

**Q. How is the Board responding to H1N1?**

The Board is working in close cooperation with the Chatham-Kent Public Health Unit and the County of Lambton Community Health Services and the Medical Officers of Health. The Lambton Kent District School Board staff are in daily communication with health authorities. We have been assured that they are very sensitive to our concerns regarding the operation of schools. The Board is ready and able to take whatever advice or action health authorities recommend. The Board complies with the Ministry of Health and Long Term Care *Guidelines for the Prevention and Management of Pandemic (PH1N1) 2009 in Elementary and Secondary Schools*.

**Q. What are the symptoms of H1N1 and other influenza-like illness (ILI)?**

The acute onset of respiratory symptoms with fever and cough **and** any of the following symptoms:

- sore throat;
- muscle aches
- joint pain;
- or weakness
- some people have reported nausea, diarrhea and vomiting

The virus continues to resemble seasonal influenza with mild symptoms in the majority of cases.

Individuals exhibiting flu-like symptoms of sufficient severity that require medical attention should contact their health care provider.

**Q. Will the Chatham-Kent Public Health Unit or the County of Lambton Community Health Services contact us if someone in our school has the H1N1?**

The Chatham-Kent Public Health Unit and the County of Lambton Community Health Services are not reporting individual confirmed cases. This is consistent with the World Health Organization. This is considered a virus that is in our communities. On June 11, 2009, the World Health Organization raised the pandemic alert level to Phase 6. This phase is declared when there is evidence of sustained community transmission in more than one WHO region-indicating that a global pandemic is under way. (The declaration is based on the spread of the virus, **not the severity**).

**Q. What specific plans are in place in the schools?**

Principals and school staff are monitoring the general health condition of students.

If students become ill:

1. They are to be sent to the office.
2. They rest in a designated area where they can be monitored.
3. Parents/guardians/emergency contact person are contacted to pick up their child.

Students are reminded daily of the importance of regular, thorough hand washing and good personal hygiene. Students and staff should avoid sharing of food, beverages and other personal items.

Principals are to ensure that the hand washing posters are displayed prominently in washrooms and that students and staff are reminded through daily announcements to wash their hands frequently.

**Q. What action is to be taken in schools? What if a child/staff member has a confirmed case?**

The Chatham-Kent Public Health Unit and the County of Lambton Community Health Services do not confirm cases. Regardless of whether or not you have been informed that a student or staff member has/had H1N1:

1. letters are not being sent home for individual cases that have been brought to their attention by a parent, student, staff or community member;
2. schools will continue to operate as per daily routines;
3. thorough cleaning and disinfecting practices are being followed;
4. soap dispensers are checked throughout the day to ensure that they are “topped up”;
5. the overall health of students and staff is being monitored;
6. students who are exhibiting influenza-like illness are isolated from the rest of the school population until they can be picked up; and
7. students are reminded daily of the best practices as follows:

**To stay healthy generally and prevent the spread of the influenza and other infections:**

- Wash hands well and often with soap and water.
- Cover your mouth and nose when you sneeze or cough.
- Cough and sneeze into your sleeve or arm (not your hands).
- Avoid touching your eyes, mouth and nose.
- Contact your family doctor and stay at home if you are ill.
- Practice social distancing (minimizing contact with family members, not going out in public) while symptomatic.
- Stay home if you are ill and return only if you no longer have a fever and are feeling better.
- Keep doing what you normally do, **but stay home if you are ill.**

**Q. I'm pregnant/have underlying health conditions/am immuno-suppressed and I'm afraid of contracting the virus. What can I do?**

Public health authorities advise that you are at no greater risk than the general population to contracting the virus. Therefore, you should take the usual precautions to prevent illness as stated above. Those who have suspected H1N1 virus infection should contact their doctor as soon as possible.

H1N1 flu virus is in our community and can be contracted anywhere. The Chatham-Kent Public Health Unit and the County of Lambton Community Health Services are not confirming cases and the general community is not being tested for the virus.

Those who are pregnant/have underlying health conditions/are immuno-suppressed should speak with their doctor as soon as possible if they develop a flu-like illness to find out what steps to take. If students/staff are sick, they should stay home and return only if they no longer have a fever and are feeling better.

The Chatham-Kent Public Health Unit and the County of Lambton Community Health Services has stated that those who are well should go to work and school.

**Q. *What measures are custodians taking in schools?***

Thorough and effective cleaning and disinfecting practices are in effect in our schools and are supported by the Chatham-Kent Public Health Unit and the County of Lambton Community Health Services. This fall, the Board initiated heightened cleaning procedures. These procedures have been reinforced with custodial staff and comply with the provincial PH1N1 guidelines. High-touch surfaces like door knobs, panic bars, push plates and hand rails are cleaned daily.

**Q *Are classroom sinks to be used for hand washing?***

Yes. Classrooms that have sinks are to be used for hand washing.

**Q: *In our bathroom at the school the water is not hot. Is that a problem?***

Health officials say the temperature of the water is not the issue—it is how long the hands are under the water and the use of proper hand washing practices.

**Q. *Will the Board be providing hand sanitizers to schools/workplaces?***

Staff, visitors, volunteers, etc. and students are able to wash their hands with soap and water in our schools and workplaces.

The Board, through the Ministry of Education's one-time funding, purchased hand sanitizers through a Board-approved vendor and delivered hand sanitizers to schools for use in classrooms without sinks and the offices.

Alcohol-based hand sanitizer is not a cleaning supply but rather a personal hand cleaning item. Just as with sunscreen and insect repellent, parents may send their children to school with a travel-size container of hand sanitizer. Staff will not be administering the hand sanitizer. It is the responsibility of the parent to ensure the child is old enough to be given the hand sanitizer, and to review appropriate use. Staff may bring their own personal size hand sanitizer. The needs of individuals with sensitivity to hand sanitizers should be respected. Parents/staff should be aware of the need to avoid scented products.

Regardless of whether students have personal hand sanitizer or not, all are to wash their hands as per the hand-washing information provided by Chatham-Kent Public Health Unit and the County of Lambton Community Health Services.

**Q. *Will schools close?***

School closures are not recommended at present by public health authorities. Any decision to close or modify school operations due to an illness outbreak will be made under the advice of Chatham-Kent Public Health Unit and the County of Lambton Community Health Services. The Board may decide to close a school if the staff absenteeism rate created a safety issue at a particular school.

**Q. *What happens when a student/staff member/parent/community member says there is a case of H1N1 at my school?***

This virus is in our community. Regardless of whether or not a student or employee has been given confirmation, the following standard practices continue:

- daily cleaning and disinfecting; and
- measures to prevent the spread of the influenza and other infections are reinforced.

Health information of individuals is protected by privacy law and may not be disclosed.

**Q. Are drinking fountains being turned off?**

No. Regular practices and precautions are to be followed (i.e. students are to avoid touching the spout of drinking fountains). As per standard practice, students should avoid sharing of food, beverages and other personal items.

**Q. Are breakfast programs and other activities involving food being cancelled?**

As per standard practice, breakfast programs are to continue under normal, diligent adult supervision.

**Q. Will clubs and extra-curricular activities be cancelled?**

Extra-curricular activities will continue.

**Q. When/where will vaccines for H1N1 be administered?**

Details about H1N1 immunization clinics are posted on the Chatham-Kent Public Health Unit and the County of Lambton Community Health Services websites [www.chatham-kent.ca](http://www.chatham-kent.ca) or [www.lambtonhealth.on.ca](http://www.lambtonhealth.on.ca)

**Q. Where can I obtain more information about H1N1?**

Chatham-Kent Public Health Unit [www.chatham-kent.ca](http://www.chatham-kent.ca)  
County of Lambton Community Health Services [www.lambtonhealth.on.ca](http://www.lambtonhealth.on.ca)  
Ministry of Health and Long Term Care [www.health.gov.on.ca](http://www.health.gov.on.ca)  
Our Board website, [www.lkdsb.net](http://www.lkdsb.net) has links to the latest information.