



Sale
Grammar
School

July 2009

Dear Parent/Carer,

Re: Swine Flu

On the advice of local health experts I am writing to provide you with information regarding the current swine flu situation. Because swine flu is now spreading in the community it is possible that school children will be affected. This letter gives advice about what you should do if your child becomes ill. It also gives advice about the things that you can do to reduce the risk of infection.

The advice from health experts is that all **well** pupils and members of staff continue to attend school as normal.

Anyone who has a fever and flu-like symptoms should not go to school or work, they should stay at home and call NHS Direct on 0845 4647 or their GP by phone for advice. You should not attend healthcare settings such as GP surgeries or A&E departments unless advised by a health professional to do so.

What are the symptoms of swine flu?

The symptoms of swine flu include fever, chills, cough, shortness of breath, headache, sore throat, runny nose, aching muscles and joints. Some people with swine flu have also reported vomiting and diarrhoea.

Please be reassured that most children who do not have underlying health conditions will have a mild illness similar to normal seasonal flu. However, if your child does have underlying health problems, which may cause them to be more vulnerable to infection (e.g. lung, heart or kidney problems, diabetes or a weakened immune system) you are advised to be particularly vigilant. It is important that children in these groups get early medical advice so that they can be started on appropriate treatment as soon as possible. They may also need ongoing medical assessment so please contact your health practitioner (GP/paediatrician) immediately if you have any concerns.

How is swine flu spread?

The virus that causes swine flu can spread between people, although it is not known how easily. It is thought that spread occurs in the same way as seasonal flu i.e.

- From person to person by coughing or sneezing (usually within 1 metre)
- From touching an object which has flu virus on it.

How can swine flu be prevented?

General hygiene can help to reduce the spread of all viruses, including the swine flu virus. This includes:

- Covering your nose and mouth when coughing or sneezing and using a tissue.
- 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 your face or to other people.
- Cleaning hard surfaces (such as door handles) frequently using a normal cleaning product

Will the school be closed if there is a case of swine flu?

Schools will not usually be closed if there is a case of swine flu. This is because swine flu is now becoming widespread in the community and closing schools in response to a case would no longer help in stopping the spread.

Where can I find out more?

At the swine flu information line on 0800 1513 513.

Further information is also available on the NHS direct and Health Protection Agency websites at:

www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk

www.hpa.org.uk

Yours sincerely,

D. A. Wilson
Headteacher