

SCHOOL DISTRICT #81
(FORT NELSON)

P.O. BOX 87
FORT NELSON, B.C.
VOC-1R0

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November 6, 2009

Dear Parents/Guardians,

Over the course of the past couple of weeks, we have seen student absenteeism in several district schools running at greater than 10%. All of our schools are following proper Ministry of Health protocols and notifying public health daily when this 10% threshold is reached. The Health branch uses this information for gauging the incidence of various forms of flu and other illnesses circulating in communities. This is a standard practice that has existed for many years. Schools are viewed as a good measuring device for communities, because school attendance and illness are monitored daily.

Presently, Public Health has advised that colds, ear infections, H1N1 flu and other seasonal flu strains are contributing to our current rate of absenteeism.

We are continuing to be diligent with our training of janitorial staff and the cleaning of school facilities, classrooms and computer labs as well as using proper hand washing and coughing routines. We are keeping in touch with our local public health nurses and with Dr. Charl Badenhorst, our Regional Health Officer to monitor staff and student absence.

To prevent the spread of illness we have asked that students and staff who are feeling ill to stay home and are continuing to encourage them to do so. If your child is sick or showing signs of the flu which could include: fever, cough, sore throat, body aches, headache, chills and fatigue, vomiting or diarrhea, please keep your child home. If students come to school when they are ill, parents will be contacted for the students to return home until they are better. Healthy individuals are working and learning in our sites and are encouraged to continue to do so.

We will continue to monitor student and staff absenteeism on a daily basis. If the H1N1 flu and other health issues impact staffing levels or our Regional Health Officer advises that schools should be closed to prevent the spread of illness, parents will be notified through letter, after which on-going communication would be through the School District Website,



local radio, CBC, cable weather network and school and school district answering machines.

While I am advising you of the possibility of school closures, we are hopeful that the measures being taken by our students, parents and staff to reduce the spread of illness combined with the provincial vaccination program, will ensure that this does not occur.

You can call HealthLink BC at 8-1-1, 24 hours a day/seven days a week to speak to a nurse if you have any questions or are concerned about any illness/symptoms experienced by you or your children.

Thank you for your cooperation in keeping our schools and community healthy.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Diana Samchuck".

Diana Samchuck
Superintendent of Schools

DS:ch