

Swine Flu Update

Dear Parent or Carer,

With the summer holidays approaching and the number of swine flu cases in the region continuing to rise, I wanted to take this opportunity to share with you the advice we have been given today by the NHS and the Health Protection Agency about dealing with any cases of swine flu we may have in the school in the future.

National guidance has recently been updated so that school closures are only likely now in exceptional circumstances, and preventative antiviral drugs will no longer be routinely offered to large groups of school pupils. As swine flu starts to circulate more freely in the local community, these measures are no longer effective, as people may be exposed to the virus outside school, or as soon as they have finished a course of drugs.

The most important advice we have been given is that children who have symptoms of flu-like illness should stay away from school until they have recovered and are free of symptoms. This is to avoid spreading the illness as much as possible.

You can check any symptoms online at www.nhs.uk or call the Swine Flu Information Line on 0800 1 513 513. If you are still concerned, stay at home and call your GP, who may suggest a course of anti-viral drug treatment.

If your doctor does advise anti-viral treatment for a child please let the school know as soon as possible.

It is important to point out that the vast majority of people who have swine flu make a quick recovery at home. However, you should do what you can to prevent the infection from being spread to others by ensuring your family take some simple precautions:

- Always use a tissue to catch your sneezes and coughs
- throw away used tissues where germs can linger
- wash your hands afterwards
- it is important to maintain good basic hygiene as well, for example washing hands frequently with soap and water to reduce the spread of viruses
- cleaning hard surfaces (such as door handles) frequently using a normal cleaning product

Experiencing symptoms?

Anyone experiencing influenza-like symptoms:-

- fever,
- fatigue,

- lack of appetite,
- coughing,
- sore throat,
- pain in muscles and joints,
- headache and chills
- **and, in some cases** vomiting and diarrhoea

1. should contact NHS Direct on 0845 4647 or their GP by telephone
2. stay at home until fully recovered and are free of symptoms
3. have as little contact with others as possible

Anyone not showing any flu like symptoms, should go to school/work as normal even if a member of your family is showing symptoms, unless they are advised otherwise by a Doctor.

Relevant websites giving further information are:-

Directgov (www.direct.gov.uk/swineflu) the primary government website for essential cross-government swine flu messages;

Health Protection Agency - www.hpa.org.uk

NHS Choices (www.nhs.uk) the primary public-facing health information and advice service;

Department of Health website (www.dh.gov.uk) the home of content relating to health and care professionals;

For education related information:

<http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/educationoverview/flupandemic>