

Herbert J. Saunders Middle School

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Myca Gray, Principal

October 20, 2009

Dear Parent/Guardian:

I am writing to inform you that we are experiencing a significant number of students/staff with symptoms of Influenza Like Illness (ILI) at Saunders Middle School and of the steps taken to address this issue. The Prince William Health District (PWHD) has informed us that not all students/staff having ILI symptoms will be tested for the H1N1 Virus, otherwise known as "Swine Flu," so it is impossible to know if these cases are, indeed, the H1N1 Virus. However, due to the number of students/staff who are ill, we are informing you as part of our ongoing efforts to keep you fully informed of important school-related news.

Our School Division has been in frequent contact with local and state health officials in accordance with established PWCS guidelines. We are closely monitoring the situation and are following the guidance of the PWHD, the Virginia Department of Health (VDH), and the Centers for Disease Control (CDC). All appropriate measures are being taken to ensure the health of all of our students and staff. As we receive important information from the PWHD regarding our schools, we will post the information to our School Division Web site (www.pwcs.edu).

While the spread of the virus from person-to-person continues throughout the United States, *the severity of the virus does not appear to be any more severe than seasonal flu*. Please continue to send your well child to school. The latest guidance from the CDC does not recommend closing a school unless there are extenuating circumstances. School Division officials will work closely with local and state health officials to monitor the situation and determine if our response needs to change.

However, please continue to monitor your children for any of the symptoms of influenza, which include fever, cough, sore throat, body aches, headache, chills and fatigue, and occasionally vomiting and diarrhea. If your child is experiencing any symptoms which you are concerned about, please keep your child at home and contact your child's healthcare provider.

This is a good opportunity to remind everyone of a few simple steps that you can take to keep your family healthy. These include:

- Wash your hands frequently with soap and water. Clean hands with an alcohol-based hand cleaner if soap and water are not available.
- Cover your nose and mouth with your sleeve or a tissue when you cough or sneeze.
- Stay home when you are sick, until you are fever-free for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medication.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth to prevent the spread of germs.
- Avoid close contact with those who have symptoms of flu.
- Seek care for you or your child; please call ahead to your health care provider's office and tell them what symptoms you have, so they can see you quickly and prevent exposing other people in the waiting room.

The health and safety of our students and staff is always of the utmost importance. Please refer to the PWCS Web site at pwcs.edu or the VDH Web site at www.vdh.virginia.gov for more information and for helpful resources regarding the H1N1 Virus.

Sincerely,



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