

2009/2010

Dear Parents and Caregivers,

Because strep throat, influenza and a gastrointestinal illness are circulating throughout the area, I feel it's important to remind our families of the precautions you can take. Recognizing symptoms is important. Symptoms of Influenza (Type A, Type B or H1N1) include fever of 100 degrees (F) or more, cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, body aches, headache, chills and fatigue. Some people have also reported diarrhea and vomiting. Symptoms of strep throat include severe and sudden sore throat without coughing, sneezing, or other cold symptoms; pain or difficulty swallowing; fever over 101 degrees (F); swollen lymph nodes in the neck; and white or yellow spots or coating on the throat and tonsils.

Schools can be easy places for infectious illness to spread. Tulsa Public Schools and local health officials are working closely to take steps to limit the spread of infectious illness. We ask that parents and guardians do their part to keep the virus out of schools. Here are some ways you can help:

- **Keep children who are sick at home.** Don't send them to school and do not go into the community, except to receive medical care. Children should not return to school until they are fever free (without the use of fever-reducing medicine like Tylenol or Ibuprofen) for at least 24 hours.
- **Plan for the possibility that you will be called to bring your child home from school if he or she gets sick while in school.** Students who exhibit symptoms of influenza will rest comfortably in the school health office until they are picked up by a parent or guardian.
- Teach your children to cover their mouth and nose with a tissue when coughing or sneezing. Also tell them if they don't have a tissue, cough or sneeze into the bend of their elbow.
- Remind your children to wash their hands often with warm, soapy water for at least 20 seconds per washing. Hand sanitizers with at least 60% alcohol are also helpful.
- Unless prescribed by your Doctor, **do not** use aspirin products for pain or fever reduction because of the possibility of Reye's syndrome.

Remember urgent medical care is needed if your child has difficulty breathing, is not drinking enough fluids, has severe or persistent vomiting, does not wake up or is not acting right, becomes very irritable, has a fever with rash, bluish or gray skin color, or flu symptoms improve but return with a worse fever or cough.

As always, if you have questions or concerns, you are welcome to call the school health office, or you can also call Tulsa Public Schools Health Services (746-6364).