



West Hertfordshire and  
East and North Hertfordshire



Dear Parent or Carer,

### **Swine flu update**

Now that pupils are back at school for the autumn term, we are writing to share with you our latest information about swine flu.

Although we have seen a fall in the number of people with swine flu over the summer, we are planning for an expected increase of swine flu in the autumn. It is important to remember that most people with swine flu make a quick recovery at home.

We do not expect schools to close unless there are exceptional circumstances, as closure was only of help in slowing the spread of swine flu from those returning from abroad into the wider community. The county council and health service are working closely to monitor the situation, and your school will pass on new advice if needed.

Your school will also have plans in place to deal with cases in the school, but won't be routinely informing parents about numbers of cases. However, do please talk to your school if you think your child is at a particular risk and more vulnerable to infections. Detailed information on risk groups can be found by visiting [www.nhs.uk/flu](http://www.nhs.uk/flu) or by phoning the recorded information line on 0800 1 513 513.

### **Vaccinations**

This autumn the NHS will vaccinate those who are at most at risk of more serious complications from swine flu. This includes pregnant women and those with heart disease, diabetes and breathing difficulties, amongst others. More information on the vaccine and a full list of 'at risk' groups can be found on the NHS website [www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)

The government will make a decision about whether to vaccinate the rest of the healthy population, including children, when it has more details on how swine flu is evolving and has more data on the use of the vaccine.

We will let you know more information on vaccinations as soon as it is available.

### **What to do if you think you have swine flu**

If you or your child have flu-like symptoms such as a sudden fever, cough, a headache, sore throat, tiredness, aching muscles, sneezing, runny nose or loss of appetite you should contact the **National Pandemic Flu Service** on **0800 1 513 100** (open 8am until midnight every day) or via the website at [www.direct.gov.uk/pandemicflu](http://www.direct.gov.uk/pandemicflu). Callers or online users of the National Pandemic Flu Service will be directed to consult with their GPs if they have other underlying health conditions or fall into an 'at risk' group.

Please remember to notify the school if your child is diagnosed with swine flu and they must stay at home until they have recovered and are free of symptoms.

### **Flu friends**

Everyone is encouraged to choose a 'flu friend' who can pick up medicine on your behalf if you have the virus. A flu friend can be a family member, colleague or neighbour. It is a good idea to find several flu friends if you can. If you know of someone who is isolated or vulnerable that may not have anyone to help them, think about offering to be their flu friend.

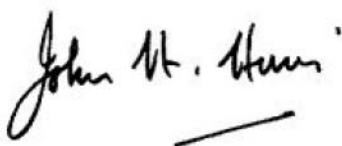
### **Steps we must all take**

Preventing the spread of germs is the single most effective way to slow the spread of illnesses such as swine flu. You should always:

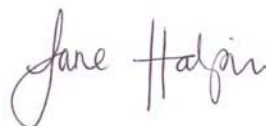
- Cover your nose and mouth when coughing or sneezing, using a tissue when possible
- Dispose of dirty tissues promptly and carefully
- Maintain good basic hygiene, for example washing hands frequently with soap and water to reduce the spread of the virus from your hands to face or to other people
- Clean hard surfaces (e.g. door handles) frequently using a normal cleaning product
- Make sure that children also follow this advice

If you want to find more information about swine flu please visit [www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk) or telephone the swine flu information line on 0800 1 513 513. If you think you have swine flu contact the **National Pandemic Flu Service** on **0800 1 513 100** or via the website [www.direct.gov.uk/pandemicflu](http://www.direct.gov.uk/pandemicflu).

Yours sincerely,



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