

SAMPLE LETTER TO PARENTS

Initial Pandemic Flu Outbreak #3: Use this type of letter to let parents know schools are open. Work with your local Health Department regarding the timing of a letter of this type.

Dear Parents,

This letter will give you information about a flu outbreak in (your county). Every year, some people get sick with the flu during the fall and winter months. This year, there is a new flu virus that is making many people in (your county) sick. So many people are sick in (your county) and the United States that health officials call it a "pandemic flu."

A lot of students and teachers in our school are sick with the flu. We hope they will all get better quickly.

At this time, the county health department tells us that students who are not ill can safely come to school. The schools will remain open. We will keep you updated with any important information.

To keep the flu from spreading to more people, we ask you to keep sick children home. Any children who are sick in school will be sent home.

Public health officials want you to protect yourself and your family against pandemic flu. Here are some ways to stop the spread of germs and sickness:

- Keep children who are sick at home. Don't send them to school.
- Teach your children to wash hands often 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. Be sure to set a good example by doing this yourself.
- Teach your children to stay away at least three feet away from people who are sick.
- People who are sick should stay home from work or school and stay away from other people until they are better.
- Stay away from shopping malls, movie theaters or other places where there are large groups of people.

We are also giving you some tips about how to care for your family if they are ill.

If you have questions, please contact your School Nurse or healthcare provider. You can call the school hotline (INSERT NUMBER). You can get more information from the (local health department contact info): Visit online at (local or state department of health Web site address) or call the Emergency Information Line: 1-###-###-####.

If the pandemic flu continues to spread and more students become ill, schools may close for days or weeks. The purpose of closing schools will be to keep children from getting sick. Begin planning now for childcare in your home.

Recommendations may change during the course of a pandemic flu outbreak.