

Radford City Schools
1612 Wadsworth Street Radford, VA 24141

William C. Bishop, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools

(540) 731-3647
Fax: (540)731-4419

May 1, 2009

Dear Parents, Faculty and Staff:

For the past week, media outlets have been widely reporting an outbreak of influenza A (H1N1 flu)— also referred to as “swine flu”— in various countries around the world, including the United States. Late yesterday, two cases were confirmed in Virginia; both are adults. While there have been no cases confirmed in children in the Commonwealth at this time, the school divisions served by the New River Health District are keeping a close eye on the developments involving this particular strain of influenza. Just this week, area school divisions have participated in two conference calls with local Health Department officials in order to discuss this situation.

While this influenza is a new virus, the symptoms are similar to seasonal flu that many of us battle during winter months. Symptoms include fever, cough, sore throat, body aches, headache, chills and fatigue. Some people have reported diarrhea and vomiting as well.

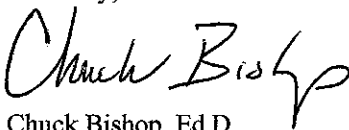
The purpose of this letter is not to alarm, but to inform and act as a reminder of the importance of good personal hygiene. Since influenza is passed from person to person as an airborne virus, we are asking that all members of our school community follow these recommendations from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC):

- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Throw the tissue in the trash after you use it.
- Frequently wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after you cough or sneeze. Alcohol-based hand cleaners are also effective.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth. Germs spread this way.
- Try to avoid close contact with sick people.
- **If you or your children get sick, stay home from work or school and limit contact with others to keep from infecting them.**

As you might imagine, I am getting inundated with information about this situation. Schools are a huge concern during any outbreak because we have so many people in close contact with one another. One of the most recommended courses of action during any outbreak is “social distancing”. Simply put “social distancing” is a way of keeping our distance from each other to lesson the spread of flu. To that end, parents should be prepared for one or more of our schools to be closed in the event of confirmed cases of this new flu in our school system. Additionally, please be reminded to report your child’s absence from school for any reason. It is especially important now to have accurate information about absences.

Rest assured I will be staying in close contact with Health Department officials concerning recommendations should we have a confirmed case in Radford. If you have questions, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,


Chuck Bishop, Ed.D.