

Dear Parents:

As you may know, the HINI Virus (or swine flu) and regular influenza can be easily spread from person to person. Therefore, we are taking steps to keep the school open to students and functioning in a normal matter during this flu season. We are working with the Three Rivers Health Department to make decisions about the best steps to take concerning schools. **But, we need your help to do this.**

If the flu becomes more severe, we may take additional steps to prevent the spread such as:

- *conducting fever and flu symptom screening of students and staff as they arrive at school.
- *making changes to increase the space between people such as moving desks farther apart.
- *dismissing students for at least 7 days if they become sick.

For now we are doing everything we can to keep our school functioning as usual. Here are a few things you can do to help:

- ***Teach your children to wash their hands** often with soap and water or an alcohol based hand rub. You can set a good example by doing this yourself.
 - ***Teach your children not to share personal items** like drinks, food, unwashed utensils, and to cover their coughs and sneezes with tissues. Have them cover up their coughs and sneezes using the elbow, arm or sleeve instead of a hand when a tissue is unavailable.
 - ***Know the signs and symptoms of the flu.** Symptoms of the flu include fever (100 degrees Fahrenheit or greater), cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, body aches, headache, and feeling very tired. Some people may also experience vomiting or diarrhea.
 - ***Keep sick children at home** for at least 24 hours after they no longer have a fever or do not have signs of fever, without using fever-reducing medications. Keeping children with a fever at home will reduce the number of people who may get infected.
- Do not send children to school if they are sick.** Any children who are determined to be sick while at school will be sent home.

Please help us prevent the spread of the HINI Virus and the influenza this school year. We will notify you of any additional changes to our school's strategy to prevent the spread of the flu at Arlington Public Schools.

Sincerely,

Kathy Brester
School Nurse