



Government of the District of Columbia  
Department of Health



Center for Policy, Planning and Evaluation Administration  
Division of Epidemiology – Disease Surveillance and Investigation

January 25, 2019

Dear Parent/Guardian:

It is “**Flu Season**” and the District of Columbia Department of Health, Division of Epidemiology – Disease Surveillance and Investigation has received several reports of “**Influenza**” also known as “**Flu**” in children attending **Brent Elementary School**.

Influenza is a contagious respiratory illness that is caused by influenza viruses. The disease can occur in people of all ages and can cause mild to severe illness that can result in hospitalization or death. The best way to protect against the flu is to get vaccinated with the seasonal vaccine every year. Vaccine is recommended for all persons 6 months of age and older. It is not too late to get the flu shot this season.

Common symptoms of influenza include:

- Fever (100.4°F) or feeling feverish – not everyone experience fever
- Runny or stuffy nose
- Sore throat
- Cough
- Tiredness
- Headache
- Younger children may have nausea, vomiting and diarrhea

If you suspect your child is ill with flu symptoms, please keep your child home from school. Please contact your healthcare provider if you are concerned. Your child should remain home for at least 24 hours after the fever is gone without the assistance of fever reducing medication. Please notify your child’s school or daycare center if your child is diagnosed with the flu.

To prevent the spread of the disease, people are encouraged to practice the following:

- Proper hand hygiene
  - Wash hands frequently with soap and water, scrubbing the hands for at least 20 seconds (teach children to sing the Happy Birthday song twice to equal the right amount of time.)
  - Use hand sanitizers only as temporary solution, if water and soap are not available (It should not replace handwashing with soap and water.
- Coughs and sneezes covering techniques
  - Cover your coughs and sneezes with a disposable tissue
  - If you do not have a disposable tissue, you can cough or sneeze into the elbow of your sleeves, not into your hands.
  - After coughing or sneezing, always wash your hands with soap and water.

Should you have any questions or concerns, please contact your school nurse at **(202) 698-3367**, or your healthcare provider. We have also attached a fact sheet with frequently asked questions to provide you with further information about the disease.

Sincerely,

John O. Davies-Cole, PhD, MPH  
State Epidemiologist