



Anthony D. Jackson
Superintendent

September 23, 2009

Dear Parent or Guardian,

In an effort to keep you informed of conditions associated with H1N1 affecting the school division, I wish to share the following update. Several of our staff members have developed flu-like symptoms. As a precaution they are being asked to remain home until they are symptom free. As we have shared with you, we anticipate many of our school employees and students will be affected with flu-like symptoms this fall and winter. Seasonal flu strains circulate widely each winter and the new flu strain, novel H1N1, has continued to spread in Virginia. The novel H1N1 flu virus has similar symptoms and the same severity as the seasonal flu strains that we see every winter. We are working closely with local and state health officials to monitor flu conditions daily. We will keep you updated with new information as it becomes available.

As you may know, flu can be easily spread from person to person. Therefore, we are taking steps to reduce the spread of flu in all of our schools. As recommended by the Centers for Disease Control, the Virginia Department of Education and the Virginia Department of Health, we plan to keep schools open to students and functioning in a normal manner during this flu season. **We need your help to do this:**

- **Get vaccinated.** The best way to protect against the flu—seasonal or novel H1N1—is to get vaccinated. A vaccine will be available this year, as it is each year, to protect against seasonal influenza. Vaccine to protect against the novel H1N1 flu virus is currently in production, and initial doses are expected to become available later in the fall.
- **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 mouth with a tissue when coughing or sneezing or cough or sneeze into the elbow, arm or sleeve instead of the hand when a tissue is unavailable.
- **Know the signs and symptoms of the flu.** Symptoms of the flu include fever (100° F 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*.

We recommend that you make plans now for child care at home if your child becomes ill or cannot go to school for a week or longer. For information on how to care for a sick person at home and for other questions about flu, contact your health care provider, local health department, visit these websites: www.flu.gov; www.vdh.virginia.gov, or call 1-877-ASK VDH3 (1-877-275-8343). For more information about what our school division is doing, visit www.henry.k12.va.us, or contact your child's school nurse. We will continue to notify you of any additional changes to our school division's strategy to prevent the spread of flu.

Sincerely,

Anthony D. Jackson
Superintendent

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