

JEMEZ VALLEY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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E. David Atencio
Superintendent

Dr. Susan Wilkinson-Davis
Assistant Superintendent

Dear Parents, Guardians and Community Members,

With the beginning of the Flu season upon us and the focused attention on the H1N1 (Swine Flu), I wanted to take a few moments of your time to inform you of where we are with our preparations and to provide you with resources for information. It is important to remind everyone to resist the urge to sensationalize the situation and to be aware of the facts. There will inevitably be cases within our district but it should be stated that all Flu like symptoms are not H1N1 and **the only way for a person to be diagnosed with H1N1 is to be tested by an approved laboratory**. We have already heard of parents and students who have told others that their families have H1N1 (Swine Flu) and after further investigation we have learned that they had not even been tested for the virus. The bottom line is we want everyone to know that we will act upon fact and not just rumor in an effort to provide a safe environment for our students, staff, and community.

Let me begin by stating that PED (Public Education Department), DOH (Department of Health), DHS (Department of Homeland Security), CDC (Center for Disease Control), and JVPS (Jemez Valley Public Schools) have been proactive and have been preparing for this season for many, many months. We have been in communication with Homeland Security and Emergency Management Secretary John Wheeler, Dr. Mike Landen, and Dr. Mary Ramos from DOH.

The district has placed links, more specific information, and communications on our website that may be useful to you. To access that information go to: www.jvps.org. Once there click on the "H1N1 updates" link located on the right side of the page. There you can find more specific information such as:

1. DOH and PED prevention guidance which is located at: <http://www.ped.state.nm.us/press/2009/h1n1/index.html>
2. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website located at: <http://www.cdc.gov/>
3. District communications and preparations

Please know that the JVPS Health Services Department continually provides basic prevention information to staff, students and parents. We continue to follow CDC guidance. It is designed to keep schools open while they do what they can to protect students and staff. Students have been trained to cough into their shirts or on their sleeves to keep from spreading germs. Students are also being reminded not to share things like drinks, lipstick, etc.

The CDC has recommended the following guidance as the best ways to prevent influenza:

1. Getting vaccinated
2. Frequent hand washing with soap and water when possible
3. Covering noses and mouths with a tissue when coughing or sneezing and staying home when sick
4. Students and staff with flu-like illness should stay home and away from other people for at least 24 hours after they no longer have a fever, without using a fever-reducing medicine
5. School staff should routinely clean areas that students and staff touch often with the cleaners they typically use. Special cleaning with bleach is unnecessary
6. Students and staff who appear to have flu-like illness should be sent to a room separate from other students until they can be sent home

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The New Mexico Department of Health also recommends parents should check their children each morning for illness and keep children home if they have influenza-like illness (fever, cough, and/or sore throat). It's important to restate that parents should keep their children at home for 24 hours after a fever breaks without using a fever-reducing medication. People should stay home from work if they are ill with influenza-like symptoms as well.

We all share the same concern regarding the H1N1 (Swine Flu) for the well being of our students, families, and community. Again, the best defense is prevention. Please follow the guidelines on the CDC, DOH, PED and JVPS websites. Together we will get through this. Thank you for your continued support and diligence on this important issue affecting the health and well-being of our students, staff, and community.

Sincerely,



E. David Atencio
Superintendent

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