



September 2009

Dear Parents/Guardians:

With school back in session, the District and the Sonoma County Department of Health Services are providing information to families about steps you can take to prevent the spread of flu. Your efforts will help us to keep school open and functioning normally. Vaccines will become available later in the fall, and Health Services will notify the general public when this occurs.

Here are some steps you can take now to prevent the spread of flu:

- **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. When a tissue is not available, show your children how to cover up their coughs or sneezes using the elbow, arm or sleeve.
- **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 fatigue. Some people may also vomit or have diarrhea. Children or family members at high risk for complications of the flu, such as pregnant women, those with asthma, diabetes, compromised immune systems or neuromuscular diseases should call their health care provider as soon as possible if they become ill to determine if treatment is needed.
- **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*.
- **Keep sick children at home** for at least 24 hours *after* they no longer have 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.
- **Vaccinate your child** for both the seasonal flu and H1N1 2009 flu when the vaccine becomes available this fall.

If the flu becomes more severe in our schools or around the County, Health Services, working with the District, may take additional steps to prevent the spread of flu such as:

- Conducting active fever and flu symptom screening of students and staff as they arrive at school,
- Making changes to increase the space between people such as moving desks farther apart and postponing class trips, and
- Increasing the dismissal period for students and staff from school to at least 7 days if they become sick.
- Closing schools if the situation becomes serious enough that the Public Health Officer authorizes such action.

We will continue to keep you informed regarding this matter during the school year.

Sincerely,

Barbara Vrankovich
Superintendent