

H1N1

What's Changed Since May?

A LOT! When the word pandemic flu first started making the news in April, health officials reacted cautiously for many reasons. Primarily, there was limited knowledge of the severity of the strain and reports out of affected countries such as Mexico indicated high numbers of hospitalizations and widespread illness. Strict guidelines and recommendations affecting school communities were put into place in order to prevent the spread of this new virus.

In the weeks that followed, major shifts occurred when it became clear that the H1N1 flu was presenting with more moderate symptoms than first suspected. Guidelines and recommendations changed significantly and are very similar to those for the seasonal flu. Below is a “then and now” so that you may understand what procedures school districts are now following.

| Action | Last May | Current |
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| Notification Letters | Letters sent home to parents and guardians upon the identification of a <i>probable</i> case of H1N1. | Notification letters no longer required. Flu prevention and education to be reinforced. |
| Tracking of H1N1 | Tracking of positive H1N1 cases and their family members by local health officials with school nurses reporting daily and weekly. | Tracking no longer in effect. Flu surveillance with general statistics of absences and those with flu like illness reported weekly to local health officials. |
| School Closure | School closure recommended by the CDC with one confirmed case of H1N1. | School closure is no longer recommended by the CDC. |
| Absence requirements for students diagnosed with H1N1 | Mandatory stay home for 7 days from the onset of symptoms. | Mandatory stay home until fever free for 24 hours without the use of fever reducing medications. |
| Testing for H1N1 | Positive flu quick tests forwarded to state lab for additional testing to determine H1N1. | No additional testing unless hospitalized. Some doctors are using commercial labs for confirmation, however <u>this is not required.</u> |
| Cleaning Procedures | Routine cleaning using typical agents. No additional cleanings are recommended. | Routine cleaning using typical agents. No additional cleanings are recommended. |