

Monitoring H1N1 Influenza

The H1N1 Influenza is a novel virus that could affect as much as 50 percent of the population this year. The primary goal is to prevent the spread of this illness to the greatest extent possible. Thus, the HCPSS is encouraging everyone to follow prevention measures to reduce the spread of the illness. Another key factor to prevent the spread of the illness is staying home when ill, especially with flu-like symptoms.

1. Why do we have to monitor student and staff's absence due to illness?

The HCPSS is working with the local and state health department to assist in gathering data on the spread of the flu based on guidance received from the Center for Disease Control. This information is crucial to health officials at both the local, state, and national level. By sharing this data with local and state health departments, the impact of illness on the community can be adequately assessed and decisions about whether or not to close schools can be made.

2. How does it work?

For students, parents are being asked to notify the school on the day their child is home due to illness. Parents may call the school or send an email message. Parents are asked to indicate if their child is home because of flu-like symptoms (fever of 100°F or more, cough, and/or sore throat). If parents do not notify the school, then the school will contact the parent to find out if the student is home due to flu-like symptoms.

Staff members are asked to notify their administrator in the event of absence and to note if it is due to flu-like symptoms. If staff members do not contact the administrator, then they may be called to find out if they are home due to flu-like symptoms.

3. How much information is being requested?

The purpose of the monitoring is to track the spread of the influenza. Therefore, the key information is whether or not the absence is due to flu-like symptoms. If the absence is for another reason, no details need be given. Simply indicate that the absence is not because of the flu. No specific names are shared with the health department, just numbers.

4. What if a parent or staff member refuses to provide the information?

If someone refuses to share information as to whether or not the absence is due to flu-like symptoms, then politely acknowledge the person's decision and mark the reason for absence due to illness as "unknown."