

## **SAMPLE KEY MESSAGES FOR SCHOOL OFFICIALS B- SCHOOL CLOSURES**

- (Local County) health officials have ordered the closure of schools as a result of the pandemic flu outbreak in our county.
- Schools may be closed for an extended period of time (for example, up to 6 weeks).
- We know this is a difficult time for our community, and our hearts go out to those who are ill. We are working closely with health officials to deal with the situation and will keep parents updated with any important information.
- Because pandemic flu is easily spread from person-to-person, it is unsafe for large groups of people to gather and children should stay home. The purpose of closing schools is to decrease contact among children in order to decrease their risk of getting sick and to limit the spread of infection.
- During this time, children and adults should stay away from other people and groups, as much as possible. Health officials also advise that people should not gather in other locations such as homes, shopping malls, movie theaters or community centers.
- Parents can help protect their children and prevent the spread of pandemic flu as they would colds and other flu by taking the following precautions:
  - Teach your children to wash hands frequently with soap and water for 20 seconds. Be sure to set a good example by doing this yourself.
  - Teach your children to cover coughs and sneezes with tissues or by coughing into the inside of the elbow.
  - Teach your children to stay at least three feet from people who are sick and stay home from work or school if you are sick.
- Recommendations may change during the course of a flu pandemic. We will make public announcements through the media and parents can call the school district's hotline at (INSERT HOTLINE NUMBER)

For more information on pandemic flu and prevention, visit (local or state department of health website with URL) or call the Health Emergency Information Line: 1-###-###-####. Information may also be found at the Department of Health and Human Services pandemic influenza Web site: [www.pandemicflu.gov](http://www.pandemicflu.gov)