

21 May 2019

## Dear staff, parent/ caregivers of students who attend Paremata School

On 20/05/2019, Regional Public Health was contacted by staff at Paremata School to report a high number of children and staff away with probable flu-like illness. Regional Public Health can now confirm that the increase of illness is due to influenza B

Influenza causes a fever (temperature  $\geq 38^{\circ}\text{C}$  or feeling hot, sweaty, and chills), cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, body aches, headache and fatigue, and sometimes diarrhoea and vomiting. These symptoms usually last 3-4 days but can be up to 7 days.

If you are worried about your child's symptoms or they have long-term health problems (e.g. asthma, diabetes kidney, heart or immunity problems), then you should phone their usual doctor or Healthline 0800 611 116 for further advise. Most people recover at home and only see their GP if their illness gets worse or is not improving.

To help control the illness in your school it is important that you inform a member of staff if your child has an illness like the one described above and that they stay home until feeling well again (usually 3-4 days but up to 7 days). Sick staff and students should not be at sports matches, school productions or camps. This is so they can rest and recover and don't spread illness to others.

Please ensure that your school has your correct and up-to-date contact details should they need to contact you.

It is important to use tissues to cover coughs and sneezes and to be very good about washing and drying hands thoroughly. The attached hyperlink <https://www.kidshealth.org.nz/flu-influenza> has some good tips for looking after people with flu like illness and stopping it spreading to other people at home.

If you get influenza we ask that don't visit hospitals or community care homes or see people who may be at high risk of serious illness, such as pregnant women, young babies, or anyone who has cancer, lung, and heart or kidney conditions. Stay off work and school until you have been well for at least 48 hours from last symptoms.

Kind regards,

Therese McGillicuddy  
Public Health Nurse  
For Medical Officer of Health  
Dr Annette Nesdale