



Eugene School District 4J

# Principals' Toolkit

Flu Season 2009–10

## CONTENTS:

Action Steps for Schools .....	3
Roles & Responsibilities .....	5
Flu Screening Flowchart .....	6
Sample Parent Letter .....	7
Sample Newsletter Article .....	8
Talking Points & Frequently Asked Questions..	9

**THIS PAGE  
INTENTIONALLY  
LEFT BLANK**



## 4J Flu Prevention

### Action Steps for Schools

---

Building administrators are responsible for ensuring that the following actions, including some specific steps, are taken in all 4J schools and worksites:

1. On the first day of school, instruct all students on proper handwashing protocols and cough etiquette.
  2. Post flu prevention posters in visible locations.
  3. Separate sick people from others.
  4. Notify 4J Health Services of unusually high absenteeism.
  5. Keep the learning going.
- 

## 1 TEACH FLU PREVENTION

- **Beginning on the first day of school, instruct every student and all staff members on how to prevent the spread of flu and other viruses.** Teach proper hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette. Talk about other ways viruses can be easily transmitted, such as sharing personal items (e.g. drinks, food, utensils). Provide students and staff with easy access to tissues and running water and soap, or alcohol-based hand cleaners if soap and water are not available. More information about hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette is included in the sample parent communications at the end of this packet.
- **Remind staff to practice good hand hygiene,** and provide the time and supplies for them to wash their hands as often as necessary.
- **When communicating with families, reiterate that public health officials recommend four main ways to prevent the spread of flu:**
  - Wash your hands.
  - Cover your cough.
  - Stay home when sick.
  - Get your family vaccinated.
- **Optional resource:** The state of Oregon has developed a K-12 curriculum for flu prevention, with materials for grades K–3, 4–5, 6–8 and 9–12.  
*<http://www.flu.oregon.gov/DHS/ph/acd/flu/schoolschildcare.shtml#Fighter>*

## 2 POST FLU PREVENTION POSTERS

- **Ensure that posters showing flu prevention and good hygiene techniques** are posted in locations visible to students and staff. Some posters may be found at:  
*<http://www.cdc.gov/germstopper/materials.htm>*  
*[http://www.publichealth.va.gov/flu/materials/posters\\_hand\\_hygiene.asp](http://www.publichealth.va.gov/flu/materials/posters_hand_hygiene.asp)*  
*[http://www.publichealth.va.gov/flu/materials/posters\\_respiratory\\_etiquette.asp](http://www.publichealth.va.gov/flu/materials/posters_respiratory_etiquette.asp)*

## 3 SEPARATE SICK PEOPLE FROM OTHERS

- **Ensure that the school starter kit** containing masks and hand sanitizer has been received and its contents distributed to key personnel. More masks can be ordered from the warehouse as needed. (These supplies have been ordered by the district and they will be distributed to each school/site from the warehouse as soon as they are received.)
- **Send sick students and staff home** and advise them and their families that people with flu-like illness should stay at home until at least 24 hours after they no longer have a fever or signs of a fever (without the use of fever-reducing medicine).
- **Identify one or more private locations in your school. If students or staff become ill at school**, move them to that separate room until someone can pick them up. **Limit the number of staff** who take care of the sick person and **provide a surgical mask** for the sick person to wear if they can tolerate it.
- **Know the signs of the flu:** Flu-like illness involves fever (greater than 100°F or 37.8°C) along with symptoms such as a cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, body aches, headache, and feeling very tired.

## 4 NOTIFY HEALTH SERVICES

- **Notify 4J Health Services** if you have an unusually high number of absences or become aware of a severe flu case (e.g. hospitalization) among your students and staff. Phone: 541-790-7216.
- **Work with nursing staff** for health advice, student care, teaching points, preventive messages, etc.

## 5 KEEP THE LEARNING GOING

- **Work with your staff to develop ways** to keep kids learning at home and/or able to make up coursework later if illness keeps individual students out of school for extended periods.



## 4J Flu Prevention

### Roles & Responsibilities: who to call

---

#### **For health advice, student care, preventive messages, etc.:**

- Contact your school nurse or your regional school-based health center.

#### **To report a high number of absences or a severe flu case (e.g. hospitalization):**

- Maxine Proskurowski, Health Services: 541-790-7215. If you can't reach Maxine, contact the health services assistant, Kathleen Ybanez, at 541-790-7216.
- Maxine is the designated official who will interface with the Lane County and/or Oregon public health officials to seek advice and direction.

#### **Logistical and operational issues:**

- Patrick Hughes, Risk Manager: 541-790-7672
- Patrick is the designated pandemic manager for the district, and will manage flu response issues at the district level. He will coordinate the district's responses to the situation with 4J Health Services, Lane County Public Health, and district administrative staff and departments.

#### **Human resources questions (benefits, medical leaves, sick leaves):**

- Employee benefits: Jackie McLaughlin: 541-790-7675
- Medical leave questions: Diana McElhinney: 541-790-7676
- Sick leave questions, classified staff: Patrick Munyon: 541-790-7679
- Sick leave questions, licensed staff: Julie Wenzl: 541-790-7682

#### **Media inquiries and questions about communications:**

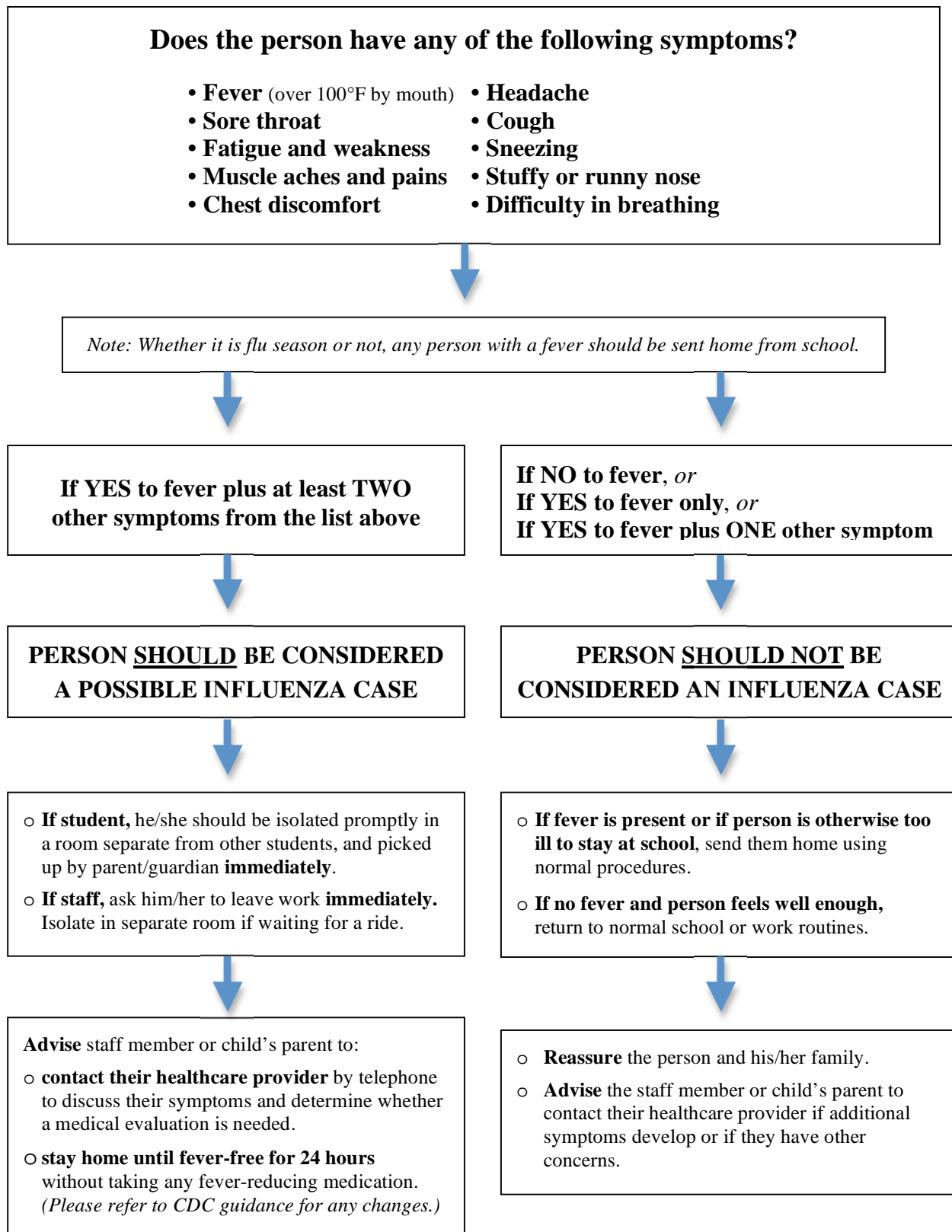
- Kerry Delf, Communications Coordinator: 541-790-7733. If you can't reach Kerry, other communications contacts are Kathleen Allison, 541-790-7737, and Barb Bellamy, 541-790-7735.
- Kerry will manage and respond to media questions and communications issues. As the situation develops, she also will provide principals with updated information and scripts to explain basic information about the flu to parents and staff.

#### **General questions or advice on how to deal with a flu issue involving students, staff, or parents:**

- Contact the director for your level.  
If you can't reach your director, call Carl Hermanns.
- Sara Cramer, Director of Elementary Services (K-5): 541-790-7550
- Laurie Moses, Director of Secondary Services (6-12): 541-790-7550
- Carl Hermanns, Assistant Superintendent: 541-790-7550



## 4J Flu Prevention Influenza Screening Flowchart





## 4J Flu Prevention

### Sample Letter to Parents

---

Dear [SCHOOL] Parent,

(DATE), 2009

As you may know, flu can easily spread from person to person. Therefore, we are taking steps to reduce the spread of flu at [SCHOOL]. We want to keep our school open and functioning normally during this flu season. **But we need your help to do this.**

Public health officials recommend four main ways to help keep you and your family from getting sick with the flu at school and at home:

- **Practice good hand hygiene** by washing your hands often with soap and water, especially after coughing or sneezing. If soap and water are not available, alcohol-based hand cleansers also are effective. Avoid other ways viruses can be easily transmitted, such as sharing personal items (e.g. drinks, food, utensils).
- **Cover your mouth and nose** with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. If you don't have a tissue, cough or sneeze into your elbow or shoulder, not into your hands.
- **Keep children at home if they are sick with flu-like illness.** Stay home for at least 24 hours after there is no longer a fever or signs of a fever, without the use of fever-reducing medicine. Symptoms of the flu are a fever (over 100 degrees Fahrenheit) along with symptoms such as cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, body aches, headache, and feeling very tired. A little snuffle is not a reason to stay home, but influenza is! Keeping sick students at home means that they keep their viruses to themselves rather than sharing them with others.
- **Get your family vaccinated** for both seasonal flu and 2009 H1N1 flu when vaccines are available. Seasonal flu vaccines are available now, and H1N1 flu vaccines are expected to be available to priority groups, including children, beginning in October. Watch for flu clinics at your doctor's office, clinic, pharmacy or elsewhere, and take advantage of them as soon as available. If you are not sure about whether or not you should get the vaccine, call your healthcare provider for advice.

Other recommended steps to prepare for the possibility of flu include: **update your emergency contact information** at your schools; **plan for child care at home** if your child gets sick or their school is dismissed; and **identify if you have family members who are at higher risk** of serious disease from the flu and talk to your healthcare provider about a plan to protect them during the flu season.

We are working closely with Lane County Public Health and the Oregon Public Health Division to monitor flu conditions and make decisions about the best steps to take concerning schools. We will keep you updated with new information as it becomes available, and the district's website at [www.4j.lane.edu/flu](http://www.4j.lane.edu/flu) will be updated regularly. If you want to learn more about influenza, visit [flu.oregon.gov](http://flu.oregon.gov) or [www.flu.gov](http://www.flu.gov) or call 1-800-CDC-INFO for the most current information about the flu.

Sincerely,  
[PRINCIPAL'S NAME & SIGNATURE]

## Know what to do about the flu!

### Action steps for parents to protect your family this school year

Public health officials recommend four main ways to help keep you and your family from getting sick with the flu at school and at home:

- **Practice good hand hygiene** by washing your hands often with soap and water, especially after coughing or sneezing. If soap and water are not available, alcohol-based hand cleansers also are effective. Avoid other ways viruses can be easily transmitted, such as sharing personal items (e.g. drinks, food, utensils).
- **Cover your mouth and nose** with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. If you don't have a tissue, cough or sneeze into your elbow or shoulder, not into your hands.
- **Keep children at home if they are sick with flu-like illness.** Stay home for at least 24 hours after there is no longer a fever or signs of a fever, without the use of fever-reducing medicine. Symptoms of the flu are a fever (over 100 degrees Fahrenheit) along with symptoms such as cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, body aches, headache, and feeling very tired. A little sniffle is not a reason to stay home, but influenza is! Keeping sick students at home means that they keep their viruses to themselves rather than sharing them with others.
- **Get your family vaccinated** for both seasonal flu and 2009 H1N1 flu when vaccines are available. Seasonal flu vaccines are available now, and H1N1 flu vaccines are expected to be available to priority groups, including children, beginning in October. Watch for flu clinics at your doctor's office, clinic, pharmacy or elsewhere, and take advantage of them as soon as available. If you are not sure about whether or not you should get the vaccine, call your healthcare provider for advice.

Other recommended steps to prepare for the possibility of flu include: **update your emergency contact information** at your schools; **plan for child care at home** if your child gets sick or their school is dismissed; and **identify if you have family members who are at higher risk** of serious disease from the flu and talk to your healthcare provider about a plan to protect them during the flu season.

#### For more information:

Eugene School District 4J: [www.4j.lane.edu/flu](http://www.4j.lane.edu/flu)

Oregon flu information: [flu.oregon.gov](http://flu.oregon.gov)

National flu information: [www.flu.gov](http://www.flu.gov) or call 1-800-CDC-INFO



## 4J Flu Prevention

### Talking Points & FAQ — Seasonal & H1N1 Flu

---

- | **The best prevention:** Wash your hands, cover your cough, stay home when sick, and get vaccinated.
- | **Sick students and staff must stay home.** A little snuffle is not a reason to stay home, but influenza is! People who are sick with flu-like symptoms need to stay home until at least 24 hours after their fever is gone (determined without the use of fever-reducing medicine). Anyone who comes to school with fever and other flu symptoms will be sent home.
- | **Vaccines:** *Seasonal flu vaccines* already are available at some locations; watch for flu vaccine clinics in our area and take advantage of them as early as possible. As in previous years, flu vaccine clinics will be offered for 4J staff. *H1N1 flu vaccines* should be available to priority groups beginning in mid-October.
- | **School closure is unlikely** unless high absenteeism makes it hard for a school to function. This was different last spring, but the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) changed its school closure guidelines after public health officials learned more about the new flu strain.

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT FLU:

### Why the concern about flu in schools?

Students can get sick with flu and easily spread it to other students and their families. So far, with 2009 H1N1 flu, the largest number of cases has been in people between 5 and 24 years old.

### Who is most at risk from flu?

Anyone can get the flu, even healthy people, and problems from the flu can happen at any age. However, children under the age of 5 years, pregnant women, people of any age with chronic medical conditions (such as pulmonary disease including asthma, diabetes, neuromuscular disorders or heart disease), and people age 65 and older are more likely to get complications from the flu and should contact their healthcare provider for advice.

### What should families do?

Public health officials say families should get the vaccines for seasonal flu and H1N1 flu as soon as they are available. Families should continue to emphasize good health habits: staying home when ill, washing hands frequently, and covering coughs and sneezes.

### When should someone stay home?

Flu spreads easily, so it is very important that students and staff do not come to school with flu-like symptoms; any who do will be sent home. If a student or staff member has flu-like illness — fever (greater than 100°F or 37.8°C) along with symptoms such as a cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, body aches, headache, and feeling very tired — he or she must stay home until at least 24 hours after the fever is gone. This should be determined without the use of fever-reducing medicine, such as ibuprofen or acetaminophen. People with flu also should not go anywhere else (such as childcare, the mall, or sporting events) where other people would be exposed to flu germs. Other family members do not need to stay home.

### What are schools doing?

School staff are teaching and modeling hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette. School offices are monitoring absentee rates and flu-like illnesses among students and staff. Sick kids and staff will be sent home. The school district will remain in close contact with public health officials for guidance.

### What do “hand hygiene” and “respiratory etiquette” mean?

**Hand hygiene:** Wash hands often with soap and water, for at least 20 seconds, especially after coughing or sneezing. If soap and water are not available, alcohol-based hand sanitizers also are effective. Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth.  
**Respiratory etiquette:** Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. If you don't have a tissue, cough or sneeze into your elbow or shoulder, not into your hands.

### What about cleaning surfaces?

Flu viruses do not survive for very long on hard surfaces, such as desks and door knobs. Public health officials say it is not necessary to disinfect such surfaces beyond routine cleaning.

### Are there other things schools can do?

Our prevention practices are based on recommendations from public health officials. If there are severe flu conditions this school year, public health officials may recommend additional practices to prevent the spread of flu in schools.

### How can people stay informed?

- Eugene schools: [www.4j.lane.edu/flu](http://www.4j.lane.edu/flu)
- Oregon information: [flu.oregon.gov](http://flu.oregon.gov)
- National information: [www.flu.gov](http://www.flu.gov)
- Health concerns? Contact your healthcare provider.

Info source: CDC. Updated 9/3/09, Kerry Delf, 4J Communications.