

October 14, 2009

Dear Parents/Guardians:

The cold and flu season is upon us and while we have not had any lab-confirmed cases of Novel H1N1 (swine) flu, the effects of this earlier-than-usual cold and flu season have resulted in higher than normal absenteeism rates in the Twin Valley School District which we continue to monitor on a daily basis.

Novel H1N1 (swine) flu, like the seasonal flu, is an illness that usually includes fever with cough, sore throat, headache and/or muscle aches, and possibly nausea, diarrhea and/or vomiting. Like all flu viruses, the infection spreads from person-to-person through coughs or sneezes as well as touching something with the virus on it and then touching the mouth, nose or rubbing the eyes.

**The most important message at this time is not new – students and adults who are ill should NOT come to school.** The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Pennsylvania Department of Health does not currently recommend school closures as an effective way to prevent flu in the schools. The district is taking action to prevent the spread of flu-like illness by focusing on hygiene and hand washing, regular custodial sanitizing, and maintaining daily contact with the Pennsylvania Department of Health, Pennsylvania Department of Education and other local and state agencies to assure the best course of action to protect our students and staff as well as minimize the burden and impact on affected families. In addition, the district has developed a Novel H1N1 (swine) flu plan that is available on our website at [www.tvsd.org](http://www.tvsd.org).

We ask that you and your family continue to take precautions to protect yourselves as well as others by following these guidelines:


- ✓ **Stay home when ill** – school procedure requires that students remain home until they are **fever-free for 24-hours WITHOUT the use of fever-reducing medication**. If you work and are unable to stay home with your child, make arrangements for someone to stay with them until they are well.
- ✓ **Hand washing** – reinforce proper and frequent hand washing. Using soap and warm water, wash hands for at least 20 seconds and rinse thoroughly. If soap and water are not available, alcohol-based hand sanitizers should be used.
- ✓ **Coughing/Sneezing** – children should be taught to cover their nose and mouth with a tissue when coughing or sneezing (or the elbow/shoulder if no tissue is available), and throw the tissues in the trash.
- ✓ **Illness in the family** – if someone in your household is ill, keep them away from other family members – especially those who are under five years of age, pregnant or have chronic heart or lung problems.

- ✓ **Discourage use of sharing personal items** – children and adults should not share drinks, food or unwashed utensils.

The Pennsylvania Department of Health has recommended that all school-aged children, especially those with underlying health conditions such as asthma and diabetes, be annually vaccinated against the seasonal flu.

Your child's health is very important to us. We will continue to maintain a close watch on illnesses within our buildings in the coming weeks, as well as provide regular updates on our website. Should you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact your child's building principal.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Robert L. Pleis".

Dr. Robert L. Pleis  
Superintendent