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## Valley Home Joint School District

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Dear Parents/Guardians,

The health and safety of your child(ren) is a high priority for the Valley Home Joint School District. As we begin the traditional school year, the potential threat of spreading H1N1 (flu virus) increases. Although the severity of the H1N1 virus is currently similar to seasonal flu it is affecting younger people and there is no vaccine for it yet.

We are continuing to work closely with the Stanislaus County Office of Education and County health officials in monitoring and responding to this situation at the local level. This year we are reporting attendance data directly to the Stanislaus County Health Services agency which is monitoring school absence rates.

In addition, our district will follow the key federal guidelines below which are supported by our state and local public health officials:

- **Students and staff should stay home when sick:** Those with flu-like illness should stay home for at least 24 hours after they no longer have a fever, or signs of a fever, without the use of fever-reducing medicines. They should stay home even if they are using antiviral drugs.
- **Separate ill students and staff:** Students and staff who appear to have flu-like illness will be separated from others until they can be sent home. The guidelines also recommend that they wear a surgical mask, if possible, while waiting to go home.
- **Enforce hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette:** Students and staff should wash hands frequently with soap and water, and always cover noses and mouths with a tissue when coughing or sneezing (or a shirt sleeve or elbow if no tissue is available).
- **Maintain routine cleaning:** School staff will routinely clean areas that students and staff touch often with the cleaners they typically use. Special cleaning with bleach and other non-detergent-based cleaners is not necessary.
- **Encourage early treatment of high-risk students and staff:** People at high risk for influenza complications who become ill with influenza-like illness should speak with their health care provider as soon as possible. Early treatment with antiviral medications is very important for people at high risk because it can prevent hospitalizations and deaths. People at high risk include those who are pregnant, have asthma or diabetes, have compromised immune systems, or have neuromuscular diseases.

Symptoms of H1N1 virus are similar to those of regular human flu and include; fever, cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, body aches, headache, chills and fatigue. A significant number of people who have been infected with novel H1N1 flu virus also have reported diarrhea and vomiting.

We will keep you updated with any important information if conditions change. Please don't hesitate to contact us if you have questions.

Sincerely,

Superintendent/Principal  
Valley Home Joint School District

***Soar to Excellence on the Wings of Knowledge . . . . .***