

Template Letter (or E-mail) to Students, Faculty, Staff, and Parents during Current Flu Conditions

- ▶ *Coordinate efforts with your local health department before distributing this letter or e-mail to ensure that all information is timely, relevant, and accurate.*
- ▶ *Advise students, faculty, staff, and parents on where to obtain specific information about your institution's flu response.*
- ▶ *Visit [School Planning](#) to download a Microsoft Word version letter of this letter or e-mail that you can modify with additional flu information for these important audiences.*

Dear students, faculty, staff and parents,

As you may know, flu can be spread easily from person to person. Therefore, we are taking steps to prevent the spread of flu at *[name of institution]* for as long as possible, **but, we need your help to accomplish this.**

We are working closely with the *[County/State]* health department to monitor flu conditions and make decisions about the best steps to take concerning our institution. We will keep you updated with new information as it becomes available to us.

For now, we are doing everything we can to keep our institution operating as usual. Here are a few things you can do to help:

- ▶ ***Talk with your health care providers about getting vaccinated for seasonal flu and 2009 H1N1 flu.*** If you are at higher risk for flu complications from 2009 H1N1 flu, you should consider getting the 2009 H1N1 flu vaccine . People at higher risk for flu complications include children younger than 5 years (especially children younger than 2 years old), pregnant women and people with chronic medical conditions (such as asthma, heart disease, or diabetes). For more information on people at higher risk for flu complications, visit [People at High Risk of Developing Flu-Related Complications](#)
- ▶ ***Practice respiratory etiquette*** by covering 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. Avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth; germs are spread this way.
- ▶ ***Practice good hand hygiene*** by washing your hands with soap and water, especially after coughing or sneezing. Alcohol-based hand rubs also are useful.
- ▶ ***Know the signs and symptoms of the flu.*** A fever is a temperature taken with a thermometer that is equal to or greater than 100 degrees Fahrenheit or 37.8 degrees Celsius. Look for possible signs of fever: if the person feel very warm, has a flushed appearance, or is sweating or shivering. Symptoms of flu can also include cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, body aches, headache, chills and tiredness. Some people may also have vomiting and diarrhea. People may be infected with the flu, including 2009 H1N1 flu and have respiratory symptoms without a fever.
- ▶ ***Stay home if you have flu or flu-like illness for at least 24 hours after you no longer have a fever*** (100 degrees Fahrenheit or 37.8 degrees Celsius) or signs of a fever (have chills, feel very warm, have a flushed appearance, or are sweating). This should be determined without the use of fever-reducing medicines (any medicine that contains ibuprofen or acetaminophen). Don't go to class or work.

If this year's flu season becomes more severe, we may take the following additional steps to prevent the spread of the virus:

- ▶ **Allow students, faculty, and staff at higher risk for complications to stay home.** These students, faculty, and staff should make this decision in consultation with their health care provider.
- ▶ **Find ways to increase social distances** (the space between people) in classrooms such as moving desks farther apart, leaving empty seats between students, holding outdoor classes, and using distance learning methods.
- ▶ **Extend the time sick students, faculty, or staff stay home or in their residence.** During severe flu conditions sick people should stay home for at least 7 days, even if they feel better sooner. Those who are still sick after 7 days should continue to stay home until at least 24 hours after symptoms have gone away. Symptoms of flu include fever, cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, body aches, headache, chills and tiredness. Some people may also have vomiting and diarrhea. People may be infected with the flu, including 2009 H1N1 flu and have respiratory symptoms without a fever.
- ▶ **Suspend classes.** This decision will be made together with local and state public health officials. The length of time classes should be suspended will depend on the goal of suspending classes as well as the severity and extent of illness.

For more information about flu in our community and what our institution is doing, visit *[institution's Website]* or call *[appropriate phone number]*.

[If your institution has a study abroad program, include information on where students and parents can go to get more information about flu response while abroad. Include your institution Web site and also [Travelers' Health](#) for health information for students studying abroad.]

For the most up-to-date information on flu, visit. Flu.gov , or call 1-800-CDC-INFO (232-4636).

We will notify you by *[e-mail, institution's Web site, text message, Facebook, Twitter, campus information center, etc.]* of any additional changes to our institution's strategy to prevent the spread of flu on our campus.

Sincerely,

[Institution administrator's name and signature]