

August 31, 2009

Dear Parents/Guardians,

All schools in Stanislaus County place a high priority on the health and safety of students. Schools are currently taking precautions to mitigate the potential spread of the H1N1 (flu virus). As our county public health officer has said, the pandemic is here and we have cases of H1N1 throughout the county, including our schools.

In most cases, the H1N1 flu is acting very much like seasonal flu in severity, and most people who have it recover quickly. Because H1N1 is affecting younger people and there is not yet a vaccine for it, people are being asked to really focus on good hygiene practices to help prevent the spread of germs.

I know that our schools are well prepared for this pandemic and are following the guidance provided by federal, state and local public health officials. Schools are reporting absence rates to the local public health agency so outbreaks can easily be identified.

We are not recommending that schools notify parents of confirmed or suspected cases of H1N1 at their schools because we know this flu will be widespread throughout the year. Based on the current guidance at this time, schools in general, WOULD NOT be closed (students dismissed) because of confirmed or suspected cases of H1N1.

The bottomline is that HEALTHY children NEED TO BE IN SCHOOL. I am confident that our schools are taking the appropriate steps to maintain safe and healthy environments. Parents also need to take responsibility for keeping sick children home for at least 24 hours after their fevers have been resolved without medication. And finally, we ALL NEED TO practice good hand and respiratory hygiene. Together we can mitigate the impact of any communicable diseases that come our way.

Sincerely,



Tom Changnon
Stanislaus County Superintendent of Schools