

# ENTIAT SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 127

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## INFORMATION REGARDING H1N1 FLU

A great deal is being said about the possible spread of H1N1 (swine) flu during the coming flu season. Students and staff members can get sick with the flu and schools may act as a point of spread, where the disease can be transmitted to other students and their families. The Entiat School District is coordinating with surrounding school districts, North Central Educational Service District and the Chelan-Douglas County Health District, to prepare to respond to a flu outbreak. Considerable written guidance is being provided to school districts by the U.S. Department of Education, The Centers for Disease Control and the Washington State Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction.

The information we've received about preparing for the flu season and the possible spread of the H1N1 virus is common sense advice for avoiding the spread of any illnesses like flu and colds.

Here is a summary of that information.

Families, students, and school staff can avoid getting or spreading the flu by doing the following.

- Practice good hand hygiene. Students and staff members should wash their hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds (the time it takes to sing "Happy Birthday" twice), especially after coughing or sneezing. Alcohol-based hand cleaners (at least 60% alcohol) are also effective. Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth with your hands as this is a common way to be exposed to flu and cold germs.
- Practice respiratory etiquette. The main way that the flu spreads is from person to person in the droplets produced by coughs and sneezes, so it's important to cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze and then throw the tissue away. Do not reuse the tissue. If you don't have a tissue, cough or sneeze into your elbow or shoulder, not into your hands.
- Stay home if you're sick. Keeping sick students at home means that they keep their viruses to themselves rather than sharing them with others. Students and staff members with flu-like illness should stay home until at least 24 hours after they no longer have a fever or signs of a fever. This should be determined without the use of fever-reducing medications (any medicine that contains ibuprofen or acetaminophen).
- Get your family vaccinated for seasonal flu and for H1N1 flu when vaccines are available.

Students, staff, and their families must take personal responsibility for helping to slow the spread of the virus by practicing these steps to keep from getting sick with flu and protecting others from getting the flu.

Parents and guardians, you will find that our staff members will be very insistent that someone in your family pick up children who become sick with a fever or other flu-like symptoms at school. If you haven't already done so, please contact the school secretary to update your emergency contact information. We will not be keeping those children at school until the end of the day or sending them home on a bus. To the best of our ability, students with flu-like symptoms will be kept isolated from others.

Our custodial staff will continue to clean commonly touched surfaces and items that are more likely to have frequent hand contact with the cleaning agents that are usually used in those areas. The Centers for Disease Control does not recommend additional disinfection beyond normal cleaning. All of our staff members will practice and encourage students to practice good hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette. Our teachers, secretaries and our school nurse will watch for signs of illness among students and respond accordingly. And we will continue to follow the guidance provided by the Chelan-Douglas Health District.

Please watch for additional information as it becomes available. Contact your health care provider if you have specific questions regarding your family's health.

Sincerely,

Michael Wyant  
Superintendent