

SCHOOL DISTRICT OF JENNINGS

2559 Dorwood Drive • Jennings, MO 63136

Mr. Clarence E. Holman, Jr.
Superintendent of Schools

Phone: (314) 653-8000
Fax: (314) 653-8030

September 23, 2009

Dear Parent/Guardian:

Many of you have expressed concern about H1N1 influenza and seasonal flu and what plans may be in place to help protect your children. Let me reassure you that we are working very closely with the CDC and the St. Louis County Health Department to monitor flu conditions and make decisions about the best steps to take concerning our schools.

You play an important role in how the flu affects our community and can help us slow the spread of a flu virus in our community. Rather than waiting for flu season to begin this fall, we recommend you start now planning to protect your family and our community as we “fight the flu” together.

The best way to protect your family against flu is with a **vaccination**. We encourage you to get your family members vaccinated as soon as possible against seasonal flu. This will offer protection against at least three flu viruses expected to circulate in our community this year. In addition, vaccine for H1N1 flu, also called swine flu, is expected to be available later this year.

For now we are doing everything we can to keep our school functioning as usual. Here are a few things you can do to help:

- **Teach your children to wash their hands** 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, and to cover their coughs and sneezes with tissues. Covering up coughs or sneezes using the elbow, arm or sleeve instead of the hand when a tissue is unavailable will limit the spread of infection.
- **Know the signs and symptoms of the flu.** Symptoms of the flu include fever (100 degrees Fahrenheit, 37.8 degrees Celsius 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* they no longer have a fever or do not have signs of fever, without using fever-reducing drugs. Keeping children with a fever at home will reduce the number of people who may get infected.
- **Do not send children to school if they are sick.** Any children who are determined to be sick while at school *will be sent home*.

For more information, visit www.cdc.gov, or call 1-800-CDC-INFO for the most current information about the flu. For more information about flu in our community and what our school is doing, visit our school website at www.jenningsk12.net. We will notify you of any additional changes to our school's strategy to prevent the spread of flu.

Sincerely,



Clarence E. Holman, Jr.
Superintendent of Schools



Action Steps for Parents to Protect Your Child and Family from the Flu this School Year

August 7, 2009 9:00 AM ET

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends 4 main ways you and your family may keep from getting sick with the flu at school and at home:

1. **Practice good hand hygiene** by washing your hands often with soap and water, especially after coughing or sneezing. Alcohol-based hand cleaners are also effective.
2. **Cover your mouth and nose** with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. If you don't have a tissue, cough or sneeze into your elbow or shoulder; not into your hands.
3. **Stay home if you or your child is sick** for at least 24 hours after there is no longer a fever or signs of a fever (without the use of fever-reducing medicine). Keeping sick students at home means that they keep their viruses to themselves rather than sharing them with others.
4. **Get your family vaccinated** for seasonal flu and 2009 H1N1 flu when vaccines are available.

If flu conditions become MORE severe, parents should consider the following steps:

- **Extend the time sick children stay home** for at least 7 days, even if they feel better sooner. People who are still sick after 7 days should continue to stay home until at least 24 hours after symptoms have completely gone away.
- **If a household member is sick, keep any school-aged brothers or sisters home for 5 days** from the time the household member became sick. Parents should monitor their health and the health of other school-aged children for fever and other symptoms of the flu.

Follow these steps to prepare for the flu during the 2009-2010 school year:

- Plan for child care at home if your child gets sick or their school is dismissed.
- Plan to monitor the health of the sick child and any other children in the household by checking for fever and other symptoms of flu.
- Identify if you have children who are at higher risk of serious disease from the flu and talk to your healthcare provider about a plan to protect them during the flu season. Children at high risk of serious disease from the flu include: children

under 5 years of age and those children with chronic medical conditions, such as asthma and diabetes.

- Identify a separate room in the house for the care of sick family members.
- Update emergency contact lists.
- Collect games, books, DVDs and other items to keep your family entertained if schools are dismissed or your child is sick and must stay home.

Talk to your school administrators about their pandemic or emergency plan.

For more information:

- **Visit:** www.flu.gov
- **Contact CDC 24 Hours/Every Day**
 - 1-800-CDC-INFO (232-4636)
 - TTY: (888)232-6348
 - cdcinfo@cdc.gov



Action Steps for Parents if School is Dismissed or Children are Sick and Must Stay Home

August 7, 2009 9:00 AM ET

- Be prepared to support home learning activities if the school makes them available. Your child's school may offer web-based lessons, instructional phone calls, and other types of distance learning. Have school materials, such as text books, workbooks, and homework packets available at home.
- Have activities for your children to do while at home. Pull together games, books, DVDs and other items to keep your family entertained.
- Find out if your employer will allow you to stay at home to care for sick household members or children dismissed from school. Ask if you can work from home. If this is not possible, find other ways to care for your children at home.
- If school is dismissed, monitor the school's website, local news, and other sources for information about returning to school.

Tips for taking care of children (and other household members) with the flu

- **Stay home if you or your child is sick** until at least 24 hours after there is no longer a fever or signs of a fever (without the use of a fever-reducing medicine). Keeping sick students at home means that they keep their viruses to themselves rather than sharing them with others. Stay home even if taking antiviral medicines.
- **Cover coughs and sneezes. Clean hands** with soap and water or an alcohol-based hand rub often and especially after coughing or sneezing.
- **Keep sick household members in a separate room** (a sick room) in the house as much as possible to limit contact with household members who are not sick. Consider designating a single person as the main caregiver for the sick person.
- **Monitor the health of the sick child and any other household members** by checking for fever and other symptoms of flu. A fever is a temperature taken with a thermometer that is equal to or greater than 100 degrees Fahrenheit (37.8 degrees Celsius). If you are not able to measure a temperature, the sick person might have a fever if he or she feels warm, has a flushed appearance, or is sweating or shivering.

Watch for emergency warning signs that need urgent medical attention. These warning signs include:

- Fast breathing or trouble breathing
- Bluish or gray skin color
- Not drinking enough fluids
- Not urinating or no tears when crying
- Severe or persistent vomiting
- Not waking up or not interacting
- Being so irritable that the child does not want to be held

- Pain or pressure in the chest or abdomen
 - Sudden dizziness
 - Confusion
 - Flu-like symptoms improve but then return with fever and worse cough
- **Check with your doctor about any special care** needed for household members who may be at higher risk for complications from flu. This includes children under the age of 5 years, pregnant women, people of any age who have chronic medical conditions (such as asthma, diabetes, or heart disease), and people age 65 years and older.
 - **Have the sick household member wear a facemask** – if available and tolerable – when sharing common spaces with other household members to help prevent spreading the virus to others. This is especially important if other household members are at high risk for complications from flu.
 - **Ask your doctor about antiviral medicines or fever-reducing medicines** for sick household members. Do not give aspirin to children or teenagers; it can cause a rare but serious illness called Reye’s syndrome
 - **Make sure sick household members get plenty of rest and drink clear fluids** (such as water, broth, sports drinks, electrolyte beverages for infants) to keep from being dehydrated.
 - **If your health department says that flu conditions have become more severe**
 - **Extend the time sick children stay home** for at least 7 days, even if they feel better sooner. People who are still sick after 7 days should continue to stay home until at least 24 hours after symptoms have gone away.
 - **If a household member is sick, keep any school-aged brothers or sisters home** for 5 days from the time the household member became sick. Parents should monitor their health and the health of other school-aged children for fever and other symptoms of the flu.

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