

[LETTER FOR STAFF to be used to provide an update on the situation]

Dear Teachers and Staff:

Welcome back! We hope you had a relaxing summer as we look forward to a new school year. As you know, last spring Iowa had confirmed cases of H1N1 influenza. This summer there have been many confirmed cases throughout the country and worldwide. Because the virus has been shown to affect school-aged children, we will continue to follow the pandemic preparedness plan which was developed by the Polk County Health Department and put into effect in our school last spring. This plan utilized several **action steps** to promote infection control measures. These will help us prepare for the regular flu season as well as the return of H1N1.

We urge you to use daily these important **action steps**. They are:

- teaching and reinforcing proper hand washing (both soap and water and the use of alcohol-based gels)
- teaching and reinforcing proper cough etiquette (coughing and sneezing in the crook of your elbow, not your hands)
- providing appropriate hand washing and sneezing supplies
- daily cleaning and disinfection of surfaces at school
- strict adherence to exclusion policies for illness symptoms

Please note: should one of your students become ill, they should not be allowed to return to your classroom unless they have been temperature-free for at least 24 hours after their temperature returns to normal (without the help of fever-reducing medication).

We will continue to work closely with the Polk County Health Department to help prevent the spread of disease in our school and community. *[delete the beginning of the following sentence if your school does not have a flu shot clinic scheduled]* We will be holding seasonal flu shot clinics and will assist the Polk County Health Department in vaccinating school-aged children when the H1N1 vaccine becomes available later this fall.

THANK YOU for all that you do and for helping with these preventative measures. For more information about H1N1 and the seasonal flu you can visit [www.polkcountyiowa.gov/health](http://www.polkcountyiowa.gov/health).

Sincerely,

[Signature of School Principal etc]