

Dear Parent,

As you may know, the flu can spread easily from person to person and school-age children are among the groups most affected. Therefore, we are working with the Berrien County Health Department to take additional steps to prevent the spread of flu in our school district.

The following steps are being recommended:

- **Teach your children to wash their hands** often with soap and water. You can set a good example by doing this yourself.
- **Teach your children not to share personal items** like drinks, food or unwashed utensils, and to cover their coughs and sneezes with tissues. If they don't have a tissue, they should cough or sneeze into their upper sleeve, not their hands.
- **Know the signs and symptoms of the flu.** Symptoms of the flu include fever (100 degrees Fahrenheit, 37.8 degrees Celsius or greater), cough, sore throat, a runny or stuffy nose, body aches, headache, and feeling very tired. Some people may also vomit or have diarrhea.
- **Extend the time sick children stay home** for at least 7 days, even if they feel better sooner. People who are still sick after 7 days should continue to stay home until at least 24 hours after symptoms have gone away.
- **If a household member is sick, keep any school-aged brothers or sisters home for 5 days** from the time the household member became sick. Parents should monitor their health and the health of other school-aged children for fever and other symptoms of the flu.
- **Don't send children to school if they are sick.** Any children who are sick at school *will be sent home*. Staying home when sick will allow your children to rest and allows you to monitor their health closely. Keeping your sick child home is the responsible thing to do. It protects fellow students and school staff, especially those who are at higher risk of severe illness from the flu.

Please note that the presence of cases of H1N1 will not trigger a school closure. Closures will be based on absence rates, staffing issues and community health information.

Should you have any questions or concerns regarding the flu, please contact your medical provider.

Thank you for your cooperation.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Sarah Johnson MD, MPH". The signature is written in black ink on a white background.

Superintendent, Berrien County Health Department