



Principals' H1N1 Resource
Week of 9/7/09

Below are answers to questions submitted by principals, with potential relevance to the larger NYC public school community. Responses reflect the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene's (DOHMH) recommendations, made in consultation with the Department of Education. This resource page will be updated on a semi-regular basis.

Will vaccinations be given to the staff as well at the elementary schools?

At this time, the DOHMH Bureau of Immunizations advises us that vaccinations provided in schools will only be given to students. Staff can obtain vaccinations using the traditional channels such as their private physician.

Do we know if the vaccination is safe?

The H1N1 vaccine is produced using the same methods as those used for seasonal influenza vaccine for many years. We expect the vaccine will be safe based on that experience, but the new vaccine's safety will also be studied in trials that are underway now...

We have extremely medical fragile students, are any accommodations being made to have D75 students vaccinated in school?

The current vaccination plan calls for school based vaccinations in elementary schools and community based vaccinations for middle and high schools. D75 schools may be vaccinated separately if they are in stand alone buildings. We are still evaluating this.

In the event that the H1N1 mutates how much will the current policy we have in place change?

The H1N1 virus has not changed since it appeared in the spring and we do not expect it to change much in the next few months. If the disease it causes becomes much more severe we will re-evaluate all of our current policies, but we doubt this will happen.

We want children to wash their hands often. Are we allowed to have hand sanitizer in the classrooms and about the schools?

Yes, hand sanitizer will be permitted in schools.

What is the monitoring and reporting that will be done with school-based health centers (SBHC)?

SBHC's will be asked to report number of ILI through a web-based system. The expectation is that SBHC's and school nurses will share the number of ILI with principals upon request.

Last spring we had to report absences and ILI's to the ISC and superintendent. Do we still need to do that?

There is no requirement to report ILI and absences to ISC and superintendents. School nurses will use a citywide database to report the number of students experiencing "influenza-like illness" (fever of 100 degrees or higher, with a cough or sore throat) while at school each day.

The Health Department's website will have a daily list of schools reporting 5 or more cases of influenza-like illness on the previous school day. We will also post attendance for every public school, although this is not an accurate measure of influenza activity in a school.

If parents do opt to have their child immunized, will the pupil accounting secretary need to enter this information into ATS in the child's immunization record? If not, how will records be kept?

Immunization information will not be entered into ATS since the vaccine is not mandated for school entry.

If staff are ill and stay home, will it be charged to an individual's sick time?

If staff are ill and stay home, this time must be charged to the individual's sick time.

If staff are not ill but are "at risk" and stay home, will it be considered sick time?

If staff are not ill and stay home, this time must be charged to the individual's sick time.