

August 21, 2009

Dear Parents:

With the approach of winter, we also face the approach of another flu season. Last spring, a new influenza A virus, called H1N1 was discovered.

While we don't know what this upcoming flu season will bring, we do want to be prepared as best we can. To that end, we are asking families to follow these simple strategies for helping to prevent the spread of H1N1 and other flu viruses.

- If your children have flu-like symptoms- fever of 100° or more with a cough or sore throat-**keep him or her home for at least 24 hours after the child is free of fever without the use of fever-reducing medicine.** Please note: This recommendation from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; **could change based on the severity of a potential flu wave.**
- Look for opportunities to **get your children immunized** for H1N1 flu, in addition to seasonal flu.
- Help your children stay healthy by making sure they get enough sleep, eat well, and stay hydrated.
- Teach your children to **wash their hands often.** Washing with soap and warm water for at least 20 seconds is ideal.
- Teach your children the proper use of hand sanitizer. Gels, rubs, and hand wipes all work well a long as they contain at least 60 percent alcohol. Hand washing is preferable, but sanitizer will work in the absence of soap and water.
- Teach your children to keep their hands away from their face and avoid touching their mouth, nose or eyes.
- Teach your children to **cover coughs and sneezes with tissues** or by coughing into the inside of their elbow. Cough or sneeze into your sleeve-not your hand.
- The Belle Fourche School District intends to send students who exhibit flu like symptoms home.
- **Have a back up plan for childcare** should your child contract H1N1 and he or she has to stay home from school.
- To get updated information regarding the H1N1 flu, we would recommend the following Web sites:

Belle Fourche School District: www.bellefourche.k12.sd.us/

South Dakota Department of Health: www.doh.sd.gov/H1N1.aspx

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/

Thank you for your cooperation in keeping our children and schools healthy!

Sincerely,

Steven A. Willard
Superintendent of Schools
Belle Fourche School District