



Forest Ridge

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL DISTRICT 142

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May 6, 2009

Dear Parent /Guardian,

We received notice today that one of our students at Hille Middle School was diagnosed with a probable case of H1N1 (Swine Flu). After discussions with the Cook County Department of Public Health and within the newly released guidelines from the Center for Disease Control, school will remain **open**. Please be assured that we have monitored student attendance patterns, reviewed student absentee trends and will continue to review this data to determine future considerations.

As noted by the CDC, guidance and recommendations must be flexible and change as more information about the disease becomes available. To that end, the CDC no longer recommends school closures based solely upon a confirmed or suspected case of H1N1 Influenza. The following points are the most current recommendations from the CDC:

- School closure is not advised for a suspected or confirmed case of novel influenza A (H1N1) and, in general, is not advised unless there is a magnitude of faculty or student absenteeism that interferes with the school's ability to function.
- Schools that were closed based on previous interim CDC guidance related to this outbreak may reopen.
- Students, faculty or staff with influenza-like illness (fever with a cough or sore throat) should stay home and not attend school or go into the community except to seek medical care for at least 7 days even if symptoms resolve sooner.
- Students, faculty and staff who are still sick 7 days after they become ill should continue to stay home from school until at least 24 hours after symptoms have resolved.
- Students, faculty and staff who appear to have an influenza-like illness at arrival or become ill during the school day should be isolated promptly in a room separate from other students and sent home.
- Parents and guardians should monitor their school-aged children, and faculty and staff should self-monitor every morning for symptoms of influenza-like illness.
- Ill students should not attend alternative child care or congregate in settings outside of school.
- School administrators should communicate regularly with local public health officials to obtain guidance about reporting of influenza-like illnesses in the school.
- Schools can help serve as a focus for educational activities aimed at promoting ways to reduce the spread of influenza, including hand hygiene and cough etiquette.
- Students, faculty and staff should stringently follow sanitary measures to reduce the spread of influenza, including covering their nose and mouth with a tissue when coughing or sneezing (or coughing or sneezing into their sleeve if a tissue isn't available), frequently washing hands with soap and water, or using hand sanitizer if hand washing with soap and water is not possible.

As a proactive measure, this past week-end, all of our schools were 'deep cleaned' which included disinfecting all of our desks, lockers, and other surfaces that students come in contact with during the day or during evening activities. Hille Middle School will have an additional deep cleaning this evening.

We urge all of our families and community members to monitor their health and follow basic prevention measures. There is currently no vaccine available to protect against H1N1 (swine flu). Recommended steps to protect against an exposure include:

- Covering the nose and mouth with a tissue when coughing or sneezing. The tissue should always be thrown away after use.
- Hands should be washed often with soap and water, especially after coughing and sneezing. Alcohol-based hand cleaners are also effective.
- Avoid touching eyes, nose or mouths as germs spread this way.
- Avoid close contact with sick people.
- If you or a family member becomes ill, the CDC recommends that the sick person stays home from work or school and limit contact with others to keep from infecting others.

If a family member becomes ill and experiences any of the following warning signs, seek emergency medical care.

Emergency warning signs may include:

- Fast breathing or trouble breathing
- Bluish skin color
- Not drinking enough fluids
- Not waking up or interacting
- Being so irritable that a child does not want to be held
- Flu like symptoms with a fever and bad cough
- Fever with a rash
- Confusion
- Dizziness
- Pain or pressure in the chest or abdomen
- Confusion
- Vomiting or diarrhea

As always, the health and safety of our families is first and foremost in our learning community.

Sincerely,

Dr. Margaret W. Longo
Forest Ridge Elementary School District 142 Superintendent

Ms. Rose Eichorst, District Nurse