

Guidelines for San Diego Schools to Address Swine Flu
Updated 04/29/2009

The most important things that can be done to protect students and staff are:

- Sick individuals should stay home until they are feeling better.
- Cover your cough – with a tissue or by coughing into your sleeve.
- Wash your hands often – particularly after coughing or sneezing and before eating; a waterless hand sanitizer is an effective method to clean hands.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth – as that is how infections are transmitted.

The policy for determining who should stay home from school, and for how long, as well as whether school closures are necessary is based on guidance from the CDC (<http://www.cdc.gov/swineflu/mitigation.htm>). Excerpts from this information are below, with recommendations on how they will be implemented in the County of San Diego.

Some definitions from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC):

- An ***acute respiratory illness (ARI)*** is defined as recent onset of at least two of the following: rhinorrhea (nasal discharge) or nasal congestion, sore throat, cough (with or without fever or feverishness).
- An ***Influenza-like-illness (ILI)*** is an illness in a person who has fever with either cough or sore throat.
- A ***confirmed case*** of swine influenza A (H1N1) virus infection is defined as a person with an illness with a fever and a laboratory confirmed swine influenza A (H1N1) virus infection at CDC or state public health lab.
- A ***probable case*** of swine influenza A (H1N1) virus infection is defined as a person with an ARI with fever or ILI who has a *non-typable* influenza specimen at the County of San Diego public health lab.
- A ***suspected case*** of swine influenza A (H1N1) virus infection is defined as a person with ARI with fever or ILI that started within 7 days of close contact with a person who is a confirmed case of swine influenza A (H1N1) virus infection or within 7 days of travel to community in Mexico where there are one or more confirmed swine influenza A(H1N1) cases.

All individuals who are sick should remain home while they are ill. If a student or staff member is a confirmed or probable case of swine flu, staff from The Division of Public Health Services, County of San Diego Health and Human Services Agency will contact the school to discuss the possibility of a school closure. The decision to close a facility is made by PHS in coordination with school personnel.

The guidelines for recommending a student dismissal and school closure, adapted from the CDC, are:

- Dismissal of students should be strongly considered in schools with a confirmed or a suspected case epidemiologically linked to a confirmed case.
- Decisions regarding broader school dismissal within these communities should be left to local authorities, taking into account the extent of ILI in the community.
- If the school dismisses students or a childcare facility closes, they should also cancel all school or childcare related gatherings and encourage parents and students to avoid congregating outside of the school.
- Schools and childcare facilities should dismiss students for a time period to be evaluated on an ongoing basis depending upon epidemiological findings.
- Schools and childcare facilities should consult with their local health departments for guidance on reopening. If no additional confirmed or suspected cases are identified among students (or school-based personnel) for a period of 7 days, schools may consider reopening.
- Schools and childcare facilities in unaffected areas should begin to prepare for the possibility of school dismissal or childcare facility closure. This includes asking teachers, parents and officials in charge of critical school-associated programs (such as meal services) to make contingency plans.

Please report students (or staff) who meet the definition of a suspected case to the Community Epidemiology Branch:

- Telephone (619) 515-6620
- Provide the student name (or staff name), a parent name (for students), and a contact phone number.
- In addition the school name and a contact person will be needed.

A Public Health Nurse will make contact with the students' parents or staff. Students or staff with ARI with fever or ILI will be instructed to stay home for 7 days after the date of onset of symptoms or until 1 day after symptoms resolve (whichever is later). The individual will be instructed to not attend school and remain home. If a cluster of cases, or additional risk factors for serious illness with swine flu are present, a nasal swab may be obtained for laboratory testing. If a positive test for swine flu is obtained, a discussion between Public Health Services and the school will take place to determine the need for a student dismissal and facility closure.