



May 20, 2009

Dear Parents and Guardians:

As you have likely learned from the media, there are a variety of confirmed cases of the H1N1 flu (swine flu) in the Puget Sound area and we know there are confirmed cases within the greater Kent School District community. We understand parents are concerned, so we are providing information to help everyone learn more about the illness and what you can do as a parent or guardian.

It is important to keep in mind that the H1N1 virus has been relatively mild, similar to the level of illness we see with seasonal flu each winter. As with seasonal flu, we will continue to operate school as usual.

Parents and guardians are our first line of defense against flu-like illnesses. We rely on you to carefully check your children before school for signs and symptoms of the flu. Symptoms of influenza include: fever, sore throat, cough, body aches, headaches, chills, and fatigue. If you notice that your children have these symptoms, please keep them home.

The illness may last up to seven days, but people are considered to be contagious as long as symptoms persist. If you or your child is showing mild flu-like symptoms, monitor and consult with your healthcare practitioner immediately. Students who exhibit flu-like symptoms at school will be sent home and parents will be urged to seek advice from their healthcare practitioner.

It is important that you remind children of these guidelines:

- **Wash your hands often with soap and water**, especially after you cough or sneeze. If soap and water are not nearby, use an alcohol-based hand cleaner.
- **Cover your nose and mouth** with a tissue. Afterwards, throw the tissue in the trash. You can also cover your nose and mouth with the inside of your elbow when you cough or sneeze.
- **Try not to touch your eyes, nose, or mouth.** Germs often spread this way.
- **Stay away from people who are sick.**

These simple steps will help reduce the spread of flu and other illnesses in our school and community. It is also important that you follow these guidelines as well, both as a role model for your children and to keep yourself healthy.

For more information and ongoing updates, please visit:

www.doh.wa.gov/swineflu/default.htm and/or www.kingcounty.gov/health/H1N1.

Thank you for your help in keeping students healthy.

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