

Schools swine flu letter – no cases/ awareness raising

Dear Parent or Carer,

With the summer holidays approaching and the number of swine flu cases in the region continuing to rise, I wanted to take this opportunity to share with you the advice we have been given by the NHS and Health Protection Agency about dealing with any cases of swine flu we may have in the school in the future.

National guidance has recently been updated so that school closures are only likely now in exceptional circumstances, and preventative antiviral drugs will no longer be routinely offered to large groups of school pupils. As swine flu starts to circulate more freely in the local community, these measures are no longer effective, as people may be exposed to the virus outside school, or as soon as they have finished a course of drugs.

The most important advice we have been given is that children who have symptoms of flu-like illness should stay away from school until they have recovered and are free of symptoms. This is to avoid spreading the infection as much as possible.

You can check any symptoms online at www.nhs.uk or call the Swine Flu Information Line on 0800 1 513 513. If you are still concerned, stay at home and call your GP, who may suggest a course of anti-viral drug treatment. This is designed to reduce the symptoms and help a quicker recovery.

If your doctor does advise anti-viral treatment for a child, please let the school know as soon as possible.

It's important to point out that the vast majority of people who have swine flu make a quick recovery at home. However, you should do what you can to prevent the infection from being spread to others by ensuring your family take some simple precautions:

- Covering your nose and mouth when coughing or sneezing, using a tissue when possible.
- Disposing of dirty tissues promptly and carefully.
- Washing your hands frequently with soap and water to reduce the spread of the virus from your hands to your face or to other people.
- Cleaning hard surfaces (such as door handles) frequently using a normal cleaning product.
- Making sure your children follow this advice.

Yours sincerely,