



# Spotswood Public Schools

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*Dr. John A. Krewer, Superintendent*

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Dear Parents/Guardians,

The Center for Disease Control (CDC) has provided guidance for state and local officials regarding responses to a possible influenza outbreak during the 2009-2010 school year (Additional CDC information on H1N1 is available at [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)). Following are questions and answers provided by the CDC regarding a number of issues I thought would be useful and of interest to you:

**1. Why should we be concerned about the spread of flu in schools?**

*Students can get sick with flu and schools may act as a "point of spread," where students can easily spread flu to other students and their families. So far, with 2009 H1N1 flu, the largest number of cases has occurred in people between the ages of 5 and 24.*

**2. Which students and staff are at higher risk for complications from flu?**

*Anyone can get the flu (even healthy people), and serious problems from the flu can happen at any age. However, children under the age of 5 years, pregnant women, people of any age with chronic medical conditions (such as pulmonary disease, including asthma, diabetes, neuromuscular disorders or heart disease), and people age 65 years and older are more likely to get complications from the flu.*

**3. What can families, students, and school personnel do to keep from getting sick and spreading the flu?**

*Families, students, and school staff can keep from getting sick with flu in three ways:*

- Practice good hand hygiene. Students and staff members should wash their hands often with soap and water, especially after coughing or sneezing. Alcohol-based hand cleaners are also effective.*
- Practice respiratory etiquette. The main way that the flu spreads is from person to person in the droplets produced by coughs and sneezes, so it's important to 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.*
- Stay home if you're sick. Keeping sick students at home means that they keep their viruses to themselves rather than sharing them with others.*

*Students, staff, and their families must take personal responsibility for helping to slow the spread of the virus by practicing these steps to keep from getting sick and to protect others from getting the flu.*

**4. What is the best way to practice good hand hygiene?**

- *Washing your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds (the time it takes to sing “Happy Birthday” twice) is the best way to keep your hands from spreading the virus.*
- *Using alcohol-based hand cleaners containing at least 60% alcohol is also effective.*

**5. How long should a sick student be kept home?**

*In the current flu conditions, students with symptoms of flu should stay home for at least 24 hours after they no longer have fever or do not feel feverish, without using fever-reducing drugs. If the flu conditions become more severe, the CDC recommends that a sick person stay home for 7 days. A person who is still sick after 7 days should stay home until 24 hours after the symptoms have gone away. In addition, this longer period should be used in healthcare settings and in any place where a high number of high-risk people may be exposed, such as childcare facilities for children less than 5 years of age.*

*Sick people should stay at home, except to go to the doctor’s office, and should avoid contact with others. Keeping people with a fever at home may reduce the number of people who get infected. Because high temperatures are linked with higher amounts of virus, people with a fever may be more contagious.*

**6. Should family members of sick students stay home too?**

*Not unless the flu conditions are determined to be very severe. If flu conditions are severe, school-aged children should also stay home for 5 days from the time someone in their home became sick. It is possible that family members could already be sick with flu and not be showing symptoms yet. The 5-day period provides enough time to know if anyone else is sick with flu. Parents should continue to monitor their health and the health of the sick child, as well as the health of their other children.*

The following are precautions being taken in the Spotswood Public Schools:

- Hand sanitizer is available in every classroom throughout the district. Elementary teachers will instruct the children to use hand sanitizer when they return from the bathroom.
- Germicidal wipes are available in every classroom throughout the district for use in class for computers, keyboards, and desktops.

- Water fountains throughout the district are periodically cleaned throughout the day and night.
- Classroom and exterior doors are cleaned periodically throughout the day and night (door handles, panic bars).
- Bathrooms throughout the district are disinfected twice per day, cleaned and sanitized nightly.
- Cafeteria tables throughout the district are cleaned 2-4 times per day.
- Throughout the district, desk tops are cleaned frequently during the day.

Those children who present significant flu-like symptoms will be directed to the nurse who will contact parents.

Please watch our website for H1N1 additional updates as they become available from the CDC or the Middlesex County Health Department. Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,



John A. Krewer  
Superintendent of Schools