

September 11, 2009

Dear Koraes Families,

As we enter the fall months, we at Koraes Elementary School prepare as we do every year for the beginning of the flu season. Because the flu can be spread easily from person to person, we take steps each year to prevent its spread among students, faculty and staff for as long as possible - and ask everyone's help in following recommended health practices to accomplish this.

This year as you know, the Centers for Disease Control and the medical community - along with our schools are closely monitoring the potential spread of a particular flu strain caused by the H1N1 flu virus (formerly known as "the swine flu").

Because there are so many questions about H1N1, we want to provide you with more information about it.

First it is important to know that following the same good health practices that prevent the spread of flu are just as effective in preventing spread of the H1N1 flu virus. We ask all students, faculty and staff to:

- Practice good hand hygiene by washing your hands with soap and water, especially after coughing or sneezing. Alcohol-based hand cleaners also are effective
- Practice respiratory etiquette by covering your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze, and washing your hands immediately afterward. If you don't have a tissue, cough or sneeze into your elbow or shoulder, not into your hands. Avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth - germs are spread this way.

- Know the signs and symptoms of the flu. Symptoms include chills or fever (a temperature of 100 degrees Fahrenheit or higher) and a cough or sore throat. Possible signs of fever are if the person feels very warm, has a flushed appearance, or is sweating or shivering. Additional flu symptoms can include runny nose, body aches, headache, tiredness, diarrhea, or vomiting.
- Stay home if you have flu or flu-like illness for at least 24 hours after you no longer have a fever (100 degrees Fahrenheit or 38 degrees Celsius) or signs of a fever (have chills, feel very warm, have a flushed appearance, or are sweating). This should be determined without the use of fever-reducing medications (any medicine that contains ibuprofen or acetaminophen). Do not come to school until you are fully recovered.

During severe flu conditions, sick people should stay home for at least 7 days, even if they feel better sooner. Those who are still sick after 7 days should continue to stay home until at least 24 hours after symptoms have gone away.

Please be familiar with these symptoms. Additional CDC information is available at www.flu.gov or by calling 800-CDC-INFO (232-4636).

We are working closely with the state and local health departments to monitor flu conditions. We will keep you updated with new information as it becomes available to us. Thank you, in advance, for your involvement following the recommended practices that will help us all achieve this.

Attached please find a letter shared by the Illinois State Board of Education. We provide this letter for informational purposes only and understand that the decision to inoculate your children is a personal one that we respect.

Sincerely,

Mary C. Zaharis
Principal