

[LETTER TO PARENTS to be used at a general education piece, put on your school's letterhead]

Dear Parent,

As you know, we are entering the time period for seasonal flu and also for the return of novel H1N1 flu. These diseases can be easily spread from person to person. Therefore, we are taking steps to reduce the spread of flu in *[School name]*. We want to keep the school open to students and functioning in a normal manner during this flu season. **But, we need your help to do this.**

We are working closely with the Polk County Health Department, Polk County school districts, and the Iowa Department of Education to monitor flu conditions and make decisions about the best steps to take concerning schools. We will keep you updated with new information as it becomes available.

For now we are doing everything we can to keep our school functioning as usual. Here are a few things you can do to help.

Know the signs and symptoms of the flu. Symptoms of the flu include fever (100 degrees Fahrenheit, 37.8 degrees Celsius or greater), cough, sore throat, a runny or stuffy nose, body aches, headache, and feeling very tired. Some people may also vomit or have diarrhea.

Do not send children to school if they are sick. Any children who are determined to be sick while at school will be sent home. Have a plan in place if you need to stay home with a sick child.

Keep sick children at home for at least 24 hours after they no longer have fever or do not have signs of fever, *without using fever-reducing drugs*. **Keeping children with a fever at home will reduce the number of people who may get infected.**

Teach your children to wash their hands often with soap and water or an alcohol-based hand rub. You can set a good example by doing this yourself.

Teach your children not to share personal items like drinks, food or unwashed utensils.

Teach your child to cover their coughs and sneezes with tissues. If tissue is unavailable they can cover up their coughs or sneezes using the elbow, arm or sleeve instead of the hand.

As a parent it is important that you stay healthy so you can protect your children. Although the seasonal flu shot does not protect against H1N1 it will protect you from the seasonal flu and being in good health can help you fight off other types of illness.

[Insert the following paragraph if your school is hosting a seasonal flu shot clinic]

To help make getting your seasonal flu shot easier *[School Name]* will be hosting a flu shot clinic for students, parents, siblings and teachers. You will be receiving additional information about these clinics in the following weeks.

For more information about flu in our community and what our school is doing, visit www.polkcountyiowa.gov/health or call 515 286-3798. We will notify you of any additional changes to our school's strategy to prevent the spread of flu.

Sincerely,

[School administrator's name and signature]