



## ST. ALBERT PROTESTANT SCHOOLS

April 30, 2009

Dear Parents,

The purpose of this letter is to provide parents with updated information about the swine (H1N1) influenza outbreak in Alberta and the implications for students in our schools. The World Health Organization has raised its pandemic alert level to its second highest, and St. Albert Protestant Schools is responding by activating its pandemic preparedness plan.

At this time, Alberta Chief Medical Officer of Health, Andre Corriveau indicates students who are not ill can safely come to school. The schools will remain open.

To keep the influenza from spreading to more people, we ask you to keep sick children at home. As is our usual practice, schools will continue to inform parents if children begin to exhibit influenza symptoms at school and arrangements will be made for the children to be taken home.

Here are some ways to stop the spread of germs and sickness:

- Please keep children who are sick at home.
- Teach your children to wash hands frequently with soap and water for 20 seconds. Be sure to set a good example by doing this yourself. Use hand sanitizer if hands are not visibly dirty or if soap and water are not accessible.
- Teach your children to cover coughs and sneezes with tissues or by coughing into the inside of the elbow. Be sure to set a good example by doing this yourself.
- Do not touch your eyes, nose or mouth after touching door handles and other surfaces that may harbour influenza and other viruses.
- People who are sick should stay home from work or school and stay away from other people until they are better.
- Stay away from shopping malls or other places where there are large groups of people.

If you have questions, please contact your healthcare provider. You can get more information from Alberta Health Services by calling 1-866-408-5465 or visiting their website at <http://www.albertahealthservices.ca>. The federal government website that has information on pandemic planning for individuals and families is: <http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/influenza/pandemic-eng.php>.

Schools will remain open unless the swine (H1N1) influenza outbreak escalates to a pandemic and the district receives notification from Alberta Education or the governing health authority that a different course of action would be more prudent. Alberta Education is in continuous contact with Alberta Health and Wellness with regard to the latest developments, and St. Albert Protestant Schools will continue to work with Alberta Education to keep parents informed.

D. Doug McDavid, Deputy Superintendent