

## Precautions Regarding Swine Flu

April 29, 2009

Over the past few days there have been several media reports regarding the Swine Flu. State and local health departments are encouraging parents, students and staff to take the following precautions to prevent the spread of viruses.

Keenan is aware that most School Districts are taking steps to address this emergent health concern. To provide Districts with readily available information and resources to prevent the spread of this virus, the following information has been gathered for your use.

### Symptoms and Precautions

Flu-like Symptoms include: fever, cough, sore throat, body aches, headache, chills, fatigue, vomiting or diarrhea.

#### **Parents and Students:**

- Keep students who are sick at home. They should stay home from school and avoid other people until they are fever-free for a minimum of 24 hours and illness symptoms are dramatically improved.
- Talk to your students about the importance of washing their hands often with soap and comfortably hot water for at least 20 seconds – as long as it takes to sing “Happy Birthday.” Be sure to set a good example by doing this yourself.
- Consider keeping several dispensers of hand sanitizer in the classroom. It will cut down on the disruption of having students leave the room to wash their hands every time they touch something or sneeze.
- Teach your students to cover coughs and sneezes with tissues or by coughing into the inside of the elbow. Throw the tissue away and wash hands. Model the precaution for your children. Keep extra tissues in the classroom.
- Stress to your students to stay at least six feet from anyone with flu symptoms. (Students showing flu symptoms should be isolated and sent home ASAP.)
- Know the risk factors within your student population. Do your students have family members who frequently travel back and forth to Mexico or other infected regions. Have any students or teachers traveled recently to Mexico, or visited schools where an outbreak has occurred? Have students from any such schools visited your school?
- Advise parents to have a contingency plan for child care if the school needs to be closed due to an outbreak. (Sending children to a day care center may not be a good option.)

- Encourage parents to have their children evaluated by a physician if they are demonstrating flu-like symptoms.

**Staff:**

- Follow the above precautions.
- Remind the custodial staff to frequently clean door knobs, desks, tabletops, faucets, etc. with disinfectant and about the proper washing of hands throughout the course of the day.
- If you feel sick with flu-like symptoms, avoid going to work.
- Try to keep at least six feet away from anyone displaying signs of a flu-like infection.
- Consider using a mask to avoid cross-contamination if you will be dealing with people in an area where an outbreak has occurred. Please note that wearing a mask can aggravate those with preexisting respiratory conditions.
- Avoid crowded areas and buildings (movie theatres, churches, restaurants, sporting events, etc.) if there is an outbreak in your area.
- Seek medical attention if you develop flu-like symptoms.

**District:**

- Stay informed of current events by checking the Center for Disease Control and Prevention website frequently [www.cdc.gov/flu/swine](http://www.cdc.gov/flu/swine).

**Resources**

Your local County Division of Public Health has further information on the Swine Flu and tools to develop a School Preparedness Kit for Pandemic Flu.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has developed a Swine Flu Facts Sheet as well as several useful publications and an up to date briefings; they can be found at [www.cdc.gov/flu/swine](http://www.cdc.gov/flu/swine).

Keenan's RiskAdvisor online tool has several bulletins, risk control documents and links to sources for information on addressing a pandemic or infectious diseases outbreak. Please note that these materials contain general information and were NOT developed specifically for the current Swine Flu outbreak. This is a new strain of the Swine Flu that has not been seen before. Consequently, your best source of advice will be from local, state, and national public health officials.

A News Release from the California Department of Education (CDE) is available at [www.cde.ca.gov](http://www.cde.ca.gov). The CDE also has checklists to help develop your Pandemic Flu portion of your Comprehensive School Safety Plan. There are also posters available on this website at [Year 2003 - Multimedia](#).

If you have any additional questions or need assistance please contact your Keenan Loss Control Consultant.