

30 July 2009

Dear Parents

I am writing to remind you of the current information regarding the control of H1N1 influenza (Human Swine Influenza).

In regard to procedures for responding to the illness, the Australian Government entered into the phase of response known as the PROTECT Phase back in June. This phase was introduced because the virus is currently not as virulent as was anticipated, and is generally only producing a mild disease in most people, severe in some and moderate overall.

The advice from NSW Chief Health Officer, Dr Kerry Chant, about responding to Human Swine Flu in this PROTECT phase is as follows:

'... people who have no underlying medical conditions and are experiencing only mild flu-like symptoms should stay at home and minimise contact with others, until they are well. People who develop moderate symptoms should see their GP. Those with severe symptoms should go to their nearest Emergency Department.' (www.emergency.health.nsw.gov.au/swineflu/news/2009/20090617_00.html)

Based on this information, advice to schools is as follows:

- a) Any student or staff member who develops flu-like symptoms should stay home until well again, and see their doctor as necessary.
- b) All students and staff should maintain a very high level of personal hygiene.

This advice essentially means that the usual processes for responding to student illness are the same as they would normally be. However, what is also very important is that you **remain vigilant in checking on the ongoing health of your child**. Please watch carefully for signs or symptoms of flu-like illness such as **fever, cough, headache, unusual tiredness, muscle-ache, sore throat, chills or shortness of breath**. Keep your child away from school at first sign of illness.

The advice from NSW Health is that **pregnant women, as well as people with underlying chronic diseases, are potentially more vulnerable to the more serious effects of all forms of influenza, including the H1N1 strain**. With this in mind, to prevent contact with pregnant staff and parents and members of the school community with pre-existing health problems, I especially seek your assistance in ensuring that **your child does not attend school with flu symptoms**. I ask that you particularly mention this to the medical practitioner who assesses your child so that appropriate caution is exercised.

Further information from NSW Health can be obtained from NSW Department of Health website <http://www.emergency.health.nsw.gov.au/swineflu/index.asp>.

We will continue to communicate with you if there are any changes to this advice. In the meantime, if you have any questions regarding this issue, please contact the school.

Kind regards



Elisabeth Jackson (Mrs)
Principal