



January 30, 2018

Dear Parents and/or Guardians:

As you may know, this flu season has been very severe throughout the United States. Here in Abilene we are seeing an increase in flu cases as well. Therefore, we are taking steps to limit the spread of flu in AISD in order to keep students in school and maintain daily routines as much as possible during this busy flu season. **HOWEVER, we need your help to do this.**

Here are a few everyday steps to help prevent the spread of germs:

- **Teach your children to wash their hands** often with soap and water. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand rub.
- **Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth.** Germs spread this way.
- **Teach your children not to share personal items** like drinks, food or unwashed utensils.
- **Teach your children to cover their mouth and nose with a tissue when they sneeze or cough.** Throw the tissue in the trash after using. Remind them to cough or sneeze into the inside of their elbows instead of their hand when a tissue is not available.
- **Avoid contact** with sick people.
- **Know the signs and symptoms of the flu.** Symptoms of the flu include fever (100°F (37.8°C), cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, body aches, headaches, and feeling very tired. Some people may also vomit or have diarrhea.
- **Keep sick children at home for at least 24 hours after they no longer have fever** except to get medical care. **The fever should be gone for at least 24 hours, without the use of a fever-reducing medication, before they return to school.** A fever is defined as 100°F (37.8°C) or higher. Keeping children with a fever at home will reduce the number of people who may be infected.
- **Do not send children to school if they are sick.**

We are working closely with the Taylor County Health Department and the medical community in Abilene to monitor flu conditions. In addition, AISD custodial staff members have been disinfecting district facilities on nights and weekends by using an EPA approved disinfectant which is used in hospitals, nursing homes, schools and other establishments where controlling cross-contamination from surfaces is of extreme importance. The disinfectant is applied via a misting machine to help ensure exposed surfaces are more completely impacted by the disinfectant.

Finally, public health officials stress that it is very important to get a flu vaccination this year, even though historical data is showing the vaccine has not been as effective this flu season. While the flu vaccine is far from perfect, it is the best way to prevent getting sick from the flu. In addition, the flu shot may be of some benefit by lessening the severity of symptoms among those who do get the flu.

Thank you for your cooperation in keeping our children and our school healthy. If you have questions about the information or recommendations in this letter, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Thank you,

Linda Langston, RN

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