

Thursday, October 1, 2009

Dear Parents,

We were notified today that one of our students has been diagnosed with the H1N1 flu virus. Due to recent events regarding the swine flu virus, school and public health officials are providing the following information to you as parents of school age children.

At this time, public health officials have advised that schools will remain open and students can continue to attend school, as long as they are not sick and do not have flu symptoms. Flu-like symptoms include: fever (over 100 degrees F), cough, sore throat, runny nose, or stuffy nose. Additional symptoms may include muscle pain, tiredness, and sometimes vomiting or diarrhea.

Flu spreads easily. If you think your child is getting the flu, it is important that he/she does not attend school, group childcare, the mall, sporting events or anywhere large crowds gather. This will reduce the possibility of spreading the germs to other people.

Below are a few simple steps that will help your children reduce their risk of getting the flu and protect others from infection:

- Teach your children to wash their hands often.
- Teach your children the proper use of hand sanitizer.
- Teach your children to keep their hands away from their face and avoid touching their mouth, nose, or eyes.
- Teach your children to cover coughs and sneezes with tissues and throw away the tissues or by coughing into the inside of their elbow.
- Help your children to learn these healthy habits by setting a good example and always doing them yourself.

We are working with district, state, and local health officials to monitor the situation and will make all decisions in consultation with them. At this point, these officials recommend that "School closures are not advised for a suspected or confirmed case of novel influenza A (H1N1), and in general, is not advised unless there is a magnitude of faculty or student absenteeism that interferes with the school's ability to function." We will notify parents if the situation changes and it becomes necessary to close our school.

We have also been advised by the Utah State Superintendent of Public Education and the Executive Director of the Utah Department of Health with the following recommendations:

- Students, faculty or staff with influenza-like illness (fever with a cough or sore throat) should stay home and not attend school or go into the community, except to seek medical care, for at least seven days, even if symptoms resolve sooner.
- Students, faculty and staff who are still sick seven days after they become ill should continue to stay home from school until at least 24 hours after symptoms have resolved.
- Students, faculty and staff who appear to have an influenza-like illness at arrival or become ill during the school day should be isolated promptly in a room separate from other students and sent home.
- Parents and guardians should monitor their school-aged children, and faculty and staff should self-monitor every morning for symptoms of influenza-like illness.
- Ill students should not attend alternative child care or congregate in settings other than school.
- Students, faculty and staff should stringently follow sanitary measures to reduce the spread of influenza, including covering their nose and mouth with a tissue when coughing or sneezing (or coughing or sneezing into their sleeve if a tissue isn't available), frequently washing hands with soap and water, or using hand sanitizer if hand washing with soap and water is not possible.

In summary, schools no longer have to close if they have a suspected or actual case of the flu. Sick students and staff with flu-like symptoms should stay home—or be sent home—for a minimum of seven days, and adults should continue to monitor children's health (and their own) for flu-like symptoms.

In response to this evolving situation, the CDC is issuing updated interim guidance daily. The full recommendations are found in the CDC's flu web site: <http://www.cdc.gov/swineflu>. There are other helpful flu-related resources online at www.schools.utah.gov/flu.htm and at <http://health.utah.gov/epi/SwineFlu/>.

Thank you for your cooperation in keeping our children and our school healthy.

Sincerely,

Dennis Pratt, Principal