

# School District of Indian River County

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August 24, 2009

**Harry J. La Cava, Ed.D.**  
**Superintendent**



Dear Parents and Guardians:

As we begin the new school year, we want to update our families about the H1N1 virus, which is also known as the Swine Flu. This illness is understandably a concern for parents, particularly in light of the considerable media attention the H1N1 virus receives. This new flu, which began infecting students and adults alike in the spring of this year, has continued to be detected in school age children throughout the summer in camps, schools, and child care settings. We believe that we will be seeing influenza like illness (including H1N1) in our school systems when school resumes. However, learning more about the illness, the proactive measures being taken by schools, and the important role you play in your child's health, can help ease some of the anxiety you may feel.

The School District has been working very closely with the Indian River County Health Department to protect the health of Indian River County children while in school. Our focus is on influenza prevention and to that end; the School District has the following proactive measures in place:

- Increased vigilance by school staff to identify students exhibiting flu-like symptoms
- Custodians/building supervisors to increase focus and frequency of cleaning commonly touched areas (i.e. doorknobs, light switches, handrails, etc.)
- Symptomatic students will be sent to the school's health room for evaluation by a health assistant
  - Health Assistant will determine if a child should be isolated due to symptoms
  - Schools will identify an area where students can be isolated from general student body. Students will be given a mask to put on in accordance with CDC guidance. **The Health Department, in accordance with CDC guidance, does not recommend the use of masks in the general school setting, unless student is symptomatic and will be placed in the isolation room to be sent home.**
- Parent/guardians of isolated students will be contacted and requested to pick up their child as soon as possible
- Students with influenza-like illness **must remain at home** for at least 24 hours after their fever is gone (without the use of fever-reducing medicine)
  - A fever is a temperature which is 100 degrees or above
- If symptoms do not subside, parents should seek medical care from their doctor or health care provider
- School health assistants, teachers, administrators, and staff will reinforce with students the importance of hand washing and practicing good personal hygiene
- students will be allowed to use hand sanitizers (at least 60% alcohol based) at school under the supervision of adults
- If a cluster of influenza cases is identified among students attending a particular school, the School District will follow the direction of the Indian River County Health Department in its response and provide guidance for parents. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention does not recommend school-wide notification for individual influenza cases.

**OVER**

**"Educate and inspire every  
student to be successful"**

Karen Disney-Brombach  
District 1

• Matthew McCain  
District 2

• Carol Johnson  
District 3

• Claudia Jiménez  
District 4

• Debbie J. MacKay  
District 5

**"To serve all students with excellence"**

Equal Opportunity Educator and Employer

In addition, Health Department and District officials want to stress what everyone can do to help minimize the affect of H1N1 (Swine Flu) cases on our community:

**Keep sick children at home.** If your child exhibits flu-like symptoms, keep them home from school and all activities such as after school programs, dances, movies, and other events where people gather. Contact your primary care health provider or county health department for further instructions.

**Stay home when you are sick.** Limit your contact with other people. Again, contact your primary care health provider or county health department for instructions.

**Cover coughs and sneezes.** Teach your child to cover their coughs and sneezes with tissues or by coughing into the inside of the elbow. Dispose of used tissues properly, and then wash hands thoroughly.

**Wash hands with soap and water.** Teach your child to wash their hands frequently with soap and water for 20 seconds (singing the "Happy Birthday" song twice).

**Teach your child the proper use of hand sanitizer.** Gels, rubs, and hand wipes work well, as long as they contain at least 60% alcohol. Dispose of hand wipes properly. Always read and follow label instructions when using hand sanitizer.

We hope the following information will answer some of your questions regarding the H1N1 virus.

**What is H1N1?** Novel H1N1 (also referred to as Swine Flu) is a new influenza virus causing illness in people. This new virus was first detected in the United States in April 2009. This virus is spreading from person to person, as does the regular seasonal flu.

**What are the symptoms of H1N1?** Flu symptoms include fever, sore throat, body aches, chills, and cough. Sometimes these symptoms may be accompanied by headache, runny nose, vomiting, or diarrhea.

**How is H1N1 spread?** Influenza spreads when an infected person coughs or sneezes near another person.

The Indian River County Health Department is continuing to monitor the H1N1 virus issue both nationally and in our community. The School District of Indian River County will continue to work closely with our local health department to provide you with updates as information warrants.

Additional information is available on the School District website at: [www.indianriverschools.org](http://www.indianriverschools.org) and on the Indian River County Health Department website at: [www.myirchd.com](http://www.myirchd.com)

Thank you for your continued support.

*Harry J. La Cava*

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Superintendent of Schools