

Saanich Schools

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Notice to Parents and Staff Influenza Update October 20, 2009

This notice is provided to remind you of the expectations and understandings that we have in regard to pandemic planning, particularly in relation to H1N1 influenza, and to let you know of how we are doing in our schools as of this week.

Reminders: Information on pandemic planning and H1N1 in general is available via our school district website at www.sd636.bc.ca. Links are provided there to H1N1 information from our school district, the provincial government (www.gov.bc.ca/h1n1/) and the Public Health Agency of Canada – Flu Watch (www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/fluwatch/).

Current Status: As you probably know, the flu is now in our community. One important consideration for parents, staff and students is that the flu is more than just a cough or cold. You have the flu if you have high fever, aches, headache, cough, sore throat, fatigue, lack of appetite and possibly vomiting and diarrhea. We are also told that if you have the flu now it is likely H1N1 as the seasonal flu has not yet come to our area. And, yes, we DO have H1N1 presenting itself in our school communities, not yet to the levels that would have us consider closing schools, but we will be ready if that is the case. We will consult with VIHA and contemplate closure only if a substantial number of students are absent with flu-like symptoms (10-20% or more), if staff members are absent to the degree that we cannot operate, or if custodial staff become unavailable to the extent that we cannot properly clean facilities.

As of today, we are requesting:

1. That you remember, and that you remind students of, the need for **cleanliness**, especially rigorous hand-washing at least five times per day, and **cough etiquette** (coughing into your elbow).
2. That if a child becomes ill with flu-like symptoms (high fever, aches, headache, cough, sore throat, fatigue, lack of appetite), you inform the school and keep the child home for seven days AND until 24 hours after the fever and other symptoms have abated. Another indicator is that the child should also be able to fully participate in all activities. The same goes, of course, for staff.

We will provide future notices as necessary. In the meantime, I wish you the best.

Sincerely,



Keven Elder
Superintendent of Schools

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