



April 28, 2009

Dear Parents and Guardians:

As you may already know, an international outbreak of swine flu has caused the U.S. Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to issue a public health emergency. Although Whatcom County does not have any known cases in our area, we are doing everything possible to protect the health of our students and limit the spread of swine flu.

The Bellingham School District is working very closely with local health officials to stay informed and is monitoring the local and national situation every day. **Whatcom County officials have asked us to share the attached information with you about taking the following precautions, including washing hands frequently and keeping your child home from school if he or she is ill.**

Let me assure you that the health and well-being of our students is our top priority. For the most up-to-date information about the Swine Flu outbreak, please go to <http://www.cdc.gov/swineflu/> .

Washington state information about Swine Flu is available at <http://www.doh.wa.gov/swineflu> and the district has additional resources posted on its Web site at <http://www.bham.wednet.edu/staff/influenzaplanning.htm> .

If you are not already registered, I encourage you to sign up to receive e-mail emergency notices and other news from the district under “E-News Registration” at <http://www.bham.wednet.edu/> . We will continue to monitor the situation and share information with you.

Sincerely,

Principal



Whatcom Unified Emergency Management



**From: Whatcom Unified Emergency Management
Date: 4-27-09**

Whatcom County officials are responding to the Swine Flu outbreak that is now in the national spotlight. There have been no cases of Swine Flu confirmed in Washington State. Whatcom County, the City of Bellingham, St. Joseph Hospital, Western Washington University, representatives of the medical community and the Bellingham School District are reviewing the community pandemic flu plan (developed in 2006) and are laying the groundwork for implementing portions of the plan, should the need arise. Work on pandemic flu preparedness has been ongoing for two years now, and as a result our community is well-prepared to respond effectively and appropriately. Officials are monitoring the developing situation and will provide information to the community as it becomes available.

Local public health officials say that since the Swine Flu, like any other flu is spread by those who are sick, it is important to use precautions such as covering your cough, washing hands frequently and staying home if they are ill. Anyone who is sick and has traveled to Mexico, or elsewhere in the U.S. where cases of Swine Flu have been confirmed, should contact their health care provider and inform the doctor of their travel history as well as their symptoms.

This is also an important time for families to review their preparedness plans. Make sure you have supplies of food, drinking water and medication to last 72 hours, in case of emergency or extended illness. Businesses are also encouraged to review their business continuity plans to ensure they are prepared to continue operations if their workforce is reduced due to illness.

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