

The Flu – Do’s and Don’ts A Guide For Parents

Hillsborough County health officials have informed us that we should expect widespread infections this flu season. We plan to do everything we can to manage the spread of the flu in our schools, whether it is H1N1 (commonly known as “swine flu”) or some other form of the flu. We need your help. Here, from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Health Department, is a short list of things families can do to help keep children healthy and keep our schools open.

- **Do not send children to school if they are sick.** If your child appears to be sick while at school, he or she will be isolated (usually sent to the school clinic) and we will ask you to take them home.
- **Keep sick children at home** for at least 24 hours after they no longer have fever without using fever-reducing drugs or medications. This will help reduce the number of children, school staff, and parents who are infected.
- **Encourage frequent hand washing** with soap and water for a minimum of 20 seconds or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- **Encourage children not to share personal items** like drinks, food, or unwashed utensils, and to cover their coughs and sneezes with tissues. If a tissue is unavailable, encourage children to cough or sneeze into the elbow, arm, or sleeve.
- **Get to know the flu symptoms.** Influenza is a viral respiratory illness that usually causes fever, sore throat, or cough. Some also experience muscle aches, headaches, chills, and fatigue. The illness usually lasts about a week.
- **If your child gets sick,** consult your doctor and make sure your child gets plenty of rest and drinks lots of fluids.

When the H1N1 vaccine becomes available, we expect to make it available in our schools to all students and school staff who wish to receive it. Children will not be vaccinated until we have written permission from a parent or guardian.

For more information on H1N1, go to the school district website (www.sdhc.k12.fl.us) and click on Health Resources under Important Links, or visit the state’s flu-related website (www.flu.gov).