

GUIDELINES FOR SCHOOLS/COLLEGES/INSTITUTIONS ON INFLUENZA A/H1N1

There have been some cases of Influenza A H1N1 virus among students and staff in certain schools, primarily in Delhi and Maharashtra. There has been considerable speculation over the need for closure of schools to control the outbreak. This matter has been considered by the Joint Monitoring Group in the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare. All schools and colleges are advised to observe the following guidelines for managing cases of infection of Influenza AH1N1.

- (i) Any student or staff member showing flu like symptoms such as fever, cough, running nose and difficulty in breathing should be allowed to stay at home for a period of 7 to 10 days.
- (ii) Educational institutions should not insist on production of medical certificate by the student/staff.
- (iii) Educational institutions should monitor the health status of such students/staff who might have come in contact with a suspected case of Influenza AH1N1 to see whether they develop flu like symptoms. In case they do so, they should be allowed to stay home, as outlined at (i) above.
- (iv) In case of students staying in Hostels, the educational institutions would not only monitor the health status of the students, but also that of care providers. It has to be ensured that the care providers wear face mask and wash hands regularly. It might not be advisable to send the boarders back to home, as it would spread infection further.
- (v) Educational institutions are further encouraged to report such cases to local health officers for further monitoring.
- (vi) Given the current magnitude of the spread of AH1N1 infection and the fact that the current virus is fairly mild, closure of educational institutions on account of any student/staff member falling ill with flu like symptoms is not recommended.
- (vii) In the first place, the schools should discourage the excursions of the students to the affected countries.
- (viii) In case if the students had proceeded to affected countries on unavoidable tours, then on their return, if some students show flu like symptoms of fever, sore-throat, cough, body ache, running nose, difficulty breathing etc. they should be advised to abstain from attending school and be allowed to stay at home for a period of 7 to 10 days.