

May 5, 2009

Dear Parent or Guardian:

As you are aware, national and local news are reporting cases of H1N1 Influenza in the U.S. and other countries. As of today, there are no known cases of H1N1 Influenza in our schools and communities. We would like to provide you with information regarding the steps that the ELCO School District is taking to minimize the threat of transmission of the virus and to keep the ELCO community apprised on how we are responding to the situation.

The district administrative team has been carefully monitoring the PA Department of Health (www.health.state.pa.us) and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) (www.cdc.gov) websites for updated information and recommendations. If local cases are confirmed, we will be notified by the Department of Health.

The symptoms of the H1N1 Influenza virus are often similar to a regular seasonal flu and include fever, sore throat, body aches, lack of appetite, chills, fatigue and coughing. Some people with H1N1 Influenza have also reported runny nose, nausea, vomiting, and diarrhea. The illness may last up to seven days but people are considered contagious as long as symptoms persist.

If a member of your family is experiencing mild flu-like symptoms, monitor and contact your health care provider. H1N1 is treatable with antiviral medications which work best if started soon after getting sick. We need your help to prevent the spread of illness in our schools. Below are some important preventative measures which you can review with your child(ren).

- Cough or sneeze into the bend of your elbow or a tissue and properly dispose of used tissues.
- Wash your hands frequently and thoroughly with soap and warm water or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth.
- Avoid close contact with anyone who displays flu-like symptoms.
- If your child gets sick, please do not send him/her to school and limit contact with others to keep from infecting them.

Principals and school nurses in all buildings have been made aware of the symptoms associated with the onset of the virus. We have shared with staff that students or adults who appear to be symptomatic should be sent to the health room for evaluation. Additionally, we have shared with staff and families that individuals who develop symptoms should not come to school, rather they should contact their family physician. Our custodial staff is ensuring that soap dispensers are filled and we are encouraging students and staff to wash their hands frequently and to cover their mouths when sneezing or coughing. A video has been developed by the High School nurse regarding the virus and actions that students can take to decrease the chance of transmission. This video was shown to all High School students on Tuesday and will be shown to Middle School students on Wednesday. At the elementary level individual classroom teachers are reviewing with their students appropriate information regarding the virus and preventative measures.

The district has placed information regarding H1N1 Influenza on our website (www.elcosd.org) and will continue to provide updates there. Additionally, information may be sent though the ListTracks email notification system. If you have not already done so, you may register for these email notifications on the district website.

Thank you for your assistance as we all strive to respond to this health situation in a proactive, responsible, manner.

Sincerely,



Dr. Richard Nilsen
Superintendent of Schools