

October 7, 2009

Dear Parent or Guardian:

While we have had no reported cases, as we prepare for the flu season, I want to share with you what we are doing and ask for your help.

We have met with representatives from the Richland Memorial Hospital (RMH), Richland County Health Office, the Regional Office of Education and the West Richland School District. We have established procedures for maintaining sanitary conditions in each of our buildings. Our nurses and secretaries will be tracking the number of reported cases. Therefore, when you call to report your child absent, please be aware that the secretary will ask you specific questions regarding the signs and symptoms of your child's illness. We will continue to work with RMH and others throughout the flu season. If the flu becomes severe, we will take additional steps as directed by the Illinois Department of Public Health.

Here are some things you can do to help protect your children.

1. Teach them to wash their hands often with soap and water or an alcohol-based sanitizer. (We have hand sanitizer throughout our buildings.)
2. Teach them NOT to share personal items like drinks, food, unwashed utensils, towels, uniforms, etc. They should learn to cover their cough or sneezes using the elbow, arm, or sleeve instead of the hand when a tissue is unavailable.
3. Keep sick children at home for at least 24 hours after they no longer have fever (100 degree temperature) or signs of a fever (without fever-reducing medication).

Symptoms of the flu include fever (100 degrees Fahrenheit or greater), cough, sore throat, a runny or stuffy nose, body aches, headache, and feeling very tired. Some people also vomit or have diarrhea. If your child has one or more of these symptoms, please take good care of them and know that the Richland County medical community is available to help you.

For more information visit [www.flu.gov](http://www.flu.gov) or call 1-800-CDC-INFO for the most current information about the flu. For more information about flu in our community and what our school is doing, visit [www.ercu1.net](http://www.ercu1.net) or call 618-395-2324. We will notify you of any additional changes to our school's strategy to prevent the spread of flu.

Sincerely,

Marilyn Holt  
Superintendent of Schools

MJH/ai