



COUNTY OF POLK
Health Department
www.polkcountyiowa.gov/health

Terri Henkels, Director
1907 Carpenter Avenue
Des Moines, Iowa 50314
Ph. 515.286.3798
Fax. 515.286.2033

Dear *[parent, teacher, or insert name]*,

[Insert school name] is working with the Polk County Health Department to help reduce the spread of illness, such as the flu and H1N1, in our school. To do this it is very important for ill students and staff to stay home when they are sick.

A student or staff member that comes to school with flu-like symptoms, including fever, cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, body aches, headache, chills and fatigue, will be sent home from school. **A person who has these symptoms should stay home for 24 hours after their fever has gone down, without the use of fever-reducing medication.** Students or staff members who are well but have an ill family member at home can still go to school, unless they develop symptoms.

While a sick family member is at home it is important to prevent other family members from getting sick by taking these steps.

- Try to have the sick person stay in one room and limit contact with other family members.
- Remind the sick person to cover their coughs and sneezes, and wash their hands often with soap and water.
- Designate one adult family member to care for the sick person. Avoid having pregnant women or high risk individuals care for the sick person and avoid having sick family members care for infants.
- Everyone in the house should wash their hands often with soap and water.
- If possible maintain good ventilation by keeping windows open in bathrooms and kitchens.
- Throw away tissues used by the sick person and clean surfaces, such as bedside tables, countertops and toys by wiping them with a household disinfectant.
- Wash linens, eating utensils, and dishes used by the sick person before being shared with others (they do not need to be washed separately).

With your help in implementing these proven strategies we will be able to minimize the number of students, staff, parents and siblings that get sick this flu season. Remember that it doesn't matter whether your symptoms are mild or severe, you still have germs that can be passed to others. Thank you for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

The Polk County Health Department
[insert your school's name]