

Dear Parents:

We want to share with you information related to the influenza virus which includes both the seasonal flu and the H1N1 virus (Swine flu). This information is provided to our district by the Hays County Health Department and the Center for Disease Control. **As with any illness, we encourage you to take your child to your medical provider to be evaluated if he/she is ill.**

Influenza virus is transmitted by contact with respiratory secretions (in the air or briefly on surfaces) of a person infected with the virus. The symptoms of influenza virus include fever, cough and runny nose, and other symptoms, such as body aches, nausea, or vomiting or diarrhea (more common with H1N1). If you experience these symptoms, please contact your health care provider, who can determine whether influenza testing is needed, and may prescribe antiviral medication and/or other treatment. **Because Influenza is caused by a virus, antibiotics will not cure this illness.**

On all of our campuses, custodians will clean and disinfect as appropriate. Our transportation staff will also ensure the cleanliness and safety of the school buses. Each of our campus nurses, as well as our WELL Clinic staff, is on alert and has established protocols on handling suspected cases. All of our teachers and staff will be emphasizing hand washing with soap and water, clearly the most effective way to stop the spread of flu. Hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol is also effective if soap and water are not available.

Please help us by asking your children to take extra precautions such as not eating or drinking after anyone else, covering coughs and sneezes with a tissue, avoiding touching their nose, mouth and eyes and washing their hands often. If your child shows symptoms of any type of influenza, we encourage you to have your child evaluated by a medical provider or the local health clinic and **keep your child out of school until he is symptom-free for at least 24 hours.** Please let the school know your child is out with flu like symptoms when calling to report an absence. We also urge everyone to receive BOTH the seasonal flu and H1N1 vaccination, when available.

For their own safety and the safety of others, students should not return to school until they have been fever and symptom-free for 24 hours **without fever-reducing medication.**

We are in contact with the Hays County emergency operations officials who are in close contact with the Texas Department of State Health Services and the state emergency operations center. The Texas Department of State Health Services has established a hot line for anyone who has questions about H1N1, 1-888-777-5320. Texas Department of State Health Services keeps an updated website, www.texasflu.org as does the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, www.cdc.gov/swineflu/. We will also post updates regarding influenza updates on our district website, www.hayscisd.net.

We will continue to monitor the situation closely. We appreciate your support and understanding at this time.

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Director of Health Services, Hays CISD