

Date: August 10, 2009

To: Lincoln Public Schools Families

From: Susan Gourley, Superintendent of Lincoln Public Schools

Re: Influenza Prevention

As the Lincoln Public Schools District prepares for the new school year, we want to assure our students and families that we are taking all the essential precautions and making the necessary preparations to deal with the H1N1 influenza. We hope the following information assists you in making decisions regarding your family's health and safety as students return to school.

The National Center for Disease Control has been closely following the progress of the H1N1 influenza and recommends that you monitor the health of your children and do not send them to school if they have any of the following symptoms.

The symptoms of H1N1 Influenza and seasonal influenza may include:

- Fever (greater than 100 degrees) – present in 90 percent of H1N1 cases
- Sore throat
- Cough
- Stuffy nose
- Chills
- Headache and body aches
- Fatigue
- Some people may experience diarrhea and vomiting

The Lincoln Lancaster County Health Department has asked that we collect information on students who are reporting flu-like symptoms. We would ask that when you call your school to report a student's absence, please also report what specific symptoms your child is exhibiting (symptoms such as fever, cough, sore throat). This information will help the school monitor the level of illness as LPS works with the Health Department in making appropriate decisions.

Students who develop any of these flu-like symptoms during the school day will be isolated from the student population and sent home. We ask that you keep your students home from school until at least 24 hours after there is no longer a fever or signs of a fever (without the use of fever-reducing medicine).

Those at the highest risk of H1N1 are: pregnant women, children six months to four years old, and anyone under 18 years old who has additional medical issues.

The CDC recommends the following good health habits your family can practice – at school, at home and at work – to help stop the spread of viruses and germs.

- **Practice good hand hygiene** by washing your hands often with soap and water, especially after coughing or sneezing. Alcohol-based hand cleaners are also effective.

- **Cover your mouth and nose** with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. If you don't have a tissue, cough or sneeze into your elbow or shoulder – and not into your hands.
- **Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth:** Germs are often spread when a person touches something that is contaminated with germs and then touches his or her eyes, nose, or mouth.
- **Stay home if you or your child is sick** – again, for at least 24 hours after there is no longer a fever or signs of a fever (without the use of fever-reducing medicine). Keeping sick students at home means that they keep their viruses to themselves rather than sharing them with others. Fever-reducing medicine such as Tylenol (acetaminophen) or Motrin (ibuprofen) can be used for children. Bayer Aspirin (aspirin 'acetylsalicylic acid') should never be used for anyone younger than 18 years of age with a viral infection. If you have questions please, contact your primary medical provider.
- **Consider having your family vaccinated** for seasonal flu and H1N1 flu when vaccines are available. Watch for additional information to come.
- **Avoid close contact** with people who are sick.
- **Practice other good health habits:** Get plenty of sleep, be physically active, manage your stress, drink plenty of fluids and eat nutritious food.

If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact the school nurse at your student's school, or Judy Zabel, supervisor of Health Services at LPS, 436-1655.