

Friday 26th June 2009

Dear Parent / Guardian

As you will be aware from the media, the World Health Organization has raised the alert over the recent outbreak of influenza A(H1N1), and there has been a steady increase in the number of cases appearing in the UK. We realize that this will be of concern to you as parents, however wish to reassure you that the school is working closely with West Sussex County Council, and receiving regular updates of the situation, to ensure the safety and welfare of your children.

At this stage it is crucial that we neither overreact nor fail to take precautionary steps. Consequently the school will continue to operate as normal, and we are advised by our colleagues in the Health Protection Agency, that students can continue to attend school, as long as they are not displaying flu-like symptoms (i.e. fever, aching muscles, fatigue, lack of appetite, a cough and/or a sore throat and sometimes nausea and diarrhoea).

Anyone returning from areas affected by Influenza A(H1N1), or having been in close contact with someone who has, and becomes unwell with flu-like symptoms within seven days of their return/contact, should stay at home and advise their GP by phone or ring NHS Direct on 0845 4647.

Individuals will be assessed and, if necessary, tested and treatment provided. The Health Protection Agency will identify any close contacts as part of the assessment, and they will be given advice and, if necessary, antiviral drugs.

Parents or Children who have had close contact (i.e. within 1 metre, for at least one hour) with an infected person, will be contacted by the Health Protection Agency with advice and possible preventative medication. They will be advised to closely monitor their health for several days however need not isolate themselves / or be kept of school, unless displaying flu like symptoms.

It is essential that the principles of good personal hygiene (as set out on the reverse) are followed to minimise the spread of this infection, and I would encourage all students to bring to school a small pack of tissues that can be used if necessary.

Further advice and information on the current outbreak is available from www.hpa.org, or by calling the flu information line (0800 1 513 513) and an information leaflet is being distributed to every household in the country over the coming days, which I would urge you to read and keep handy during the coming weeks.

Yours sincerely



Mr P Cook
Headteacher

What are the symptoms of swine influenza?

The symptoms of influenza A(H1N1) in people are similar to the symptoms of regular human seasonal influenza infection and include fever, fatigue, lack of appetite, coughing and sore throat. Some people with influenza A(H1N1) have also reported vomiting and diarrhoea.

Is treatment available?

Testing has shown that the human swine influenza H1N1 can be treated with the antivirals oseltamavir (Tamiflu) and zanamivir (Relenza).

Most of the previously reported influenza A(H1N1) cases have recovered fully from the disease without requiring medical attention and without antiviral medicines.

What measures can I take to protect against infection?

General personal hand and respiratory hygiene can help to reduce transmission of all viruses, including influenza A(H1N1). This includes:

- Covering your nose and mouth when coughing or sneezing, using a tissue when possible
- Disposing of dirty tissues promptly and carefully
- Maintaining good basic hygiene, for example washing hands frequently with soap and water to reduce the spread of the virus from your hands to face or to other people
- Cleaning hard surfaces (e.g. door handles) frequently using a normal cleaning product
- Making sure your children follow this advice