



30 June 2009

# Newsflash

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## **'Manage it' phase in Influenza A (H1N1) Swine Flu strategy**

You may be aware that the Minister of Health has moved to a 'manage it' phase in its Influenza A (H1N1) Swine Flu strategy. This is moving away from the previous containment phase. This means that children and staff who have travelled overseas are able to return to school as long as they are not showing any 'flu-like' symptoms. It is also unlikely that early childhood services or schools will be advised to close if they have suspected or confirmed cases.

However we ask that if children are suffering from **any** type of illness that they are kept home until they are better. Ministry of Health guidelines suggest the best things you can do to stop the spread of any type of influenza virus are to:

- Stay at home and away from others if you are sick
- Cover your coughs and sneezes with a tissue
- Put used tissues into a rubbish bin
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth – germs spread that way
- Be careful to wash hands often with soap and dry them thoroughly – **hand hygiene is critical:** even when you start to feel better there is still a risk of infecting others, so keep to the 20/20 rule – 20 seconds washing and 20 seconds drying
- Keep surfaces clean at home, school and work

## **National Standards**

National Standards are to be used in schools from 2010 and are in the Learning Areas of Math and English. Students will be assessed against these Standards using a combination of standardised tests and teacher judgement. While reviewing the consultation material, please keep the following questions in mind:

- Will assessing students increase their level of achievement?
- How will the Ministry of Education protect the data they gather, to ensure that the media does not create League tables?
- Will National Standards celebrate those students who may not have attained the Level required, but who have made excellent progress?
- Will the emphasis on Numeracy and Literacy mean that students will no longer benefit from the 'richness' of a diverse curriculum (Performing Arts, Technology etc) as the focus shifts to these Learning Areas?
- How can we protect our students from being harmed by reporting which places them 'well below the standard'?

The Consultation Period on National Standards **ends this Friday, 3 July**. For those parents interested in either reading more or placing feedback, please visit [www.minedu.govt.nz](http://www.minedu.govt.nz)