

November 23, 2009

Dear Parent(s) / Guardian(s):

As we continue to move through flu season, schools in Stanislaus County remain vigilant in their efforts to maintain safe and healthy campuses. The Stanislaus County Health Services Agency (HSA) reports that absences from schools across the county remain higher than the baseline data from the fall. However, they are not reporting huge spikes at any schools or high absenteeism in any particular school district.

We urge you and your families to continue to take precautionary steps to prevent the flu, including staying home when sick. We remind you that children are not to return to school following flu-like symptoms until they have been fever free for 24 hours without fever reducing medication.

While we have shared in the past that the H1N1 flu strain does not appear to be any more severe than the seasonal flu, Health Officials are urging extra caution regarding children with special needs. According to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), children with chronic health problems such as asthma, diabetes, heart disease, metabolic conditions, and neurologic and neuromuscular disorders are at higher risk of having complications from the flu. In addition, all children younger than 5 years old are at higher risk of flu complications compared to older children.

On the back of this letter is an H1N1 and Seasonal Flu Guidance Chart. It was prepared by Tulare County Public Health and has been reviewed and approved by Stanislaus County HSA. We encourage you to review it as it provides great information in an easy-to-read format. Please note that it contains a special section for children at risk of complications from the flu.

Again, we are committed to providing safe, healthy learning environments for all students in our county. Please continue to support good hand and respiratory hygiene in your home – washing hands often, and covering coughs and sneezes are significant ways to help prevent the spread of flu and other contagious diseases.

Additional information on H1N1 and Seasonal Flu is available at [www.hsahealth.org](http://www.hsahealth.org) and [www.stancoe.org](http://www.stancoe.org).

Sincerely,



Tom Changnon  
Stanislaus County Superintendent of Schools