

Tuesday 14th July 2009

Dear Parents

Re: Updates on Swine Flu – latest information available

You will know doubt be aware that Swine Flu continues to dominate the headlines. I wanted to write to you to give you the latest information we have as more and more parents are seeking clarification.

From: Managing Swine Flu in Schools and Early Years Childcare Settings in Wiltshire

‘Every case of possible or confirmed swine flu in Wiltshire is being actively managed by NHS Wiltshire and the Health Protection Action (HPA). Where these cases are potentially linked to schools or early years settings, we liaise closely with the Department for Children Services at Wiltshire Council. **In the vast majority of cases, swine flu is a mild illness and those affected make a full and quick recovery.**

Confirmed Cases

In common with most areas of the country Wiltshire now has confirmed cases of swine flu. At present, we continue to contain outbreaks in liaison with the Health Protection Agency (HPA).

Children and adults who do not have flu like symptoms or have not been confirmed as having swine flu should continue their daily routines as normal.

Staff / parents of any children who show signs of specific flu like symptoms (temperature, cough, sore throat, muscle aches, runny nose or diarrhoea) are advised to contact their doctor for advice. People are advised not to attend their surgery, in order to help limit the spread of infection. **The general advice is that schools and early years settings remain open.’**

You may have heard in the media that there are so many cases of the virus that doctors’ surgeries seem no longer to ‘swabbing’ patients to confirm cases – simply due to the volume of suspected cases. The advice given states:

‘Children and adults who feel unwell are being investigated as a possible case or have been confirmed as having swine flu would be told to remain at home and self isolate. The general advice would remain that schools and early years settings remain open, even if they have a confirmed case of swine flu within the school community.’

General Information Regarding Swine Flu

For general information about swine flu visit or contact:

- NHS Choices www.nhs.uk
- The swine flu information line 0800 1513513
- NHS Direct 0845 4647
- www.hpa.org.uk

We advise everyone to follow good hygiene practices, including hand-washing and the ‘catch it, bin it, kill it’ principles for coughs and sneezes:

- Cover your mouth and nose when coughing or sneezing, using a tissue whenever possible
- Dispose of dirty tissues promptly and carefully – bag and bin them
- Maintain good hygiene – washing hands frequently with soap and water
- Clean hard surfaces (e.g. kitchen worktops, door handles) frequently, using a normal cleaning product
- Stay at home when you are unwell – if you have a cough and a fever, it is best to stay at home, take the medicines to relieve the symptoms and drink plenty of fluids. This will speed your recovery and help prevent the spread of infection to others

Increasing numbers of schools have had confirmed cases but many are reporting that they have had 'suspected' cases.

Parents of any children who show signs of specific flu-like symptoms (temperature of 38°C or higher with flu like symptoms, cough, sore throat, muscle aches, runny noses or vomiting / diarrhoea) are advised to phone their family doctor for advice. Do not attend the surgery as this will help limit the spread of infection.

At St Mark's we have had a 'suspected' case, like many schools in Salisbury. Parents very sensibly followed the advice given and the child is recovering at home. I write to keep you informed and not to panic any family. The school is not planning on closing, in accordance with advice. There have been many health scares over the years e.g. noro virus, seasonal flu etc. We cannot stop these infections or make cast iron guarantees that they will not be perpetuated – just like the common cold. We take every reasonable precaution but evidence suggests that hand washing, good hygiene generally, using disposable handkerchiefs/tissues etc are the best defences. 24 hours after the last 'symptom' is accepted as being well enough to return to school/work for anyone affected.

If anything changes that you need to know I will be in touch.

If you have any questions please do not hesitate to ask me.

Yours faithfully

Gareth Flemington
Headteacher