

International School of Milan

Policy on Dealing with H1N1 Influenza

We expect that during the coming winter, there will inevitably be cases of H1N1 influenza across the ISM. This policy is written to explain how the school will respond to this situation and to explain the measures we are putting in place to try to reduce the spread of infection. It also sets out our expectations for parents and families, who have an essential role in limiting the spread and the impact of the virus.

1. Information about the H1N1 virus

Parents are encouraged to learn as much as possible about H1N1 and we will provide resources to help. In addition, our school doctors will lead workshops to ensure that the ISM community is fully aware about the nature of the virus and its projected impact in Italy during the coming months.

It is extremely difficult to tell the difference between the new H1N1 form of the virus and the regular seasonal influenza that is a feature of every winter. The symptoms of both are almost identical and in the vast majority of cases, infections with H1N1 follow the normal course leading to full recovery within a week or so. There is no need to worry if symptoms appear and if appropriate action is taken at the outset. Only a small percentage of cases develop complications, but given the large number of people likely to be infected we all need to treat any infection carefully.

2. Procedures in place at ISM

The most likely avenue for contagion is through the air, but general cleanliness such as cleanliness of hands can reduce other risks, especially for young children who touch their mouths frequently and for everyone before eating meals or touching food. We will pay special attention to cleanliness and ensure that children wash their hands before lunch and during breaks.

From the beginning of term we will introduce a new system for washing hands using disinfectant spray available in all classrooms. We will encourage the students to use the sprays at breaks, before lunchtimes and at any time the teacher feels it is appropriate. More frequent use is envisaged for younger children.

3. Measures required by the Italian authorities

We will apply any procedures recommended or required by the Italian authorities.

4. What to do if you suspect a case of influenza at home (you or your child)

If any member of your family shows any of the regular signs of influenza (high temperature with muscle pains and breathing symptoms) then please keep your child at home until the symptoms have completely cleared or until the incubation period (one week) has passed without any of the symptoms developing. If your child is confirmed to have had a case of H1N1 then please let us know and please return to school only if your doctor confirms that there is no further risk of contagion.

5. Vaccination

It is expected that the vaccine will become available during October and we recommend that everyone in the community is vaccinated for *both* H1N1 and the regular influenza.

Approved - 1 September 2009