

SWINE FLU - ADVICE TO PARENTS

As previously advised, children attending primary and secondary schools and child care centres who have travelled to Mexico, USA, and Canada should continue to be excluded for seven calendar days after leaving the affected areas. Please note that Japan and Panama have now been removed from the list.

As of 4 June 2009, children attending primary and secondary schools and child care centres who have travelled to Victoria should also be excluded for seven calendar days after their return to Tasmania. This applies whether or not the child has symptoms of flu. However, no exclusion arrangements currently apply for students who have been in transit through Tullamarine Airport only, as long as the stay was less than four hours.

Children who are excluded from schools are asked to stay at home as much as possible and should be discouraged from congregating in groups in enclosed spaces like school holiday programs, the cinema or birthday parties. While we ask that children be excluded from school, this is not the same as being quarantined so activities like walking the dog are fine.

Teachers and other staff are not included in these exclusion arrangements. However if they develop any flu-type symptoms they should stay at home and immediately phone 1800 FLU DOC.

There has been significant media coverage of this issue last night and today. However, continued effort by schools where possible to get the message out to all parents of students before the commencement of the school term is appreciated. The responsible authorities are making every attempt to further promote this message through media outlets and www.pandemic.tas.gov.au

A central data base is being established to record numbers of students and staff excluded from school and work because they are suspected H1N1 cases. It would be appreciated if details of such cases could be emailed to me on john.pacconi@catholic.tas.edu.au

To recap, the authorities have advised that it is imperative that no students be allowed onto school premises who, within seven days, have returned from Victoria or any of the three countries listed above. More information, and resources such as messages, pro-forma letters etc, will be provided in the next update scheduled for 11 June 2009.

For information please go to www.pandemic.tas.gov.au.

Teachers and staff are encouraged to continue to reinforce good general health hygiene practices such as ensuring students wash their hands or use alcohol based hand rub regularly and to cover their nose and mouth if sneezing and coughing.

The instructions contained in this email are consistent with arrangements in State Education Department and Tasmanian Independent schools, so the approach is an all of Tasmanian schools swine flu pandemic management.

For more information, please contact me on email cdeayton@shc.tas.edu.au or phone 62794090