

Health and Healthy Living
Deputy Minister

Room 327, Legislative Building
Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada R3C 0V8

Education, Citizenship and Youth
Deputy Minister

Room 156, Legislative Building
Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada R3C 0V8

August 14, 2009

Principals, Funded and Non-Funded Independent Schools:

In preparation for the 2009-2010 school year, we would like to provide you with an update on the H1N1 flu situation.

While it is difficult to accurately predict what will happen during the fall flu season, it is expected that the H1N1 flu virus will continue to be present in communities across the province. It is also anticipated that some schools may notice increased levels of flu-like illness among students and staff. Schools are encouraged to have their pandemic plans in place.

Manitoba Health and Healthy Living (MHHL) would like schools to remain attentive for flu-like illness among students and staff. Schools should continue to contact their public health nurse at the local community public health office to report any instances of unusually high absenteeism or to raise any specific school-based questions or concerns.

Schools are also encouraged to include infection prevention as part of the classroom learning experience, including placing age appropriate messaging about cough etiquette and hand washing in a variety of locations throughout the school and ensuring that hand hygiene supplies such as soap and water are readily available.

Educators are reminded that - as per the process outlined in the May 4, 2009 letter from the Deputy Minister of Education, Citizenship and Youth - any direction on school closures for public health reasons will come from the Minister of Education, Citizenship and Youth, based on consultation with the Chief Provincial Public Health Officer and/or the regional medical officer of health.

We have also included the documents:

- *H1N1 Flu: Background and Interim Guidance for School Administrators and Staff*
- *H1N1 Flu: Questions and Answers for Schools and Parents*

that we hope you will find useful in your own discussions and in communications with parents.

For the latest information on H1N1 flu, please visit: www.manitoba.ca/flu. Information for schools can also be found at: www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/flu/index.html.

Sincerely,

Original signed by

Arlene Wilgosh
Deputy Minister
Health and Healthy Living

Original signed by

Gerald Farthing
Deputy Minister
Education, Citizenship and Youth

Attachment