

Action Steps for Parents to Protect Their Children and Families from the Flu this School Year

As you know, all of us in Littleton Public Schools take seriously the health, safety and well being of our students, staff and volunteers. We are counting on our parent community to help us with this priority. With the general concerns about the risks of the H1N1 flu virus, we thought we would bring some key points to your attention, in addition to the letter that was sent home to all parents earlier this school year. What follows are recommendations from the Center for Disease Control (CDC) for steps parents/guardians can take to keep families from getting sick with the flu at school and/or at home:

1. **Wash your hands often with soap and water**, especially after coughing or sneezing. Alcohol-based hand cleaners are also effective.
2. **Cover your mouth and nose** with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. If you don't have a tissue, cough or sneeze into your elbow or shoulder, not into your hands.
3. **If you or your child is sick, stay home** for at least 24 hours after there is no longer a fever or signs of a fever (without the use of fever reducing medicine). Keeping sick students at home means that they keep their viruses to themselves rather than sharing them with others.
4. **Get your family vaccinated** for seasonal flu and 2009 H1N1 flu when vaccines are available. If you have questions about the flu vaccine, consult with your healthcare provider.
5. **Have a plan for child care** at home if your child gets sick.
6. **If you have children who are at higher risk of serious disease from the flu**, talk with your healthcare provider about a plan to protect them during the flu season.

Health authorities are predicting that more people will likely become ill from the H1N1 virus (swine flu) than in a typical influenza season. In light of this, direction from the Tri County Health Department and CDC is for a student to be kept at home if they have symptoms of influenza-like illness such as a fever, cough and/or sore throat. Keep your student at home for at least 24 hours after their fever is gone without fever reducing medications. A fever is defined as 100° F.

If a student comes to school or school activities with these symptoms, he or she will be sent home. If a parent or guardian cannot be reached, the student will be kept apart from others until they can be sent home and then should remain at home as described above. If you have any concerns about your child's health, please consult your medical provider.

LPS is working with Tri County Health to provide immunization clinics for the H1N1 influenza vaccine. We anticipate that they will be provided in November at three different locations. We will publicize that information when it is finalized.

We will continue to monitor student and staff absences closely. At the present time, health authorities are generally not recommending school closures unless there is a level of staff or student absenteeism that interferes with the school's ability to operate effectively.

For more information, you can access <http://www.tchd.org/flu.htm> , www.flu.gov, or 1(800) CDC-INFO (232-4636).

Let's all work together to keep our schools and greater community safe and healthy throughout this flu season.