



SALEM SCHOOL DIVISION ISSUES LETTER TO PARENTS CONCERNING SWINE FLU

April 30, 2009

Dear Parents,

At the request of the Virginia Department of Health (VDH) District Offices, we are sending this informational statement concerning the Swine Flu home with students. At the time of this correspondence, there have been no documented cases of Swine Flu in Virginia. We will continue to closely monitor our schools and students, respond to any public health announcements and rapidly provide you with information. We will rely on email for further informational updates and our automated phone notification system in the event of any urgent developments. If your contact information has changed recently, please immediately contact your school secretary to update your phone number and/or email address.

Please be aware that the Salem School Division is following all local procedures when it comes to monitoring the current Swine Flu outbreak that is affecting various parts of the United States. We have direct lines of communication with the VDH District Offices to stay apprised of any new developments regarding this particular strain of flu.

We want to reassure you that we are doing everything necessary to protect the health and safety of our students and staff. Should the virus make its way to southwest Virginia and the Roanoke Valley, we will follow established procedures. Parents are advised that VDH plans to safeguard public health include closing schools as a precaution to help isolate and slow the spread of a community outbreak. We will certainly provide as much notice as possible if such action is directed by the VDH.

Students who are not ill can still safely come to school, but we are asking for your help when it comes to paying attention to your own health and the health of your children. The symptoms of the Swine Flu virus infection are similar to those that often accompany the seasonal flu. These symptoms include fever, cough, sore throat, body aches, headache, chills and fatigue. Some people also have reported diarrhea and vomiting.

The annual flu shot does not offer protection against this particular virus, but here are some very common sense ways you can protect yourself and your family:

- If you get sick, stay home from work or school and limit contact with others to keep from infecting them.
- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Throw the tissue in the trash after you use it.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water, especially after you cough or sneeze. Alcohol-based hands cleaners are also effective.
- Try to avoid close contact with sick people.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth. Germs spread that way.

The Centers for Disease Control's webpage http://www.cdc.gov/swineflu/swineflu_you.htm provides other factual information about Swine Flu. If you have a particular concern about the Swine Flu, please call your physician. If you have questions about school plans and procedures, please contact your child's principal, school nurse, or my office.

Sincerely,

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