

October 2019

To: Superintendents of Schools in the Alberta Health Services - North Zone

To assist with the identification and reporting of gastrointestinal and respiratory illness in school, we are sending you information to circulate to schools.

**Updated:** visit and bookmark the North Zone MOH website [www.ahs.ca/nzmoh](http://www.ahs.ca/nzmoh) where all the current outbreak documents and resources are conveniently located.

Influenza immunization can also help limit and control outbreaks due to influenza. We strongly encourage your staff, students at the school, and their families to be immunized. Public Health clinic dates and locations are available by accessing the Alberta Health Services website at [www.albertahealthservices.ca](http://www.albertahealthservices.ca).

**If an outbreak is suspected in one of your schools defined as 10% or greater absenteeism due to illness, please encourage a call to the local Public Health Centre or 1-855-513-7530 as soon as possible.** Early identification is important in limiting illness and containing outbreaks. Additionally, Public Health is able to assist in developing up to date information / fact sheets for distribution as required.

Please provide any address or contact person information to Beant Lallh in our office to ensure we are able to continue to provide updated information to you:  
[beant.lalh@albertahealthservices.ca](mailto:beant.lalh@albertahealthservices.ca)

Thank you for partnering with Alberta Health Services in this important work.

Sincerely,

Original signed

Dr. Albert de Villiers, Lead MOH North Zone, Areas 1,2,3,9  
Dr. Kathryn Koliaska, MOH North Zone Areas 4, 5, 6  
Dr. Gerhard Benadé, MOH North Zone Area 7,8,10  
Dr. Kristin Klein, MOH North Zone Area 7,8,10

October 2019

To: Schools/Principals in the Alberta Health Services - North Zone

**Re: School Guide for initial infection control measures to help limit the spread of illness**

**New this year:** visit and bookmark the North Zone MOH website [www.ahs.ca/nzmoh](http://www.ahs.ca/nzmoh) where all the current outbreak documents and resources are conveniently located.

Please make sure your staff are aware of these documents, and post where easily accessible for reference and use:

- [Early Outbreak Recognition Checklist](#)
- [NZ Public Health Line List – School](#)

**If you suspect an outbreak in your school due to 10% or greater absenteeism due to illness, please contact your local Public Health Centre as soon as possible.** Early identification is important in limiting illness and containing outbreaks. An outbreak in a school is suspected when there is a 10% or greater absenteeism rate of children and/or staff members, due to reports of illness or unusual or unexpected symptoms, on any given day. These symptoms may include, but are not limited to:

- unexplained pain;
- fever (>38.3 degrees C)
- respiratory symptoms including common cold with listlessness, runny nose and eyes (not related to a known allergy), coughing, sore throat, wheezing;
- skin symptoms including infected skin or eyes, undiagnosed rash, severe itching;
- intestinal symptoms including unexplained: diarrhea, loose stool, nausea/vomiting;

An exception to the 10% cut-off for absenteeism is chicken-pox like illness - please report any/all chicken-pox like illness for any students or staff.

**Please remember:**

- Public Health is able to assist in providing up to date information / fact sheets for distribution as required.
- Immunization (including the influenza vaccine) remains the cornerstone of influenza prevention, along with good hand washing and respiratory hygiene. All Albertans 6 months of age and older are eligible for provincially-funded seasonal influenza vaccine at no charge. We strongly encourage your staff, the children at your school, and their families to be immunized. Public Health clinic dates and locations are available by calling Health Link at 811 or by accessing the Alberta Health Services website at [www.albertahealthservices.ca](http://www.albertahealthservices.ca).

Thank you for partnering with Alberta Health Services in this important work. Please contact your local Public Health Centre or CDC Intake at 1-855-513-7530 for reporting, request for services, or any questions.

Sincerely,

Original signed

Dr. Albert de Villiers, Lead MOH North Zone, Areas 1,2,3,9  
Dr. Kathryn Koliaska, MOH North Zone Areas 4, 5, 6  
Dr. Gerhard Benadé, MOH North Zone Area 7,8,10  
Dr. Kristin Klein, MOH North Zone Area 7,8,10