



THE NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

JOEL I. KLEIN, *Chancellor*

OFFICE OF THE CHANCELLOR

52 Chambers Street - New York, NY 10007

Dear School Community,

As the City continues to respond to the H1N1 flu and do all we can to keep everyone in our school community healthy, I wanted to address a topic that many parents have questions about: absences due to H1N1.

The State of New York requires students to be in school a certain number of days each school year. But in our effort to contain the spread of the H1N1 flu, we have closed some schools temporarily and encouraged some students who are sick and might be infected to stay home until their symptoms go away. In other words, our response to H1N1 has led to increased absenteeism in some of our schools.

When a school is closed, the days a student misses are neutral. Students are not marked absent or present. This means these days will not appear on students' records.

For schools that have not been closed, we have created a new policy to address absences related to H1N1. Here's how it will work:

- We are putting a new Absence Reason Code in place that will allow schools to document that a student was marked absent from school because of H1N1.
- We will not require a doctor's note from students returning to school after an absence caused by H1N1, but we are asking that every student present a note from a parent or guardian explaining the reason for the absence. If the note states the absence was related to H1N1, we will enter the new code "H1N1 Related" into the computer system that tracks attendance to correspond to the day or days of absence.
- The existence and use of this new code will allow schools to make decisions pertaining to attendance awards ceremonies, promotions, and grades awarded.

Using the above coding process to designate H1N1 as the reason for student absence will allow students to put their health first. Please be assured that absences related to H1N1 will be counted as excused in your child's attendance record.

Please contact your parent coordinator if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Joel I. Klein".

Joel I. Klein