

School District Efforts to Minimize the Spread of the Flu

For the past few weeks, students and staff have experienced illnesses that have kept them home from school and work. It is flu season, and H1N1 flu is present in Knoxville, as it is throughout the state. We would like you to know that the Knoxville School District is working hard to minimize the spread of the flu by taking precautions planned by our school nurse in cooperation with Marion County Health Services, Knoxville Area Community Hospital, and area medical clinics.

Here are some of the precautions we are taking:

- Student trips to nursing homes or other facilities are cancelled until the threat of spreading the flu is gone.
- Elementary students will not be traveling between buildings for annual Halloween “parades” that have been held in the past.
- Hand sanitizer will be available near the front door at all buildings during parent-teacher conferences. Please use the sanitizer when you enter the building. Our teachers will also be asked to use sanitizer.
- Our maintenance and custodial staff is making an extra effort to thoroughly clean and sanitize surfaces that students come in contact with, including desks, door handles, and bathroom fixtures.
- Teachers are encouraging students to wash their hands thoroughly throughout the day.
- Coaches and athletes are being instructed not to share water bottles or towels during practices and games.

What if a student or employee catches the flu?

- We are enforcing our policy that students and staff must be free of fever, vomiting, and diarrhea (without medication) for 24 hours before returning to school or work.

Yes, students and staff are experiencing the flu, but our absence rate so far has ranged from 5% to 11%, depending on the building and day.

We hope the precautions we are taking will contribute to fewer severe cases of the flu.