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Dear Parent,

As you are no doubt aware there are increasing numbers of cases of swine flu being diagnosed across the country. I thought I would take this opportunity to share with you the advice we have been given by the Health Protection Agency and other local health services about dealing with any cases we may have in the school.

In line with the current treatment only policy in the UK, school closures and the distribution of antiviral medicines for prevention are no longer normally recommended due to the virus being widespread within the community. This means that people are likely to be repeatedly exposed to the virus in their everyday lives so such precautions would now be ineffective.

The most important advice we have been given is that parents of children who have signs and symptoms of swine flu are asked to keep their children away from school until they have recovered and are free of symptoms. If children are prescribed antiviral drugs for treatment, they should also stay at home until they have finished the course. This is to avoid spreading the infection as much as possible. If anyone is concerned about flu-like symptoms they should phone their GP or NHS Direct on 0845 4647 for further advice.

There are various measures that people can use to reduce the spread of infection. General infection control practices and good respiratory hand hygiene can help to reduce transmission of all viruses:

- Covering your nose and mouth when coughing or sneezing, using a tissue when possible.
- Disposing of dirty tissues promptly and carefully.
- Washing your hands frequently with soap and water to reduce the spread of the virus from your hands to your face or to other people.
- Cleaning hard surfaces (such as door handles) frequently using a normal cleaning product.
- Making sure your children follow this advice.

Further information is also available on line on www.nhs.uk, or through the Swine Flu information line on 0800 1 513 513. Alternatively, on the Health Protection Agency's website at www.hpa.org.uk/swineflu.

Yours sincerely,

Simon Taylor
Headteacher