



FAYETTE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

October 9, 2009

Dear Fayette County Public Schools Families:

I hope this letter finds you and your family well. As you know, we've been working closely with the Lexington-Fayette County Health Department to try to reduce the spread of flu in our community and keep kids and employees healthy. However, now that we're well into the school year, we are seeing an increase in cases of illness among students and staff, many due to the flu.

Although our overall school district attendance has remained above 90 percent all year and is at 94 percent today, we have seen concentrations of illness in some schools and in some classrooms. We want you to know that we are monitoring this situation closely and taking appropriate action. Twice a day, we are checking on attendance at every single school, and then, at each school, principals are watching classroom by classroom attendance. When we see spikes in absences, we are finding out why kids are out and when appropriate, alerting families with reminders about the symptoms of flu and ways to prevent the spread of illness.

Since so many cases of flu are not being tested or confirmed, we are treating any reports of flu-like illness seriously. It is important to note that while the flu does seem to be on the rise, we are also getting many reports of colds, strep throat and stomach viruses.

Regardless of whether there are confirmed cases of flu in your child's school, our custodial staff is cleaning every classroom with hospital grade disinfectant multiple times a day. We are paying close attention to "high touch" surfaces and common areas. Not only are we encouraging students to cover their cough and wash their hands more frequently, we have installed hand sanitizer dispensers in the common areas of all of our schools for convenience. Additional cleaning regimens have also been instituted on our school buses.

As with any health or safety issue, it is vital that we work closely with our families as partners during this time. If a member of your family has a medical condition that places them in a unique high-risk situation, please stay in contact with your physician, school principal and school nurse. Like you, we want our kids to be safe and well, and we will make accommodations whenever necessary. As the parent or guardian, you need to make decisions that will keep your children safe and we will support you in every way.

If your child is sick, please keep them home until they are well. No test or homework assignment is more important than their health. We will work with our families to provide make up assignments and get the student caught up once they return to school. We've asked our principals to be very flexible with our families.

As always, if you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact me or your school principal. Information about the flu is available on our district Web site at www.fcps.net, and through the Health Department at www.lexingtonhealthdepartment.org or their Flu Hotline at 288-7529.

Sincerely,

Superintendent

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