[School Letterhead]

[Date]

**Influenza/Influenza-like Illness (ILI)**

Dear Parents/Guardians and Staff:

Several students at [insert school/childcare center name] have come down with influenza or an influenza-like illness. Please review the following information to protect the health of your child and your family.

**Background**

Influenza is caused by viruses that are spread from person-to-person through coughing or sneezing of infected people. The symptoms may include fever, cough, sore throat, body aches, headache, chills and fatigue. Some people with influenza also have vomiting and/or diarrhea. Most people infected with influenza will have a mild illness lasting 3 to 5 days.

Certain groups of people are at higher risk for severe illness when infected with influenza, including:

* Children younger than 5, especially children younger than 2 years old.
* Adults 65 years of age and older.
* Pregnant women.
* Persons with certain health conditions (e.g., diabetes, heart, kidney, or liver diseases, weakened immune systems)
* Persons with morbid obesity (body mass index ≥ 40)

**What should you do?**

There are important actions that can help prevent the spread of germs that cause respiratory illnesses like influenza. All people are encouraged to take these steps:

* Annual vaccination is the best way to prevent influenza. The fu vaccine is recommended for everyone 6 months of age and older. Contact your healthcare provider or the San Luis Obispo Public Health Department at (805) 781-5500 to see if vaccine is available for your child and your family.
* Cover your nose and mouth when you cough or sneeze.
* Wash your hands often with soap and warm water. Alcohol-based hand cleaners are also effective.
* If you get sick, stay home from work or school and limit contact with others to keep from infecting them.
* Try to avoid close contact with sick people.
* Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth.
* Do not share personal items such as towels or utensils.
* Routinely clean items or surfaces that are touched frequently (use your normal cleaning products).

**Can my child return to childcare/school?**

Students and staff with influenza-like illness (fever with a cough or sore throat) should stay home and not attend classes or participate in other group activities for at least 24 hours after fever resolves without the use of fever-reducing medications. Public Health does not recommend dismissal of the school or cancellation of classes for the control of seasonal influenza.

If you have any further questions or concerns, please contact [insert school point of contact name] or call [insert contact phone number].

[School Signature]