

September 21, 2009

Dear Parents,

As you may know flu is spreading easily from person to person and school-age children are among the groups most affected. We have had an increase of ill students. We have had 13 (as of 9/21/09 2:00pm) students that have reportedly tested positive for the Type A influenza. (As of last Thursday we had 2 reported cases of type A influenza, and as of Friday 1:00pm we had a total of 6.)

We are taking steps to prevent the spread of flu in South Iron School. Currently, flu conditions in Missouri have become more prevalent. Symptoms of the flu include fever (100 degrees Fahrenheit, 37.8 degrees Celsius or greater), cough, sore throat, a runny or stuffy nose, body aches, headache, and feeling very tired. Some people may also vomit or have diarrhea.

We are working closely with the health department to monitor flu conditions and make decisions about the best steps to take. Since flu conditions have become more severe, we are now implementing the following steps to prevent the spread of flu within our school.

- **Extending the time students (or staff) that has influenza A stay home** to 7 calendar days, even if they feel better sooner. People who are still sick after 7 days should continue to stay home until at least 24 hours after their symptoms have gone away.
- **If a household member is test positive for influenza A, school-aged brothers or sisters are excluded for 5 days** from the time the household member became sick.
- **Allowing high risk students and staff to stay home.** Certain groups are at higher risk of developing serious complications from flu. These groups include children under the age of 5 years, pregnant women, people of any age who have chronic medical conditions (such as asthma, diabetes, or heart disease), and people age 65 years and older. **These students and staff should consult their doctor to make the decision to stay home. Your doctor's office can fax a note to school. (Elementary fax 598-1163 or High School 598 – 4210)**
- **Conducting active fever screening** of students and staff that complain of flu like symptoms. Any student with a fever will be separated from others and sent home as soon as possible. Please do not send your child to school if they have a fever (without the use of fever reducing medication).
- **Increasing social distances** (the space between people) at school. Where possible desks have been moved farther apart. Elementary special class teachers (art, music & library) have coming to the elementary side (therefore the elementary students do not have to walk over to the high school side of the building.)
- **Routine Cleaning is recommended.** We are continuing routine cleaning and have added cleaning of door knobs, water fountains, etc... during the day.

- **Homework** If you have a household member with influenza A, please call the office to make arrangements for homework. We would like to meet you at the door or outside, so you do not have to enter the building.
- **Excused absences...** Mr. Wakefield has stated there will be no punishment for students or staff that has missed school due to influenza A. Our teachers will be working with students and parents to get work made up. Please bring us a Dr.'s note for documentation of the influenza illness. I know that the Dr. offices have been very busy and writing excuses has not been a priority. If you don't have a note to bring in, call your healthcare provider and they can fax one to the school at their convenience. (elementary 573-598-1163 or high school 573-598-4210)

If your child is ill we would like for you to call and let us know the type of symptoms they are having. If you child test positive for influenza type A, please call and let us know. This will help us keep track of illnesses. For more information you can call the school at 573-598-4241. Or you can visit [www.flu.gov](http://www.flu.gov) or call 1-800-CDC-INFO for the most current information about the flu. For more information about flu in our community you can call the Iron County Health Department at 573-546-7121. We will notify you of any additional changes to our school's strategy to prevent the spread of flu.

Sincerely,

Michelle Miller, RN

South Iron School Nurse