



SOUTHAMPTON COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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Dr. Gwendolyn P. Shannon, Division Superintendent

Dr. Deborah Goodwyn, Chairman
James D. Pope, III, Vice-Chairman

March 29, 2017

Dear Parents and Guardians:

We are working with the Western Tidewater Health District and our school nurses in response to an increase in the numbers of children absent from school due to influenza-like (flu-like) illnesses. These children have complained about headaches, general body aches, fever, and cold like symptoms. Several measures to prevent additional illnesses, including increased cleaning and reinforced hand washing/sanitizing, are currently in place and being actively practiced throughout the school. Maintenance and janitorial staff disinfected the school last night and administration and teachers are actively disinfecting throughout the school day.

Please know that we are diligent in our checking of students with flu-like symptoms, and immediately sending students home that exhibit these symptoms. We are asking your help in following the guidelines below to allow for the safe and healthy return of your child to school.

Upon your child's healthy return to Riverdale, we will mark them excused in our system provided that a physician or parental note is provided. Additionally, students will be afforded the opportunity to make up all work and tests that were presented during their absence from school.

Proper hand washing technique, which is one of the best ways to prevent spreading of the flu, as recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), is cited below:

- Use soap and running water.
- Rub your hands vigorously as you wash them for 20 seconds.
- Wash all surfaces (including the back of hands, wrists, between fingers and under fingernails)
- Rinse well and leave the water running until after drying your hands.
- Dry hands with a single use towel and turn off faucet with a towel.

It is important to wash your hands frequently, including:

- Before and after eating.
- After using the bathroom.
- After contact with body fluids or changing diapers.
- After touching animals.
- After blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing.
- Before you touch your eyes, mouth, or nose.
- After being in a crowded public space.
- After handling garbage.

If you, or your child, have symptoms of a respiratory infection (e.g. coughing, body aches, fever), the health district recommends:

- **Parents or guardians keep children with respiratory symptoms and fever out of school until they have, at a minimum, been fever-free (without the use of fever-reducing medicines) for a full 24 hours.**
- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue whenever you cough or sneeze. Put the used tissue in the waste basket.
- If you do not have a tissue, cough or sneeze into your upper sleeve.

For more information on influenza and prevention, please visit: <http://www.vdh.virginia.gov/epidemiology/influenza-flu-in-virginia/>

If you have any further questions, please contact your child's doctor or the health district's epidemiologist, Amal Patel, at (757) 514-4767 during regular working hours or after-hours at (757) 435-6453. Also, Dr. Gwendolyn Shannon (Ph.D.), Division Superintendent is available at (757) 653-2692.

Respectfully,

Gwendolyn Shannon, Ph.D.
Division Superintendent

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