

Dear Parents,

We want all PVUSD families to know that we continually monitor developments of the new influenza (H1N1, also called “swine flu”). We know that there has been confusing information out there. The facts are that millions of people get the flu every year, and millions of people will get the flu again *this* year – a certain number of those will have H1N1. The symptoms and the level of sickness will likely be very much the same for both types of flu.

There have been recent probable H1N1 cases in our community and schools. If you are told of a “confirmed” case of H1N1, please understand that it is a *probable* case. H1N1 cannot be confirmed in the doctor’s office, as it takes time to get the results back from the labs equipped to do these specialized tests. We receive regular updates from Santa Cruz and Monterey County Health Services, and closely monitor news & updates from the CDC and the CA Dept of Education. *Please be assured that we are taking the situation seriously*, and want you to know that at this time **the virus does not appear to be any more serious than the seasonal flu** that occurs every year, typically in the winter.

We would like to share some information that will help keep everyone healthy:

- If you think your child is ill, please take a temperature. **If it is 100° (38°C) or higher, the child should remain home until the temperature is normal (below 100) for 24 hours without fever reducing medication** (this includes any medicine containing acetaminophen (Tylenol) or ibuprofen (Advil or Motrin). Doctors are telling parents to keep sick children home from school at least 5 days, and/or until 24 hours after the fever has gone away without use of these medications. *Call your health care provider and ask whether they want you to come in or would prefer that you treat your child at home.*
- Students with a new cough, or bad sore throat, should remain home.
- Students with vomiting or diarrhea must stay home. Please call your medical provider if your child also has a fever or is unable to keep fluids down.
- Teach your family to cough and sneeze into a tissue and then throw the tissue away (or into the elbow area if tissue is unavailable). Coughing or sneezing into our hands passes germs to many other people and surfaces.
- Family members who are ill should stay as separate from the rest of the family as possible.
- All family members need to **wash their hands as often as possible**, especially before meals, after using the bathroom, and when they have been around lots of people and touched many surfaces.
- Hand sanitizer has been ordered for every classroom and department of the District. [Parents can send extra hand sanitizer and tissues to their child’s classroom as they see fit.]
- Our teachers and staff are very aware and try to ensure that hand-washing is frequent, and our custodians always clean all restrooms, eating areas, and surfaces regularly.
- **Do not bring your child to school until he or she is well.** When you call the school, **please let us know if your child has a fever, as we can use that information to help the Health Department track the spread of flu-like illness.** [If your child is out 3 days or more, remember that a doctor’s note is required when returning.]

People of all ages with severe asthma, diabetes, heart conditions, kidney disease, or illnesses that affect their immune system are at increased risk if they get the flu. **If your child has a serious health problem, make sure the school is aware of it.** If your child is at increased risk and you are concerned about what to do about exposure, follow the steps above *and talk to your child’s doctor.*

School-aged children are candidates for flu shots (or nasal vaccine) for seasonal flu, and will be on the priority list for the H1N1 *when it becomes available*. The Health Department will let us know when they have completed their planning for immunization against H1N1 in school children. People with the highest risk from H1N1 will be vaccinated first, and vaccine may be provided for free. We will continue to keep you informed, or you may contact the County Health Department directly at any time.

Healthy children should be in school, and healthy employees at work. We want all our students and employees to come to school every day that they are well. However, if your child is sick, please keep him/her at home and consult your medical provider for instructions.

Sincerely,

Pajaro Valley Unified School District

[more questions: 831/786-2100, ext 2531, or consult the many links to CDC, County Health, and flu.gov on our website : www.pvUSD.net]