

SAMPLE LETTER TO PARENTS #3 -- Expanded Outbreak:

Use this letter to let parents know schools are open and emphasize that ill children stay home

Dear Parents,

We wrote to you recently to tell you about concerns of an expanding influenza outbreak in our community. Here is some new information to share with you.

Our daily classroom absenteeism monitoring indicates that there are now even more students in our school who are ill with the H1N1 flu virus (swine flu). We have been working closely with the _____ County Health Department to slow the spread of this new flu virus and they tell us that students who are not ill can continue to attend school. We will keep you updated with any important information.

To keep the flu from spreading to more people, we ask you to keep children with a fever and cough at home. Any children who are sick in school will be sent home.

Public health officials want you to protect yourself and your family against pandemic flu. Here are some ways to stop the spread of flu viruses and take care of your family

- Keep children who are sick at home. Don't send them to school.
- If some of the people in your home are sick with the flu, try to keep them at least 6 feet away from the people who are not sick.
- If some of the people in your home are sick with the flu, some things you can do to help them are:
 - o Have them drink lots of liquids (juice, water).
 - o Keep the ill person as comfortable as possible. Rest is important.
 - o For fever, sore throat and muscle aches, use ibuprofen (Motrin) or acetaminophen (Tylenol). Do not use aspirin with children or teenagers; it can cause Reye's syndrome, a life-threatening medical condition.
 - o Keep tissues and a trash can within reach of the sick person for easy disposal of tissues.
 - o Be sure everyone in your home washes their hands frequently.
 - o Contact a healthcare provider for further advice. Your healthcare provider may want to prescribe antiviral medications for persons who are ill, or for well household members to protect them from getting sick, especially if they are pregnant, have asthma or other respiratory problems, or have diabetes. If the ill person is having difficulty breathing or is getting worse, contact the healthcare provider right away.

If the H1N1 flu continues to spread and more students become ill, students may be dismissed from school for days or weeks. The purpose of student dismissals will be to keep children from getting sick. If students are dismissed, children should stay at home. **Begin planning now for child care in your home.**

For more information about H1N1 influenza, visit the Oklahoma State Department of Health's website at <http://h1n1.health.ok.gov>.