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## District Health Department

*Serving Fillmore, Gage, Jefferson, Saline, and Thayer counties.*

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### If Your Child is Sick with Flu, Report it to Your School!

Guidance for Parents for Reporting Flu to Their School

#### What to Say

If your son or daughter is sick with influenza, it's important that you tell the school secretary this reason of illness when you call in. **Don't say only that your child will be absent from school. Instead say, "My child is sick with influenza."**

If your child is ill with influenza: **Keep them at home** – do not send them to school or day care for at least 24 hours after the fever is gone **without medication**. The best way to keep from catching the flu is **1)** to wash hands frequently with soap and water or use an alcohol based hand sanitizer, and **2)** to cover noses and mouths with a tissue when coughing or sneezing or a shirt sleeve or elbow if you don't have a tissue.

#### When to Say It

You need not wait for a doctor's diagnosis to know your child has influenza. You should report that your child is sick with influenza if they have a **cough or a sore throat** and if, when you take their body temperature using a thermometer, the reading measures **100 degrees or higher**. With influenza your child may also have **muscle aches, runny nose, sore throat, chills, headache, and just feel really tired and weak**. Some children will also have vomiting and diarrhea. If your child has these symptoms, don't send them to school. Call your school and say, "My child is sick with influenza."

#### Why it Matters

If you report influenza as the reason for your child's absence, your school can share that valuable information with your local Health Department, Public Health Solutions. We've asked school nurses to report school absenteeism due to influenza to get a clearer view of how influenza is developing in our area. This can help us take action to slow the spread of influenza in our region. We take influenza seriously — and you should, too — because it can lead to serious illnesses, the closing of schools and businesses, and even deaths. In fact, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reports that, in the U.S., influenza causes more than 200,000 people to be hospitalized and about 36,000 deaths every year.

#### Next Steps

Once you report influenza to your school secretary, call your child's doctor to report the illness and find out whether your child should be examined. Your doctor may want to give your child a prescription for helpful medications. **Don't send your child back to school until 24 hours after your child's fever has gone (without medication)** away or your doctor says it's okay for your child to go back to school.