guidance about reporting of influenza-like illnesses in the school. *DISD RNs will maintain school surveillance and remain in contact with colleagues at the Denton County Health Department (DCHD) to maintain awareness of symptoms and any suspected, probable or confirmed cases within the district. All nurses will complete the DCHD "Influenza-like Illness Report" for any students who have been reported to them with Type A influenza through the end of this school year.*
- Schools can help serve as a focus for educational activities aimed at promoting ways to reduce the spread of influenza, including hand hygiene and cough etiquette. *School nurses and classroom teachers in our district have been and will continue to promote awareness of these very basic public health measures on a frequent basis.*
- Students, faculty and staff should stringently follow sanitary measures to reduce the spread of influenza, including covering their nose and mouth with a tissue when coughing or sneezing (or coughing or sneezing into their sleeve if a tissue isn't available), frequently washing hands with soap and water, or using hand sanitizer if hand washing with soap and water is not possible. *The district operations staff and administrators are working closely will all involved to maintain a healthy school environment, ensuring adequate handwashing supplies and following recommended sanitizing procedures daily in each building. Additionally, hand sanitizer is being provided for each classroom and office. Nurses will maintain frequent communication with building custodians if there are any areas of special concern for cleaning. All of the cleaning supplies used are approved for school use, and leave no surface residue or airborne particles that could cause untoward effects for our students or staff.*

The CDC guidelines can be seen in their entirety at the following website:

http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/K12_dismissal.htm