



Northwest R-I School District

A "Distinction In Performance" District

September 9, 2009

Dear Parent/Guardian:

As you know, seasonal flu and H1N1 (Swine) flu can be easily spread from person to person. Therefore, we are taking steps to reduce the spread of flu in the Northwest R I School District. Although a few isolated cases of Type A influenza have been identified District-wide, we have not experienced an outbreak of H1N1 in our buildings at this time. We want to keep the school open to students and functioning in a normal manner during this flu season. **But, we need your help to do this.**

We are working closely with the Jefferson County Health Department *and* the Missouri Department of Health to monitor flu conditions and make decisions about the best steps to take in the school setting. We will keep you updated with new information as it becomes available.

Some of the action steps our District is taking now:

- ✓ Teachers and Nurses are educating students on effective hand-washing, cough and sneeze etiquette, and healthy habits.
- ✓ Students and staff are encouraged and reminded to wash hands often and /or use hand sanitizers.
- ✓ Sick students and staff will be sent home and encouraged to stay home for 24 hours after they no longer have fever or signs of fever.
- ✓ Routine cleaning of surfaces with emphasis on surfaces and items that are more likely to have frequent hand contact.
- ✓ Posting Flu tips for parents and staff on the District website www.nwr1.k12.mo.us with links to other sources of valuable information.
- ✓ Working with Jefferson County Health Department in providing Seasonal Flu and H1N1 Vaccine to our community. Seasonal Flu Clinic is scheduled for September 21, 2009 at Northwest Valley Media Room 2:30-4:30pm. H1N1 vaccine will be available sometime in October. The District will work with the Jefferson County Health Department to schedule a H1N1 clinic when it becomes available.

The District will be monitoring the situation and may take additional actions if the flu outbreak becomes more severe. We will inform you of those actions if they become necessary.

For now we are doing everything we can to keep our school functioning as usual. Our focus at this stage is prevention and education. Here are a few things **you** can do to help.

- **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. Covering up their coughs or sneezes using the elbow, arm or sleeve instead of the hand when a tissue is unavailable.

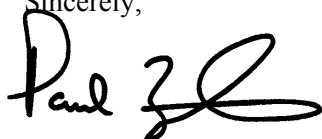
September 9, 2009

Page two

- **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 feeling very tired. Some people may also vomit or have diarrhea.
- **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.
- **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*.
- **If available, Flu Vaccine is effective in prevention of flu and spread of flu.** There is a Community Flu Clinic scheduled September 21, 2009 at Northwest Valley from 2:30 p.m. - 4:30 p.m. This is for the seasonal flu vaccine; however, we will work with health officials to schedule H1N1 vaccination clinics when it becomes available. For more information on flu clinics in our community, call the Jefferson County Health Department at 636-789-3372.
- **Now is a good time to make plans for what to do if your child becomes sick at school.** Who can pick up your child? Who will care for your child while sick? Keep school informed of current phone numbers to reach you. It will be important for children who become sick at school to be picked up as soon as possible. This is also a good time to stock up on “sick room essentials” like tissues, fever reducing medicines, soup, juice, books, DVD’s, quiet activities and rest for parents to give lots of “tender loving care”.

For more information, visit www.flu.gov, or call 1-800-CDC-INFO for the most current information about the flu. For more information about flu in our community, visit the Jefferson County Health department website at www.jeffcohealth.org or call 636-789-3372. Additional information about what our District is doing to prepare for and deal with the flu this season, is available on our website at www.nwr1.k12.mo.us.

Sincerely,



Dr. Paul T. Ziegler
Superintendent of Schools