

April 30, 2009

Dear District Parents/Guardians and Community Members,

The H1N1 Influenza 'flu' has become a recent focus in the news. In response to the news coverage and concerns this topic raises, we would like to you to know that the district and our school nurses have been, and will continue, to work closely with the Seattle King County Health Department, the Center for Disease Control and the U.S. Department of Education to determine the best action for schools to take. Although there have been possible cases of H1N1 flu reported in Washington State, our current focus at this time is on on-going prevention guidelines that have been implemented in our schools over the last few years.

For example, disease prevention practices are emphasized daily through hand washing and providing hand sanitizer in classrooms and around the schools; and teaching respiratory etiquette (coughing into sleeve) reminders. Additionally, surface tops (desks, counters, door handles, etc.) are cleaned regularly with approved disinfectant.

H1N1 flu in people is characterized by fever, sore throat, cough, body aches, headaches, chills and fatigue. The illness may last up to 7 days, but people are considered to be contagious as long as symptoms persist. If you or your child have mild flu like symptoms, monitor your condition and telephone your health care provider to consult if necessary. A H1N1 flu diagnosis is confirmed by a positive nasal swab culture.

What You Can Do To Prevent the Spread of Illness and the H1N1 Flu:

- Practice healthful habits such as eating nutritious food, getting plenty of sleep, drinking plenty of fluids, being physically active, and reducing stress.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth. Germs spread that way.
- Sneeze or cough into a tissue, elbow or sleeve. Throw the tissue in the trash after use.
- Wash hands often with soap and water, especially after coughing or sneezing. Alcohol based hand cleaners are also effective.
- If you or your child are sick with a fever of 100 degrees or higher, vomiting, diarrhea, blistering rash, heavy nasal congestion, or frequent cough then **stay home** and, if necessary, seek medical attention.

Resources you can use to learn more include:

- King County Health Department, www.kingcountyhealth.gov/health or 206-296-4949
- Center for Disease Control, www.cdc.gov
- Office of the Superintendent of Public Education, www.k12.wa.us/HealthServices/swineflu.aspx
- Bellevue School District website, www.bsd405.org

We realize the recent news about the H1N1 flu raises concern about your child and your family's health and well being. When we all work together to help keep our children healthy, practice preventative measures, and stay home when we are unwell, everyone benefits from our diligence.