

October 14, 2009

Flu Precautions Update

Dear Parents,

In accordance with guidance from state and local public health agencies, we are providing you with the following update regarding precautions and instructions for the H1N1 Influenza (swine flu). Public health officials have advised that schools can remain open and also that students can continue to attend school, as long as they are not sick and do not have flu symptoms.

This week, we received the first reports of confirmed H1N1 cases in our school community (four elementary school students from different classes and grade levels). Each of the students were kept home from school this week and the families expect full and normal recovery. As winter approaches, more cases will likely be reported and we will keep you apprised of the School's overall flu trends, which we expect to roughly approximate the same trends in the larger community. We are not planning a school closure at this time, nor are we currently planning selective dismissal of classes or grade levels where flu cases have been reported. We are taking measures recommended by public health officials such as:

- Ongoing and consistent training of students and faculty regarding hand hygiene, respiratory etiquette, and remaining home when flu-like symptoms first appear;
- Routine cleaning of areas that are commonly touched by students and staff;
- Liberal leave policies for faculty and staff who stay home as a result of the flu or flu-like symptoms;
- Flexible approach to schoolwork that is missed by students who stay home as a result of the flu or flu-like symptoms;
- Flexible approach to providing classwork and assignments to families who choose to preemptively keep children home from school.

We remind you that students, parents, faculty and staff of American Heritage School should remain at home if they are experiencing flu-like symptoms and should remain at home for 24 hours after fever goes away (without fever-reducing medication). If a child arrives to school and is exhibiting flu-like symptoms, the front office will call parents and request that the child be picked up and returned home immediately. Please remember that as with most sicknesses, the flu spreads easily. If you think your child is getting the flu, it is important that he/she does not attend school, and avoids locations where large number of people are gathered. This will reduce the possibility of spreading the infection to others.

Flu-like symptoms include fever (over 100 degrees F.), cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose. Additional symptoms may include muscle pain, tiredness, and sometimes vomiting or diarrhea. Below are a few simple guidelines that will help you and your children reduce their risk of exposure to the flu and protect others from infection.

- 1) Teach your children to wash their hands often. Washing with soap and hot water for at least 20 seconds is ideal (the time it takes to sing "Happy Birthday" twice).
- 2) Teach your children the proper use of hand sanitizer, gels, rub and hand wipes all work well, as long as they contain at least 60% alcohol.
- 3) Teach your children to keep their hands away from their face and avoid touching their mouth, nose or eyes.
- 4) Teach your children to cover coughs and sneezes with tissues and throw away the tissues or by coughing into the inside of their elbow. Cough or sneeze into your sleeve -- not your hands!

We have instructed our faculty in safety precautions and procedures that need to be followed at American Heritage School for the health and safety of our children. Our School's health and security director, Bob Wheeler, as well as our health aid, Shari Wheeler, and administrative personnel, are well advised and familiar with the guidelines set forth by the Utah Department of Health with respect to flu precautions.

For additional information, visit <http://health.utah.gov/epi/h1n1flu/>.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter. We will continue to be vigilant in communicating with you, public health officials, and neighboring schools as we move forward. If you have any questions or specific concerns, please don't hesitate to contact us. You may also contact me personally at gbeckwith@ahsmaail.com, 801-642-0055 ext. 302 (wk), 801-885-8530 (cell).

Sincerely,



Grant Beckwith
Principal

Cc: Board of Trustees