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**New York State Department of Health  
Guidance for Assessment of Students Suspected of Having Influenza  
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This document is intended to provide guidance for monitoring and assessment of influenza-like illness in school settings. Additional information and guidance regarding the response to human infections with H1N1 (swine flu) virus in educational and childcare facilities outside of New York City (NYC) can be accessed at: <http://usny.nysed.gov/swine-flu-info.html>.

**Monitoring of Illness**

Any student illness should be reported to the school nurse or other designated school official immediately. Signs reinforcing this message should be posted within the school and at all school entrances. Students should be observed at arrival and those who appear to have an influenza-like illness when they come to school- or become ill during the day-should wear a surgical mask while waiting to be screened by the nurse. These students should also wait in a room separated from other people if possible.

Influenza should be suspected in anyone presenting with influenza-like illness, which is defined as a fever (measured temperature of  $\geq 100^{\circ}\text{F}$ ) and cough or sore throat. If a student is found to have a fever and to be experiencing influenza-like symptoms, this information should be documented and the student should be dismissed in accordance with school district procedures. In addition, **dismissal is recommended for any student with a fever regardless of whether or not they have respiratory symptoms.**

Dismissal is NOT indicated for students with respiratory symptoms but no fever. These students may be sent back to class if in the nurse's clinical judgment the child is well enough to return to class.

**Infection Control for Dismissed Students**

A surgical mask should be kept on the student while they are waiting to be picked up by their parent or guardian. They should wait in a room separated from other people if possible, apart from the general population until they are picked up by an authorized individual and dismissed. Students should not be kept in the general office or classroom while waiting to be picked up.

**Length of Dismissal and Re-admittance**

Students with fever and no other symptoms may return to school after the fever has resolved.

Students, faculty, or staff with influenza-like illness should stay home and not attend school or go into the community except to seek medical care for at least 7 days after the start of the illness

or until they are symptom free for 24 hours, whichever is longer. Ill students should not attend alternative childcare or congregate in settings outside of school. Note that influenza may result in a residual cough. If 7 days have passed, the student is fever free, and otherwise feels well for at least 24 hours, exclusion from school is no longer needed, even if they have a residual cough.

If it is found that the child is unlikely to have influenza and an alternative diagnosis, such as strep throat, is made by a health care provider, the period of exclusion can be altered as appropriate for the diagnosis.

When exclusion is no longer needed and when the student is able to participate, and staff determine that they can care for the student without compromising their ability to care for the health and safety of the other students, then re-entry into school should be permitted. Those students dismissed for fever and respiratory symptoms do not need a doctor's note to return to school.

### **Infection Control Recommendations**

Efforts to maximize adherence to meticulous respiratory hygiene and cough etiquette should be practiced at all times. Hand hygiene is absolutely essential and should be performed before and after patient care and before donning and after removal of a surgical facemask. The school nurse or other designated school officials who have close contact (e.g., provide direct care or perform nursing or medical evaluation) with ill students should wear a surgical mask and gloves while evaluating those with complaints of fever, cough, sore throat, or other signs of influenza-like illness. Ideally, the facemask should be put on before entering the medical room. The mask may be worn throughout the day while in the medical room. The mask may be taken off when leaving the medical room. Environmental infection control should focus on routine cleaning for most surfaces and only target use of disinfection for surfaces touched frequently by hands.