

H1N1 Influenza 09 (Human Swine Influenza)

Guidelines for schools and early childhood education and care centres

Modified sustain phase

- No school closures or class quarantine.
- Children or teachers that are confirmed by the Department of Human Services as cases of H1N1 Influenza should still remain in home quarantine for three days after starting their anti-viral medication. Household members are not required to remain in quarantine.
- As per normal basic health practices, individual students who are unwell with flu-like symptoms should remain at home.
- Schools and early childhood education and care centres (ECEC) will be asked to be vigilant of illness within school and ECECs and will contact parents to collect unwell children. This particularly applies to students that may have respiratory conditions or low immunity to illness.
- If children become ill at school/ECEC they will be separated until collected by parents. Staff should utilise appropriate hygiene practices when attending to these children. This would include hand washing, distancing, tissues for cough and sneeze and masks (only if necessary).
- Parents should be reminded that this is a timely opportunity to review their arrangements for collecting children urgently from school, kindergarten or childcare, if required.
- Schools will send information to all parents reminding them of the importance of basic hygiene, including information prepared by DHS.
- Year 12 exams and the GAT will proceed. Year 12 students who have been confirmed as having H1N1 and require special consideration will be considered as per the usual VCAA Special Provision for Other Circumstances.
- Any secondary school that has been closed for 4 days or more as a result of H1N1 will automatically receive a Derived Examination Scores (DES) for students affected.
- Parents of children returning from USA, Canada, Japan, Mexico and Panama will continue to be asked to voluntarily keep their children home for seven (7) days from arrival back in Australia. This is a further precautionary measure to assist in managing the further spread of the virus. The exclusion does not affect teachers and teachers should continue with normal duties.

Young and vulnerable children

- Based on DHS medical advice, and advice from DEECD Principal Medical Advisor, it may be necessary to close Special Development Schools if a confirmed H1N1 case is identified. This is based on the complex medical conditions of students within these schools and their low immune systems. This ruling would also apply to early childhood intervention centres.
- The closure of these centres would be undertaken on a case by case analysis between DHS and DEECD.
- ECECs will remain open during the sustain phase with enhanced hygiene practices
- Children under the age of 5, and particularly those under the age of 1 year are at increased risk of adverse outcomes of influenza.
- Family day care should also ensure they implement household hygiene practices with a focus on hand washing.
- Child care centres and preschools should encourage parents to keep their children at home if they are unwell and to seek medical advice. Children who become unwell should go home as soon as possible and be isolated until they are picked up. Parents should be encouraged to seek medical advice early if their children are unwell, particularly if they are very young.
- Children in baby's rooms in child care and all children in any family day care arrangement should be considered "intimate contacts" in case contact tracing.
- All confirmed cases and contacts of children in childcare will require careful consideration. In exceptional circumstances it may be necessary to close a room (possibly a baby room) or a child care centre. This will be considered on a case by case basis.

FOR MORE INFORMATION: Visit www.health.vic.gov.au

Call the Swine Influenza Hotline Tel 180 2007

Call Nurse-on-Call Tel. 1300 606 024 – for expert health information and advice (24 hours, 7 days)