

# Cascade Public Schools

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Dear Parent/Guardian:

It's never too early to prepare. With this thought in mind, I want to remind you of some action steps you might wish to use to protect your child and family from the possible return of H1N1 (swine) flu this fall.

I have asked staff to take similar precautions in an effort to eliminate any serious outbreak if H1N1 returns.

Our goal is to keep everyone healthy so that the education of our students is not hampered. I have attached a list of various websites you may wish to visit that contain additional information and are updated as new information becomes available.

Best wishes for a great school year and thank you for all you do to keep our children healthy and learning. If I can be of additional assistance, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

Vic Koshuta  
Superintendent - Cascade School District #422  
"Raising the Bar from Great to Greater"

*Raising the Bar from Great to Greater*

The mission of Cascade School District #422 is to inspire all students to reach their maximum potential, become lifelong learners, and to be contributing, responsible citizens.

## Action Steps for Parents to Protect Your Child and Family from the Flu this School Year

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends 4 main ways you and your family may keep from getting sick with the flu at school and at home:

1. **Practice good hand hygiene** by washing your hands often with soap and water, especially after coughing or sneezing. Alcohol-based hand cleaners are also effective.
2. **Cover your mouth and nose** with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. If you don't have a tissue, cough or sneeze into your elbow or shoulder; not into your hands.
3. **Stay home if you or your child is sick** for at least 24 hours after there is no longer a fever or signs of a fever (without the use of fever-reducing medicine). Keeping sick students at home means that they keep their viruses to themselves rather than sharing them with others.
4. **Get your family vaccinated** for seasonal flu and 2009 H1N1 flu when vaccines are available.

**If flu conditions become MORE severe, parents should consider the following steps:**

- **Extend the time sick children stay home** for at least 7 days, even if they feel better sooner. People who are still sick after 7 days should continue to stay home until at least 24 hours after symptoms have completely gone away.
- **If a household member is sick, keep any school-aged brothers or sisters home for 5 days** from the time the household member became sick. Parents should monitor their health and the health of other school-aged children for fever and other symptoms of the flu.

**Follow these steps to prepare for the flu during the 2009-2010 school year:**

- Plan for child care at home if your child gets sick or their school is dismissed.
- Plan to monitor the health of the sick child and any other children in the household by checking for fever and other symptoms of flu.
- Identify if you have children who are at higher risk of serious disease from the flu and talk to your healthcare provider about a plan to protect them during the flu season. Children at high risk of serious disease from the flu include: children under 5 years of age and those children with chronic medical conditions, such as asthma and diabetes.
- Identify a separate room in the house for the care of sick family members.
- Update emergency contact lists.
- Collect games, books, DVDs and other items to keep your family entertained if schools are dismissed or your child is sick and must stay home.

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Policy guidance is now available from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention regarding the H1N1 virus, intended for K-12 schools, teachers, administrators, and parents. You will find it here:

**<http://www.flu.gov/plan/school/schoolguidance.html>.**

(Because the guidance may change as the situation changes, we're sharing the URL where the guidance will always live on flu.gov, rather than a static attachment.)

Additionally, CDC has also created a health-focused toolkit for teachers and parents, located here:

**<http://www.flu.gov/plan/school/toolkit.html>.**

The State Department of Education is working with the Idaho Department of Health and Welfare to update the H1N1 information webpage online at

**<http://www.sde.idaho.gov/site/flu/>.**

Please check the page next week for the most up-to-date information to help you prepare for potential Pandemic H1N1 2009 influenza cases in schools. School-age children are particularly susceptible to the H1N1 virus, creating the potential for large numbers of cases with more hospitalizations and deaths among younger age groups.

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services is taking the steps necessary to provide H1N1 flu vaccine for possible use in the fall. However, the vaccine will not be available for several weeks after the school year starts.

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