

Nov. 4, 2009

Dear Parent/Guardian,

Like other school districts around the country, Lake Washington School District is being hit with cases of the flu. According to King County Public Health, most flu cases in our area now are the H1N1 variety. We are taking steps to reduce the spread of the flu (both H1N1 and seasonal).

We want to help our students and families stay healthy and to keep our schools open and functioning normally during this flu season. Here are some reminders of the things that we are doing at school that you also can do to help:

- **Remind your student to wash their hands** often with soap and water or an alcohol-based hand rub. **Remind your student to cover their coughs and sneezes** with tissues and wash their hands afterwards. They should cover up their coughs or sneezes using the elbow, arm or sleeve instead of the hand when a tissue is unavailable.
- **Remind your student not to share personal items** like drinks, food or unwashed utensils.
- **Know the signs and symptoms of the flu.** Symptoms of the flu include fever (100 degrees Fahrenheit, 37.8 degrees Celsius or greater), cough, sore throat, a runny or stuffy nose, body aches, headache, and feeling very tired. Some people may also vomit or have diarrhea.

If your student does become sick with flu symptoms:

- **Do not send your student to school if they are sick.** Any students who are determined to be sick while at school will be sent home. Students who exhibit flu symptoms at school will go to a separate room so they can be kept apart from other students until a parent or guardian can pick them up.
- **Keep sick students at home** for at least 24 hours after they no longer have fever or do not have signs of fever, without using fever-reducing drugs.

Even children who have always been healthy before or had the flu before can get a severe case of flu.

**Call or take your child to a doctor right away if your child of any age has:**

- Flu-like symptoms that improve but then return with fever and worse cough
- Fast breathing or trouble breathing
- Bluish or gray skin color
- Not drinking enough fluids
- Severe or persistent vomiting
- Not waking up or not interacting
- Being so irritable that the child does not want to be held
- Has other conditions (like heart or lung disease, diabetes, or asthma) and develops flu symptoms, including a fever and/or cough.

**Please update your contact and emergency contact numbers** at school if they have changed and plan to pick up a sick child within the hour. Parents are advised to arrange for childcare now in case your child becomes ill and is unable to attend school.

The district Web site has a page dedicated to H1N1 updates: <http://www.lwsd.org/News/News-and-Announcements/Pages/H1N1-Flu-Update-9-18-09.aspx>. This page includes links to additional resources such as the Center for Disease Control (CDC), Public Health Seattle & King County and Washington State Department of Health. Public Health's **flu hotline** is available Monday through Friday, from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. at 877-903-KING (5464). They will have information about H1N1 flu vaccine clinics as vaccine becomes available.

Sincerely,

Tim Stonich, Principal  
Helen Keller Elementary