

August 18, 2009

Parents /Guardians of School District #6 School Children,

To keep our school community up to date regarding Swine Flu, Columbia Falls School District would like to provide the following information to be used by students, families, school staff and community members. Information is from the Flathead City- County Health Department, the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and the School District Six Pandemic/Possible Pandemic Emergency Control Protocol.

New CDC guidance does not require school closure if a school experiences confirmed Swine Flu cases, but recognizes the need to balance the risk of illness among students and staff with the benefits of keeping students in school. The District will continue to rely on advice from the public health and medical community in assessing the risk of transmission of communicable diseases to determine how best to protect the health of students and staff.

As of the end of the last school year, there were **NO** confirmed cases of swine flu among School District #6 students, faculty or staff. Decreasing the spread of germs can decrease the likelihood of any type of flu being spread. We would like your cooperation in being pro-active to reduce the risk of influenza disease transmission.

**PREVENTION measures include -**

- *Hand washing* – Wash hands with soap and water for 15-30 seconds every time your hands are soil. This is important after EVERY time you cough or sneeze. Alcohol –based hand gels are effective if your hands are not visibly soiled.
- *Practice Cough/Sneeze etiquette* –
  - COVER YOUR COUGH/SNEEZE – with a tissue if you can. Then throw the tissue in the trash. Cough/sneeze into your upper sleeve if you do not have a tissue, not into your hands.
  - Wash your hands after every time you cough or sneeze, or use alcohol based hand gel.
  - Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth – germs can be spread that way.
  - Try to avoid contact with sick people.
  - Practice voluntary isolation – any person experiencing symptoms of influenza like illness, please stay home. If you suspect swine flu infection, please contact your health care provider .Your health care provider will determine whether influenza testing or treatment is needed. Please call your health care provider **before** seeking care.
    - **Symptoms include:** oral temperature of 100.0 ° F or greater AND any of the following symptoms: cough, sore throat, body aches, muscle aches, headache, nausea/vomiting, diarrhea
- An individual who displays influenza symptoms at school will be sent to the school nurse. If influenza symptoms are confirmed the individual will be sent home. If symptoms are confirmed in a student, the student will be sent home as soon as a parent/guardian or person designated on the student’s emergency form has been notified.
- If a student or staff member is diagnosed with influenza, they will be required to report to the school nurse for assessment when they have been symptom free for 24 hours, and no longer have a fever, without the use of fever-reducing medication (any medication that contains ibuprofen or acetaminophen). If confirmed symptom free, the student or staff member will be allowed to return the NEXT school day if well.

- Try to stay in good general health. Get plenty of sleep, be physically active, manage your stress, drink plenty of fluids, and eat nutritious food. Be well!

***Families should be advised that School District # 6 may need to implement a school or district-wide closure with little or no advanced notice. Please make daycare arrangements in advance of emergency school closure. When a decision is made to close schools, the CDC recommends doing so for 5-7 calendar days.***

The following web sites will have valuable updated information:

[www.flatheadhealth.org](http://www.flatheadhealth.org)

[www.cdc.gov/swineflu/](http://www.cdc.gov/swineflu/)

The School District Six Pandemic/Possible Pandemic Emergency Control Protocol document has been placed on the District website [www.sd6.k12.mt.us](http://www.sd6.k12.mt.us) . The Protocol provides information that outlines what your school district is doing to prevent the spread of influenza. The protocol will also be available in each school building and at the District Administration Office.

Please contact your school nurse if you have questions or concerns.

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