



**Health and Healthy Living**

Public Health Division

Office of the Chief Public Health Officer

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**Principals, Funded and Non-Funded Independent Schools:**

We would like to provide you with an update on the H1N1 influenza situation.

Some schools may have noticed an increase in influenza-like illness amongst students and staff. However, most of the individuals who have become ill have experienced relatively less-serious cases of influenza illness and have not required hospitalization. Although the number of people with more severe illness has increased, this still represents a small percentage of the cases in Manitoba.

While the current situation indicates that the H1N1 flu virus is present in communities across the province, there has been no public health reason to close schools. Please be assured that the situation is being assessed on an ongoing basis to determine the most appropriate public health interventions to best protect the health of Manitobans. Should circumstances change that would warrant a closure decision you will, as per the process outlined in the May 4, 2009 letter from the Deputy Minister of Education, Citizenship and Youth, be so advised.

School divisions should contact the local public health office for advice about any potential health issue, such as unusually high absenteeism rates or a suspected outbreak of specific illness (e.g. influenza-like or gastrointestinal illness).

We have also developed a letter for parents as well as the fact sheets *Self Care for Influenza* and *Information about H1N1 Flu for Children and Youth*, and ask that these be sent home to parents and guardians. For the latest information on H1N1 Flu, we also invite you to visit the Manitoba government website: [www.gov.mb.ca/flu/index.html](http://www.gov.mb.ca/flu/index.html)

Sincerely,

Original signed by

Elise Weiss, MD, FCFP, MSc

A/Medical Lead – Emergency Preparedness