

# Queen Elizabeth Elementary

May 4, 2009

Dear Parent/Guardian:

We are writing to you concerning the recent spread of the H1N1 influenza virus (previously referred to as swine flu). There are a relatively small number of confirmed cases in British Columbia and, to date, all have been mild, and the individuals are recovering.

The Vancouver school district works with medical health officers at Vancouver Coastal Health in such cases to monitor the situation and respond as necessary to minimize potential risks.

In response to the spread of the H1N1 virus, Vancouver Coastal Health recommends we:

- Continue all educational programs and school activities as per usual;
- Allow travelers who are well and returning from Mexico or other flu-affected areas to participate in regular school activities. Only people who are ill should stay home;
- Continue all field trips as planned.

Good personal hygiene, specifically frequent hand washing, continues to be the most effective way to prevent the spread of flu viruses to individuals:

- Sneeze or cough into a tissue or your sleeve, not your hands. Use a tissue to wipe your nose and throw the tissue in the trash after a single use;
- Wash your hands frequently with soap and water for 20 seconds and dry with an air hand drier or a single-use paper towel;
- Try to avoid close contact with sick people;
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth as this is how germs are commonly spread.

Actions if you or others become ill:

- Stay home if you get sick with mild illness and limit contact with others to keep from spreading the virus;
- People who are ill should stay home until they are well enough to resume their regular activities;
- Vancouver Coastal Health has indicated that students are not required to obtain a medical note before returning to school;
- Do not wear face masks if you do not have flu symptoms. Masks are not a medically effective means to prevent the spread of the H1N1 virus and, in fact, can create other complications.

More information is available at:

- HealthLinkBC online: [www.HealthLinkBC.ca](http://www.HealthLinkBC.ca) or by telephone by dialing 8-1-1
- BC Communicable Disease Control: [www.bccdc.org](http://www.bccdc.org)
- Vancouver Coastal Health Authority: [www.vch.ca](http://www.vch.ca)
- BC Government: [www.gov.bc.ca/govt/swine\\_flu.html](http://www.gov.bc.ca/govt/swine_flu.html)

We will keep you informed should medical health officers change any of their recommendations to us. Updates will be posted at [www.vsb.bc.ca](http://www.vsb.bc.ca).