

# Flu Season Preparedness

*To the Seattle Waldorf School Community:*

*As we are preparing for the start of fall classes, the school is also preparing for flu season. Cases of novel H1N1 (swine) flu have appeared throughout the country, yet the vast majority of novel H1N1 cases are mild and, at this point, appear no more severe than most seasonal influenzas. However, this strain does seem to be more frequent in children and young adults.*

*Our school has formed a response team to address the issue and is working closely with the local Health Department. We strongly encourage all members of the SWS community to take the standard precautions adopted during the flu season and to play an active role in our public health prevention efforts.*

*Geraldine Kline, Executive Director*

We ask that everyone follow the basic steps outlined below, which are based on recent guidelines for schools from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

## Prevention

- **Practice good hand hygiene** by washing your hands with soap and water before eating, and especially after coughing or sneezing. Alcohol-based hand cleaners also are effective. Our teachers will remind all students to **wash their hands for 20 seconds before snack and lunch** and at regular intervals during the school day. Alcohol-based hand cleaners are available in all classrooms. Desks, counters, door knobs and other commonly touched surfaces will be disinfected daily.
- **Practice respiratory etiquette** by covering 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. Avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth; germs are spread this way. Our teachers will remind their students to do so.
- **Know the signs and symptoms of the flu.** A fever is a temperature taken with a thermometer that is equal to or greater than 100 degrees Fahrenheit or 37.8 degrees Celsius. Look for possible signs of fever: if the person feels very warm, has a flushed appearance, or is sweating or shivering.
- **Keep the children home if they have flu or flu-like illness for at least 24 hours after they no longer have a fever.** If you've had a fever, stay away until you've been 24 hours without a fever. **If you suspect you have had swine flu without a fever, stay away until 7 days after onset or 24 hours after all symptoms cease, whichever is longer.** Keep your child at home if they have any signs of fever

- (equal to or greater than 100 degrees), cough, sore throat, body aches, headache, chills, vomiting, diarrhea, blistery rash, heavy nasal congestion or undue fatigue. Signs of fever should be determined without the use of fever-reducing medications (any medicine that contains ibuprofen or acetaminophen).
- **Talk with your health care providers about whether you should be vaccinated for seasonal flu.** For more information about priority groups for vaccination, visit [www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/vaccination/acip.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/vaccination/acip.htm).

## **If You Have the Flu**

Students, faculty or staff members who have an influenza-like illness, should self-isolate at home for at least 24 hours after being free of a fever without the use of fever-reducing medicine. Affected individuals should seek medical care if they are experiencing severe symptoms

## **More Information and Updates**

For more information and to receive e-mail updates from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, visit [Flu.gov](http://Flu.gov). You can also track information by following them on Twitter: <http://twitter.com/flugov>. You can learn more about novel H1N1 in King County from the [Public Health Department Web site](#).