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H1N1 Update

Dear Arcadia Families,

With all of the information circulating on H1N1 flu, I wanted to provide you with an update on Arcadia Schools. Many rumors are circulating on cases of H1N1 flu in the district. **To date, we have no confirmed H1N1 cases from the Hancock County Health Dept.** However, there are confirmed strains of Type A flu present in Hancock County. Type A strains cause H1N1 and they are being treated the same.

We are working closely with the health department and following CDC recommendations to try and avoid any possible flu outbreak in the school. Our absences are currently within the normal range in the elementary, middle and high school. They are being monitored closely. The maintenance department is sanitizing all drinking fountains, bathrooms and common surfaces daily. Hand sanitizers are available in all classrooms and common areas in the building. Bus drivers are disinfecting the buses frequently. Teachers and principals are reminding students daily of the need to wash their hands and cough into sleeves. We will continue these procedures throughout the winter and remain as proactive as possible during this influenza season. If an outbreak would occur at the school, necessary steps will be taken and notification sent out through our normal channels of communication.

On the back of this letter is an informational sheet on H1N1. If you wish more preventative tips or information, they are available at www.flu.gov.

Thank you for your understanding and cooperation as we work together in trying to keep everyone healthy this year.

Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions.

Yours in education,



Laurie M. Walles



WHAT PARENTS NEED TO KNOW ABOUT H1N1 (Swine Influenza) TO PROTECT THEIR CHILDREN

What Can I Do To Prevent The Spread of H1N1 Flu?

The role of students and parents is a very important one. Take a common sense approach to limit the spread of germs. *Make good hygiene a habit and teach these habits to your children:*

- Washing and drying your hands properly is one of the best ways of protecting yourself against the spread of germs. Wash hands for at least 20 seconds with soap and water. Teach your children to sing Happy Birthday twice while washing hands to ensure they are washing long enough. You can use an alcohol based rub if soap and water is unavailable.
- Wash and dry hands frequently but especially before handling or eating food, after coughing or sneezing, blowing your nose or using the bathroom.
- Cover your mouth and nose with tissue when you cough or sneeze and dispose of the used tissue in a covered, lined wastebasket right away. Cough or sneeze into your upper sleeve if you do not have a tissue rather than sneezing into the air or into your hand. Wash your hands.
- Try to stay several feet away from sick people to avoid catching their germs.
- Monitor your school aged children for illness every morning. Keep your child home if he/she is sick. If your child is suspected of having H1N1 flu they should remain at home until he/she is symptom-free for 24 hours without fever-reducing medication to prevent the spread of flu to others.
- Students who are sick should not be sent to group day care and should not be out in public places except to receive medical care. Ill students should not be at the mall, at sporting or social events, in restaurants, etc. while they are out sick from school.
- Plan for how you will care for your child if he or she is home sick. Stay informed. Get fast, reliable information on H1N1 and seasonal flu developments at www.cdc.gov or by calling your local health department.

When to Seek Emergency Medical Care

- Has difficulty breathing or chest pain
- Has purple or blue discoloration of the lips
- Is vomiting and unable to keep liquids down
- Has signs of dehydration such as dizziness when standing, absence of urination, or in infants, a lack of tears when they cry
- Has seizures (for example, uncontrolled convulsions)
- Is less responsive than normal or becomes confused

What Are the Symptoms of H1N1 Flu?

The symptoms of novel H1N1 flu virus in people are similar to the symptoms of seasonal flu and include:

- Fever (over 100 degrees F)
 - Cough
 - Sore throat
 - Body aches, headache runny or stuffy nose, chills, and fatigue
- A significant number of people who have been infected with novel H1N1 flu virus also have reported diarrhea and vomiting.

What Should I Do If My Child Becomes Sick With Flu-Like Symptoms?

Like seasonal flu, H1N1 flu in humans can range in severity from mild to severe. If your child becomes ill, here are a few things to remember:

- Check with his/her health care provider about any special care they might need if he/she has a health condition such as diabetes, asthma, or other chronic health condition
- Check with his/her health care provider about whether your child should take antiviral medications
- The child should stay home until he/she has been symptom-free for 24-hours without fever-reducing medication except to seek medical care or for other necessities.
- Make sure your child gets plenty of rest
- Have your child drink clear fluids (such as water, broth, sports drinks, electrolyte beverages for infants) to keep from being dehydrated
- Cover coughs and sneezes. Clean hands with soap and water or an alcohol-based hand rub often and especially after using tissues and after coughing or sneezing into hands
- Avoid close contact with others -do not go to school or other public places while ill

WARNING! Do **NOT** give aspirin (acetylsalicylic acid) to children or teenagers who have the flu; this can cause a rare but serious illness called Reye's syndrome.

Children 5 years of age and older and teenagers with the flu can take medicines *without* aspirin, such as acetaminophen (Tylenol) and ibuprofen (Advil, Motrin, Nuprin) to relieve symptoms.

*Be watchful for emergency warning signs (see below) that might indicate you need to seek medical attention.