



District School Board of Pasco County

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H1N1 (SWINE FLU) COMMUNICATION UPDATE FOR PARENTS

Pasco County Schools continues to work closely with the Pasco County Health Department to monitor the H1N1 virus also known as Swine Flu. The following are answers to commonly asked questions by parents and students:

What are the symptoms of H1N1?

According to the CDC (Centers for Disease Control) H1N1 symptoms are the sudden onset of a fever (100° F and over) accompanied by a sore throat and cough. Other symptoms may include vomiting, diarrhea, body aches, fatigue, and headache.

What should I do if my child gets sick?

Parents are asked to keep their children home when exhibiting flu symptoms. The Health Department recommends that parents call their health care provider or the Health Department for guidance. Both the CDC and Health Department recommend that parents contact a doctor immediately when symptoms develop if your child has an underlying health problem.

What happens if my child gets sick at school with flu symptoms?

Students will be sent to the clinic and parents will be notified. Students may be asked to wear a facemask while in the clinic to protect others and will remain in the clinic until picked up. Students with symptoms will not be sent home on the buses at the end of the day. It is important for the school to have accurate contact information for parents.

How long must my child with flu symptoms stay home from school?

A student must be symptom free with no fever for at least 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medication before he/she may return to school.

Can my other children attend school if one child in my family has symptoms?

Yes, other children in the household may attend as long as they are not ill.

Will schools be closed?

School closures early last spring were done out of an abundance of caution because there was very little information on this influenza at the time. It has since become apparent that, in general, the H1N1 virus does not warrant such severe measures and the CDC is no longer recommending school closures. In addition, student exposure continues in places outside of school such as stores, restaurants, theaters and other places where people may gather.

Does the school/district have a confirmed case of Swine Flu?

Students and adults in our schools and communities have reported symptoms of flu-like illness. A confirmed case means that a doctor has performed a test for H1N1. However, most cases at this time are being treated symptomatically, rather than performing formal testing. The Health Department will continue to monitor the spread of the virus through other measures.

Will I know if my school has children reporting flu symptoms?

Now that the H1N1 influenza is widespread across our community, parents should expect cases among school children and adults throughout the year. Schools will not be sending out notification letters for individual cases. The District is working in collaboration with the Health Department and will provide parents with information regarding changes in the CDC recommendations or any updates of information through the District website.

What happens if there are several students who are absent from one class?

It is expected that schools and the community will see cases with flu-like symptoms and the number may vary greatly throughout the year. Schools and classes will operate normally through any such fluctuation in student attendance. Attendance information will be monitored in collaboration with the Health Department.

Will athletic or other school events be cancelled?

Extracurricular activities will continue at this time. Students with flu-like symptoms may not attend activities until they are symptom free with no fever for at least 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medication.

Who is considered at high-risk for this illness?

Some people are at a greater risk of complications from infection with H1N1 influenza and should contact their health care provider for guidance. Those identified by the CDC at higher risk may include (1) children younger than age 5, (2) pregnant females, (3) people with a chronic illness such as asthma, heart disease, diabetes, diseases of the blood, liver or kidney and (4) people with an immune system problem. Parents with concerns about their child due to one of these conditions should talk with the teacher(s), school nurse or school administrators.

What is the District and school doing for prevention?

- (1) Schools are stressing prevention messages with parents, students and staff (hand hygiene and cough etiquette).
- (2) Any student who becomes ill is sent to the clinic or another designated area.
- (3) Custodial and food services staff are trained in the proper cleaning methods and are following CDC recommendations.
- (4) The District is continuing to work with the Health Department to keep our children safe and healthy.
- (5) The District will provide up to date information to parents about H1N1 through the use of the District website as well as links to other health resources.
- (6) School administrative staff and health services personnel are available to assist parents with any additional questions.

Where can I find out more information?

Please do not hesitate to contact the school if you have any additional questions. Additional information is available through links on the District website or by visiting the following website:

Pasco County Schools: <http://www.pasco.k12.fl.us/>
Pasco County Health Department: <http://www.doh.state.fl.us/chdpasco/>
U.S. Department of Community Health: www.flu.gov
Centers for Disease (CDC): <http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1fu/>