



April 27, 2009

Dear Parents and Guardians:

As you have probably heard, President Obama yesterday declared a public health emergency in the wake of the confirmation of 20 cases of swine flu across the country. **While it is critical to stress there have been no confirmed cases of swine flu in Maryland, it is important to understand the illness and to begin now to take proper precautions.**

Our school system is working with the Anne Arundel County Department of Health to help ensure the effects of swine flu in our area – if it does appear – can be contained. First and foremost, it is important not to panic. It is, however, equally important for all of us – adults as well as children – to practice good hygiene that includes frequent hand-washing and other commonly reinforced sanitary procedures.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the symptoms of swine flu in people are similar to those seen in a seasonal human flu: fever, cough, sore throat, body aches, headache, chills, and fatigue. Some people have reported diarrhea and vomiting associated with swine flu. More severe illnesses, such as respiratory failure, and even death have been reported in connection with swine flu infection, but **none of the cases in the United States has led to such complications.**

While there is currently no vaccine to protect humans against swine flu, there is plenty that can be done to protect against it. Such measures include:

- **staying home from work or school and limiting contact with others when you are sick.**
- covering your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze.
- frequently washing your hands often with soap and water.
- avoiding touching your eyes, nose, or mouth. Germs spread this way.
- avoiding close contact with those who are ill.

At this time, the Department of Health has advised us that all of our educational programs can proceed normally. All of our school principals have been advised of the situation and instructed to discuss with their staffs the need to be extra vigilant in cleaning work and classroom areas.

It is important to continue to obtain as much up-to-date information as possible. With such information, you – like us – will be able to make the best decisions for your children. To that end, we will continue to make available links to web-based information on our Web site, www.aacps.org. Look in the “For Your Information” section for a link titled “Latest Information On Swine Flu.”

More information also can be found on the Web sites of the Department of Health (www.ahealth.org), the Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (www.dhmh.state.md.us), and the Centers For Disease Control and Prevention (www.cdc.gov/swineflu).

I appreciate everything you do for your children and for our schools every day, and I thank you for working with us to keep our children safe and healthy.

Sincerely,

Kevin M. Maxwell, Ph.D.
Superintendent of Schools

KMM/bm