

School Board of Brevard County

2700 Judge Fran Jamieson Way • Viera, FL 32940-6601

Mark W. Mullins, Ed.D., Superintendent



January 21, 2020

MEMORANDUM

TO: All Principals

FROM: Christine M. Moore, Assistant Superintendent
Student Services and Exceptional Student Education

RE: Influenza Letters

The FDOH has developed guidance letters for school administrators regarding the recent flu outbreak.

As previously addressed in last week's LTM, cases of influenza for this year's flu season have been increasing nationwide. According to the Department of Health in Florida, flu activity levels remained above levels observed during the previous two flu seasons. Again, the FDOH recommends sick individuals stay home until fever-free for 24 hours (without the use of fever-reducing medication) and that all individuals exercise good handwashing practices.

Attached are two letters from the FDOH – one is a letter for school administrators, the other is an optional letter schools may send home to parents or legal guardians. I am also including the direct links from the FDOH.

[Influenza Letter to School Principals and Administrators, January 2020.pdf](#)

[Sample Letter to Parents, January 2020.pdf](#)

Thank you for your attention to this very important matter.

attachments

Christine M. Moore
Assistant Superintendent Student Services
Phone: (321) 633-1000, ext. 11270 • FAX: (321) 633-3454



Mission:

To protect, promote & improve the health of all people in Florida through integrated state, county & community efforts.



Ron DeSantis
Governor

Scott A. Rivkees, MD
State Surgeon General

Vision: To be the Healthiest State in the Nation

January 6, 2020

Dear Principal or Administrator:

Influenza activity levels are increasing across the state and the nation, especially in children. So far this season, over 80% of all outbreaks have been reported in facilities serving children. The best way to defend against seasonal influenza and its potentially severe complications in children is to ensure they receive a seasonal influenza vaccine each year. **We ask that you please advise students, teachers, and staff to get vaccinated. We also strongly recommend that you send a letter home to parents encouraging them to vaccinate their children and keep sick children home from school (draft letter provided).**

People infected with influenza are most likely to pass the disease to others early in course of their illness (within the first three days after symptoms begin). **This means it is important to review school illness exclusion policies with staff, teachers, and parents to ensure parents keep children sick with influenza symptoms home.** Symptoms of influenza often include fever, cough, sore throat, runny nose, body aches, headaches, or fatigue. Influenza vaccines are safe and continue to be the best way to protect students, teachers, staff, and their families from influenza infection. The Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices continues to recommend influenza vaccine to everyone aged 6 months and older.

The Florida Department of Health urges schools to help fight the spread of influenza by:

- **Sending a letter to parents encouraging influenza vaccination and reminding them to keep sick children home;** provided on our website: FloridaHealth.gov/diseases-and-conditions/influenza/flu-resources.html, as well as "The Flu: A Guide for Parents" fact sheet found here: www.cdc.gov/flu/highrisk/parents.htm?CDC_AA_refVal=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.cdc.gov%2Fflu%2Fparents%2Findex.htm.
 - To locate influenza vaccine, contact your physician, your local county health department, or visit: FloridaHealth.gov/findaflushot.
- **Encouraging both teachers and staff to get vaccinated.**
- **Rapidly identifying sick students, teachers, and staff; and ensuring they stay home when they are sick.**
- Promoting good respiratory etiquette: students, teachers, and staff should cover their noses and mouths with a tissue when coughing or sneezing, wash their hands often with soap and warm water, and avoid touching their eyes, noses, or mouths.
- Cleaning and disinfecting commonly handled surfaces or objects on a regular basis.
- **Contacting your local county health department right away to report any suspected outbreaks of influenza or influenza-like illness.**


Florida Department of Health
Office of the State Surgeon General
4052 Bald Cypress Way, Bin A-00 • Tallahassee, FL 32399-1701
PHONE: 850/245-4210 • FAX: 850/922-9453
FloridaHealth.gov



School Principals and Administrators
Page Two
January 6, 2020

For more information on preventing influenza and for school-specific resources, please visit: www.cdc.gov/flu/school/. Please reach out to your local county health department with any questions (FloridaHealth.gov/CHDEpiContact). Thank you for your important contribution to protecting the health of those in the community you serve!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "SAR", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Scott A. Rivkees, MD
State Surgeon General

January XX, 2020

Dear Parents:

The Florida Department of Health reports influenza activity levels have increased notably over the last few weeks. **The Florida Department of Health is encouraging families to get vaccinated for influenza as soon as possible. Influenza vaccines are safe and the best way to protect against influenza and its potentially severe complications.**

Influenza can cause mild to severe illness. Serious outcomes of influenza infection can result in hospitalization or death. Some people, such as young children, the elderly, and people with certain health conditions are at higher risk for serious complications from influenza. Some children are at especially high risk for influenza-related complications: children less than five years old, American Indian and Alaskan Native children, and children with chronic health problems.

While rare, influenza-associated pediatric deaths are reported each season, most often in unvaccinated children with underlying health conditions. Last season, six influenza-associated pediatric deaths were reported in Florida, and all six occurred in children who were not fully vaccinated. Influenza vaccination has been shown to significantly reduce a child's risk of dying from flu. For more information, please visit www.cdc.gov/flu/parents/index.htm.

The best ways to protect your child and your family during influenza season are to:

1. Get vaccinated.
2. Keep sick family members home.
3. Contact your health care provider if you or your child are experiencing flu-like symptoms (common symptoms include fever, cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, body aches, and headache).
4. Follow your physician's guidance on treatment.
5. Take additional steps to prevent flu by staying away from people who are sick, frequently washing your hands with soap and warm water, and avoiding touching your eyes, nose, and mouth as much as possible.

Annual influenza vaccination is crucial for children with underlying health conditions including asthma, diabetes, heart disease, and neurological and neurodevelopmental conditions. Children less than six months old are too young to be vaccinated, which is why it is so important to make sure the people around them are vaccinated.

Influenza vaccines are offered in many locations including pharmacies, clinics, employers, and schools. **Contact your physician or county health department, or visit FloridaHealth.gov/findaflushot to find a location offering influenza vaccines near you.**

Sincerely,