

# Austin Independent School District

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## Bureau of Education Office of Health Services



Dear Parents/Guardians:

As you may know, the flu circulates each year in Texas, typically October through May. The flu can easily be spread from person to person. Austin ISD will continue to take steps to prevent the spread of the flu, including the H1N1 flu. Our goal is to decrease the exposure to the seasonal flu and H1N1, while limiting the disruption to learning. Austin ISD is working closely with the Center for Disease Control (CDC), Texas Department of State Health Services, and local Health Departments to monitor the situation. This letter is being sent to keep you informed of AISD's prevention and preparedness plan for preventing seasonal and H1N1 flu.

### **What is Austin ISD doing to protect my child from the flu?**

- **School Health Teams and Quick Care trained staff will assess and monitor all illnesses. Absenteeism rates will also be monitored and reported to local health department.**
- **AISD is practicing infection control.** Staff will be encouraged to teach and use proper hand washing techniques and cough etiquette. We will continue to ensure that our schools and buildings are clean and commonly touched surfaces such as door knobs, desks, restrooms, stair rails, etc. are cleaned often with an approved disinfectant that kills the flu virus.
- **Posters will be displayed on campuses regarding proper hand washing and cough etiquette.**
- **Staff and students who are ill will be sent home.** Staff and students who become ill at school will be kept separated from healthy staff and students until they are able to go home. Staff and students are to stay home until they are fever-free for at least 24 hours without the use of fever reducing medication.
- **Seasonal and H1N1 flu vaccines will be encouraged for students and staff.** Students and staff that are in a high-risk population (pregnant women, those with chronic illness such as diabetes and asthma, those that live a household of a baby under 6 months of age, and people 6-24 years old) will be highly encouraged to receive the seasonal flu and the H1N1 vaccine. Speak to your healthcare provider about obtaining a flu and H1N1 vaccination.
- **School dismissal.** At this time the flu is expected to be mild. According to CDC guidelines, school closure is not recommended for disease control. We will continue to work closely with health departments, should conditions warrant.

## How can you protect your family?

- **Update your emergency and contact information at your child's campus.**
- **Know the signs and symptoms of the flu and how it spreads.** Symptoms include fever over 100.3 degrees or more, sore throat and cough. Many people have a runny nose, fatigue, body aches and loss of appetite. The virus is transmitted through the coughing or sneezing of people infected with the virus.
- **If you are ill, stay home.** You will need to stay home for at least 24 hours after fever subsides without the use of fever reducing medications. The same holds true for any family member.
- **Get a seasonal flu vaccine as soon as possible for all members of your family.** Consult your health care provider or community health center for guidance. If you do not have a health care provider, you may call 2-1-1 to receive a list of providers.
- **Get the H1N1 vaccine if you are part of a target group.** The vaccine should be available in mid-October. Consult your health care provider for guidance and to determine if you are in a target group.
- **Practice infection control measures at home.** Teach all family members to cover their nose and mouth with a tissue when they cough or sneeze. Throw the tissue away after using. If tissues are not available, cough/sneeze into your sleeve or elbow. Wash hands often with soap and water for 20 seconds. Use paper towels for drying hands or assign everyone their own towel. If soap and water are not available, use alcohol-based hand sanitizers. Try to avoid sick people. Keep commonly touched surfaces clean by wiping them with a household disinfectant and use according to the product label.

Austin ISD will continue to do what it takes to keep our schools healthy, safe, and functioning normally. Our goal is to decrease exposure to the seasonal flu and the H1N1 flu, while limiting the disruption to learning. If the flu is determined to be more severe than expected, additional measures will be taken to protect students and staff. We will update you with information as we receive it. Please feel free to visit the following websites for additional information:

- [www.austinisd.org](http://www.austinisd.org)
- [www.texasflu.org](http://www.texasflu.org)
- <http://flu.gov>

If you have any questions, please contact your campus nurse or Tracy Lunoff, Coordinator of Student Health Services at 414-9778 or [tracy.lunoff@austinisd.org](mailto:tracy.lunoff@austinisd.org)