

Dear Parent/Guardian:

This letter is to inform you of the recent information Maine School Administrative District #43 has acquired regarding the swine influenza (H1N1), known as swine flu. The Superintendent of MSAD #43, James Hodgkin, has been in close contact with the Maine Department of Education and the Maine Center for Disease Control offices. We are receiving daily updates and will do everything possible to keep parents/guardians informed. The Superintendent will be putting out an announcement over the First Alert system and will give updates as needed. Our school website (<http://district.msad43.org>) will also have additional information. Other websites you can go to for current information include: www.maine.gov (look in the News Section). Additional websites are: www.cdc.gov and www.pandemicflu.gov. You may contact Kathy Sutton RN, the district's School Health Coordinator should you have additional questions at 364-7896 ext. 224. Our school nurse for Meroby Elementary and Rumford Elementary School is Tracy Pinkham RN. She may be reached at 364-3714 or 364-8155. Our school nurse for Mountain Valley Middle and Mountain Valley High School is Kim Clement RN. She may be reached at 364-4547, ext. 116.

Swine flu (H1N1) is a virus infection. This virus is spread from person to person through coughing and sneezing. The virus can survive on surfaces for 2-3 hours and people can become infected by touching something with flu viruses on it and then touching their mouth or nose. Symptoms include: **fever, cough, sore throat, body aches, headache, chills & fatigue.**

If your child/children is showing any of these symptoms **do not** send them to school. If your child becomes ill during the school day you will receive a phone call from the school and ask that you pick up your child and take them home. They must be fever and free of symptoms for 48 hours before they return to school. It is most important that if your child becomes ill that you contact your family doctor.

It is important that you do not give aspirin (acetylsalicylic acid) to children or teenagers who have the flu as this can cause a rare but serious illness called Reye's Syndrome. Fevers and aches can be treated with acetaminophen (Tylenol) or ibuprofen (Advil, Motrin, Nuprin) or naproxen (Aleve). Check the ingredients carefully and call your family doctor if you have any questions about your child's illness.

The easiest and most effective way to prevent the spread of swine flu is:

- **Cover your coughs and sneezes.**
- **Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth.**

- **Wash hands frequently (soap and water or an alcohol based hand sanitizer), especially after coughing or sneezing.**
- **Stay home if you are sick, especially with a fever.**

At school we will be teaching children the above and taking steps to provide hand sanitizer in certain situations. We will be temporarily covering the water fountains at school and ask that you send your child to school with a bottle of water.

The attached Pandemic Flu Planning Checklist for Individuals and Families is a helpful guide to assist your family should families need to remain at home for a period of time.