

DISTRICT DISCUSSES PREPAREDNESS FOR H1N1 CASES



Kerrville Independent School District is prepared in the event of a H1N1 virus outbreak. KISD administrators have been working closely with both state and local public health officials to coordinate efforts should confirmed cases of H1N1 be identified in the district.

The United States Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in Atlanta places the decision to close public schools due to the outbreak of the H1N1 virus at the local level. The CDC provides guidelines to assist local officials in the decision to close a campus or district. At this time, KISD does not anticipate the automatic closure of a campus should KISD have a confirmed case of the H1N1 virus.

According to KISD Superintendent Dr. Dan Troxell, the district will coordinate a decision to close a particular campus or the district with the consultation of state and local public health officials. Says Troxell, "KISD nurses and administrators will be monitoring student and staff attendance rates throughout the school year and we will be in regular communication with local health officials regarding individuals with flu-like symptoms." Should KISD have a confirmed H1N1 case, administration will work cooperatively with local Texas Health and Human Services staff and the City of Kerrville to respond appropriately.

Decisions to close the campus will be based on the following factors:

1. Percentage of staff absent
2. Percentage of students absent
3. Intervals and frequency of which the absences occur
4. Severity of student and/or staff illnesses

If the district or a campus were to close, KISD parents will be immediately notified using the district's telephone School Messenger system and through information provided to the local media. Additionally, a notice will be prominently posted on the district website and on KEC-Channel 2.

The Center for Disease Control recommends the following school/parent responses to the H1N1 virus:

- Keep students at home if they are sick in order to prevent the illness from spreading.
- Have children wash hands frequently with soap and water.

- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when coughing or sneezing. This may prevent others from getting sick.
- Seek medical attention early if you or your child becomes ill with influenza-like symptoms.

In addition to the recommendations, KISD is encouraging parents to develop an alternate child care plan in the event of a school closure.

KISD has taken several precautionary steps in dealing with the H1N1 virus. The district has purchased all the recommended cleaning materials and trained custodial staff how to properly utilize the supplies should a case of H1N1 be diagnosed in the district. Routine cleaning of areas students frequently touch and the additional use of sanitizers and disinfectants are in place.

The district will continuously stay apprised of the situation and monitor all changes should they occur. Says Laurie Gagne, Director of Special Programs, "While the disease and its spread is completely unpredictable, KISD has a plan in place. The best medicine is to stay informed and take the recommended precautions issued by health officials. Our office will continue to work with state, county, and local officials in order to share information and stay current at all times. By remaining diligent in preventive measures, sharing information and resources, and working with our highly experienced school nurses, KISD students, staff, and parents can feel confident in dealing with a potential influenza outbreak."

Visit KISD's website under Student Services/Health Services for links to updates, resources, parent tips associated with the H1N1 virus as well as all updates from school nurses throughout the coming year. For general questions on the virus, contact any KISD school nurse. For other questions, contact Laurie Gagne, Director of Special Programs, (830)257-2200, ext. 245.