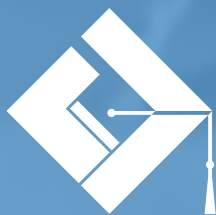


OKLAHOMA PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
**FLU ACTION KIT**



OKLAHOMA STATE DEPARTMENT OF  
**EDUCATION**  
— CHAMPION EXCELLENCE —

# OKLAHOMA FLU ACTION KIT

Oklahoma is facing its worst influenza season in years, with the virus widespread and ongoing. The information in this toolkit was created to provide guidance on how administrators and staff can prepare for and mitigate the incidence of influenza in their schools.

When an outbreak occurs, the number of students and staff who contract influenza will be much higher than during a normal flu season and the illness much more severe. As we have already seen this winter, schools may have to make the difficult decision to close to limit the spread of the virus or because a high number of students and staff are already infected. Determinations concerning school closings are a local decision.

If they have not already done so, districts should develop influenza policies. It is important not to discourage employees and students from staying home when they have flu-like symptoms. For additional guidance or advice, contact your local health department.

# INFLUENZA ACTION PLAN

The following is a step-by-step action plan that schools should take before, during and after an influenza outbreak. These steps may need to be repeated throughout flu season, which could continue until mid-spring.

## PREVENTION

Create an influenza outbreak plan.

Work with local and state health departments on preparedness. This could include collecting materials that could be sent home to families.

Establish staff and faculty responsibilities to prevent the spread of influenza.

Train all faculty and staff on prevention and symptom recognition.

Educate students, faculty and staff on the importance of personal hygiene and best hygienic practices to prevent flu-like illness. This may include guidance on how to cover a cough/sneeze, wash hands, etc.

Ensure cleaning staff is using appropriate products to kill influenza.

Create a checklist to determine when to require students, faculty and staff to stay home when they are ill.

## HEIGHTENED ALERT

Begin tracking the number of students and staff who are infected by influenza or similar illnesses.

Send communication to families about the potential for an outbreak, and include tip sheets and informational resources.

Post flu prevention signs throughout school buildings and offices.

Encourage proper personal hygiene procedures, including washing hands thoroughly with soap and water prior to eating. When hand-washing is not possible, students should use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer under adult supervision.

Ensure proper disinfection efforts are taking place building wide, including enhanced sanitation efforts.

## OUTBREAK/HIGH ALERT

Close schools.

Announce closing and cancel non-academic events.

Conduct a “deep clean” of all buildings and outdoor equipment/doors.

# SAMPLE PARENT COMMUNICATION: INITIAL FLU OUTBREAK

Dear Parents,

This letter is to inform you that we are at a heightened risk for flu outbreak, address any concerns you may have and provide helpful tips from preventing flu infections from spreading.

At this time, we are advising families to continue to come to school, as long as students are not sick or do not have symptoms of influenza-like illness. Symptoms may include fever (over 100 degrees F.) and cough **or** sore throat, runny nose, muscle pain and fatigue. If you suspect your child is getting the flu, it is essential that he/she not attend school or go to childcare facilities, public venues or sporting events where other people could be exposed to influenza. Also, it is important to teach your children the following ways to reduce their risk of becoming infected:

- Wash hands often, ideally with soap and hot water for at least 20 seconds.
- Hand-sanitizer, including gels, rubs and hand wipes, work well as long as they contain at least 60% alcohol. Always read and follow label instructions when using hand sanitizer.
- Keep hands away from the face and avoid touching the mouth, nose or eyes.
- Use tissues for coughs and sneezes or cough into the inside of the elbow. **Do not cough into hands!**
- Children learn best by example. Be a positive influence by modeling these behaviors yourself.

If we all practice good hygiene, health officials believe we can limit the spread of the influenza virus. Custodial staff will continue to sanitize classrooms and common areas regularly. We are consulting with local health officials regarding best cleaning practices.

We will inform families immediately if the situation changes and it becomes necessary to close school.

Thank you,

[Insert name of Principal]

# SAMPLE PARENT COMMUNICATION: SCHOOL CLOSURE

Dear Parents,

Due to an outbreak of influenza at our school, we have made the difficult decision to close school on [insert date]. We greatly appreciate your cooperation and concern during this difficult time for our community.

Due to the severity of the flu, it is not safe for large groups of people to gather. During this time, children and adults who have tested positive for influenza or are showing symptoms of the illness should stay away from others as much as possible and refrain from gathering in public locations such as shopping malls, movie theaters or community centers.

For information from the Oklahoma State Department of Health about when it's safe to send your student back to school, click on <https://www.ok.gov/health2/documents/Too%20Sick%20for%20School.2015.pdf>.

Thank you for your cooperation and partnership. I will continue to update you on this situation.

Thank you,

[Insert name of Principal]

## **SAMPLE PARENT COMMUNICATION: REOPENING OF SCHOOL**

Dear Parents,

The influenza outbreak at our school is now under control. We will reopen again on [insert date]. At this time, students may safely return to class if they have no flu-like symptoms.

Because the flu spreads easily, please continue to keep children who have flu-like symptoms at home. Symptoms include a fever of more than 100 degrees F. and cough or sore throat. Students who are sick will be sent home.

Despite the fact that school is reopening, some students may still be infected. It is important to continue to stress the need for proper hand-washing and hygiene. Our custodial staff has followed appropriate procedures to sanitize our building and will continue to do so.

We will continue to give updates as needed and look forward to seeing you and your children again.

Thank you,

[Insert name of Principal]

# OKLAHOMA STATE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH WEBSITE RESOURCES

Flu season reminder:

<https://www.ok.gov/health2/documents/Flu%20Season.2015.pdf>

Hand-washing guidance:

<https://www.ok.gov/health2/documents/Hand%20Hygiene%20-%20English.2011-2012.pdf>

Ready-to-print signs on hand-washing:

<https://www.ok.gov/health2/documents/Hand%20Washing%20Steps.2015.pdf>

<https://www.ok.gov/health2/documents/Hand%20Washing%20-%20Kids.2015.pdf>

Flu facts for the current flu season:

<https://www.ok.gov/health2/documents/Influenza.2014.pdf>

Flu prevention and control recommendations:

<https://www.ok.gov/health2/documents/Recommendations%20for%20K-12%20Schools%20for%20Prevention%20and%20Control%20of%20Influenza%202012.pdf>