



Dear Parents/Guardians;

As you are all aware there is much concern about flu this year – particularly the H1N1 virus (first called “swine flu”). Although we deal with flu every year, there is more concern now because of the severity of the H1N1 virus and that much of the population has not acquired immunity to that particular strain.

We want you all to feel assured that we are taking a potential outbreak at SLDC in a serious way. When we first started hearing of this new virus strain we put antiseptic wipes in every classroom and office and began talking about universal precautions. We have emphasized hand washing and proper covering of sneezes and coughs, both for students and staff. We have also been in regular contact with the Orange County Health Department and the Center on Disease Control to ensure that we have up-to-date information.

The Orange County Health Department has said that we should treat the possible outbreak of the H1N1 virus as we would any flu virus. They emphasize that any of us could be exposed to the virus and not even know it, or that we may have even contracted the virus and not recognized it. Their advice is that we continue to follow the precautions that you will find attached to this letter and that individuals who are ill **stay at home**. Students or staff who experience fevers must stay home until they are fever-free for 24 hours. The difference with this precaution is that the fever needs to be gone **without the use of fever-reducing medications** (i.e., Tylenol). Students who are out more than 3 days must have a doctor’s note that releases them back to school – the same policy is in effect for our staff.

Our goal is to maintain as healthy an environment as possible. You can help by reinforcing hand washing and the proper way to cover a sneeze or cough. With many of our students this means demonstration and consistent reinforcement!

Attached you will find typical guidelines for dealing with flu and flu -like symptoms, as well as some information about the flu vaccines that are available. If you have seen other helpful information, please pass that on to us and we will distribute it as necessary.

Thanks for helping us keep our students and staff healthy!!!!

Dawn O'Connor
CEO/Principal

The 2009 H1N1 flu (swine flu) was first detected in the United States in April 2009, and is expected to continue to affect people for the rest of 2009 and possibly into 2010. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), there have been more than 1 million cases of the H1N1 flu so far in the United States. To date, H1N1 flu activity has been reported in all U.S. states and territories. And worldwide, more than 177 countries and territories have reported confirmed cases. **Here's some information about spotting symptoms and lowering your risk of getting the H1N1 flu.**

- **H1N1 flu symptoms**—similar to regular seasonal flu symptoms. They may include fever, sore throat, cough, stuffy nose, chills, headache, body aches, fatigue, diarrhea, or vomiting.
- **Transmission**—spreads the same way as the seasonal flu: from person to person, usually through coughing and sneezing. It can also spread when people touch a contaminated surface and then touch their mouth, eyes, or nose.
- **Infection period**—starts one day before appearance of symptoms and can last seven or more days after symptoms start.

How to protect yourself and your family

Take these precautions to limit your chances of getting or spreading the flu:

- Wash your hands often with soap and water or an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- Avoid touching doorknobs, desks, or other surfaces that might be contaminated.
- Always cover sneezes and coughs, even if you feel well.
- Avoid people who are coughing or sneezing.
- Get a flu vaccination. And remember, there are two different vaccines—the H1N1 vaccine and the seasonal flu vaccine. The seasonal flu vaccine does not protect against the H1N1 flu.

H1N1 flu vaccine

A vaccine for this new flu should be available in October or November. It will probably first be given to members at higher risk for complications from the H1N1 flu. According to the CDC, these include children and young adults between 6 months and 24 years old, pregnant women, persons who live with or provide care for infants younger than 6 months old, healthcare workers, and persons 25 to 64 years old who have medical conditions that put them at higher risk for influenza-related complications. As vaccine supplies increase, additional at-risk groups will receive vaccinations. The most updated information will be posted on cdc.gov/h1n1flu as it becomes available.

If you get sick:

If you or your children have flu-like symptoms, the CDC recommends staying home even if the symptoms are mild. Treat symptoms with rest, fluids, and over-the-counter medications. Stay at home until the fever is gone for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medicine, except to get medical care or for other necessities.

- 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 hand sanitizers are also effective.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth. That's how germs are spread.
- Keep away from others as much as possible.

If you have severe symptoms, such as difficulty breathing or a high fever, contact your doctor or health care provider as soon as possible. He or she will help determine whether treatment is needed.