



Linda Parker, Principal

September 28, 2009

Dear Families:

As you may know influenza is spreading easily in our community from person to person and school-age children are among the groups most affected. We have had several cases of influenza-like illness and we are taking steps to prevent the spread of influenza at Challenge to Excellence. We want to keep the school open and functioning as normally as possible. **We need your help to do this.**

- **It is very important that sick children and staff stay home** at least 24 to 48 hours after they no longer have a fever (100°F or 37.8°C) without the use of fever-reducing medicine such as Tylenol or Ibuprofen. The time sick children or staff are asked to stay home may be extended depending on federal, state, or local guidance and the current community influenza situation. Keeping your sick child home is the responsible thing to do. It protects fellow children and staff, especially those who are at higher risk of severe illness from the influenza.

- **Continue to monitor your child for flu-like symptoms prior to sending him or her to school.** Symptoms of the influenza include fever (100°F or 37.8°C), cough, sore throat, a runny or stuffy nose, body aches, headache, and feeling very tired. Some people may also vomit or have diarrhea. The staff will continue to monitor children while they are at school, and any child determined to be ill will be sent home. If you are called, *please pick your child up immediately to prevent the illness from spreading.*

- **People with certain health conditions may face special medical challenges during flu season.** These conditions include pregnancy, cancer, blood disorders, asthma, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, diabetes, heart disease, kidney disorders, liver disorders, neurological disorders, neuromuscular disorders, and persons with weakened immune systems, including those receiving chemotherapy. If your child has any of the above health conditions please consult their health care provider to determine if they need to be kept home from school at this time or receive anti-viral medication to prevent illness. If they develop flu-like symptoms, contact their health care provider or seek medical care immediately.

16995 E Carlson Drive, Parker, CO 80138
303-841-9816 Fax: 303-840-3246

- The school will continue increasing the frequency of cleaning surfaces and items** which are more likely to have frequent hand contact such as tables, desks, door knobs, drinking fountains, keyboards, or pens.
- Students, staff and families should continue to practice these health tips from the Centers for Disease Control:**
 - * Cover your nose and mouth when you cough or sneeze
 - * Wash your hands often with soap and water (or use a hand sanitizer)
 - * Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth
 - * Avoid close contact with sick people

Here are a few additional steps you can do to help keep you and your family healthy:

- Know the signs and symptoms of the influenza.** Symptoms of the influenza include fever (100°F or 37.8°C), cough, sore throat, a runny or stuffy nose, body aches, headache, and feeling very tired. Some people may also vomit or have diarrhea with H1N1 influenza.
- Extend the time sick children stay home**, even if they feel better sooner.
- Teach your children not to share personal items** like drinks, food or unwashed utensils, and to cover their coughs and sneezes with tissues. If they don't have a tissue, they should cough or sneeze into their upper sleeve, not their hands.
- Teach your children to wash their hands** often with soap and water. You can set a good example by doing this yourself.
- Get vaccinated for seasonal influenza and H1N1 influenza.**
 - **The vaccine for seasonal influenza is available now.** Please contact your health care provider or local pharmacy to get vaccinated.
 - **If you or your children fall within any of the H1N1 vaccine priority groups get vaccinated when it becomes available in October.** The priority groups include pregnant women, people who live with or care for children younger than 6 months of age, healthcare and emergency medical services personnel, persons between the ages of 6 months and 24 years old, and persons 25 years of age or older who are at higher risk for novel H1N1 because of chronic health disorders or compromised immune systems. Contact your family's health care provider to determine if they will offer the H1N1 vaccine. The



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vaccine may also become available at local pharmacies. If these options are not available, Tri-County Health Department will be scheduling school-based clinics with the cooperation of local school districts. Once these clinics are scheduled, details on the locations and times will be posted on their website at: www.tchd.org.

For more information visit www.flu.gov, www.tchd.org or call the Colorado Help line at 1-877-462-2911 or 1-800-CDC-INFO. For more information about what Challenge to Excellence is doing, call (303) 841-9816. We will notify you of any additional changes to our strategy to prevent the spread of influenza.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads 'Mrs. Parker'.

Linda Parker
Principal
Challenge to Excellence

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