

Preparing for the Flu Season

August 27, 2009

Dear Northview Families,

As you know, the H1N1 virus is a form of the flu that has been active since last winter. During the summer break, school district officials worked with local and national public health experts to prepare for a widespread outbreak of the flu. Some schools in the metro area are beginning to report isolated cases of H1N1 – including a handful of suspected cases in North Kansas City Schools.

As a District, we are following the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) recommendations and asking staff and students with flu-like symptoms to stay home and not return to school until at least 24 hours after they are fever free. Families should **notify the school nurse**, if your child has been diagnosed with the flu or other contagious disease.

Our communications on the flu, as recommended by public health officials, will focus primarily on **good hygiene** and other **preventive measures**. We will not be able to send communications about the number of H1N1 flu cases in the District, because the CDC is no longer testing for H1N1 unless a person has been hospitalized. As such, there is no reliable way to track the number of cases of H1N1 in the District. However, if a confirmed case of H1N1 flu is reported in our school, we will notify you.

If your child misses school because of the flu or any illness, be sure to contact the teacher or principal to make arrangements to continue his/her education at home. With the support of local health officials, we want to keep schools open during this flu season. However, **we need your help** to do this. The CDC and other public health experts recommend the following:

- Teach your children to **wash their hands** thoroughly and often with soap and water or an alcohol-based hand rub. You can set a good example by doing this yourself.
- Teach your children **not to share** personal items like drinks, food or unwashed utensils.

- Teach your children how to **cover their coughs and sneezes** with tissues or into their sleeve (instead of the hand) when a tissue is not available.
- Know the signs and **symptoms of the flu**. Symptoms include fever (100 degrees F. or greater), cough, sore throat, a runny or stuffy nose, body aches, headache, and feeling very tired. Some people may also vomit or have diarrhea.
- Keep sick children **at home for at least 24 hours after the fever is gone** without the use of fever-reducing drugs (any medicine that contains ibuprofen or acetaminophen). Keeping children with a fever at home will reduce the number of people who may get infected.

For more information, visit www.flu.gov, or call 1-800-CDC-INFO for the most current information about the flu. You also may contact the school nurse.

Thank you for doing your part to help prevent the spread of the flu and other contagious diseases, so all our students can stay healthy and continue to learn and achieve in school.

Sincerely,

Mark S. Lewis
Principal