

St Edmund's Catholic School
(Voluntary Aided)

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13th July 2009

Dear Parent/Carer

Swine Flu Guidelines

As you may know, the number of swine flu cases is increasing and the NHS has moved from working to contain the virus to focusing its efforts on treating the people who have the disease.

We are now aware that there are cases affecting Portsmouth schools. Although I realise you may be concerned, I would like to reassure you that there is no cause for alarm. The most common symptoms of swine flu are fever, sore throat, diarrhoea, headache, feeling generally unwell and a dry cough – in other words, symptoms very similar to ordinary seasonal flu. Most people recover within a week, even without anti-viral treatment.

Of course, although symptoms have generally proved mild, a small number of patients will develop more serious illness. Many of these people have other underlying health conditions that put them at increased risk.

Although the NHS is now focusing on treating swine flu, the advice for individuals remains the same. Unless you have flu-like symptoms, there is no need to stop your normal everyday activities, such as going to work or school.

If you feel your child is displaying flu like symptoms, they should stay at home. You should seek advice from NHS Direct on 0845 4647 or contact your GP, who will be able to make a diagnosis over the phone. It is important to phone rather than go to the surgery to help minimise the spread of the virus. Of course, you should also inform the school as usual on **02392 823766 xt: 211**

Although the focus is now on treatment, there are still steps we can all take to help prevent swine flu from spreading. It is a good idea to follow good simple hygiene advice from the NHS, which asks that people “catch it, bin it, kill it” when they sneeze or cough. This means you should:

- catch your cough or sneeze in a tissue
- throw the tissue in the bin quickly

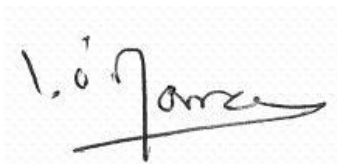
- wash your hands regularly with soap and water
- clean hard surfaces (like door handles and remote controls) frequently with a normal cleaning product

To read the latest official advice and find out about the simple steps you can take to help protect yourself and others visit www.nhs.uk or call the Swine Flu Information Line on 0800 1 513 513.

Further information about swine flu can also be found on the Health Protection Agency website www.hpa.org.uk/swineflu and in the enclosed leaflet 'Swine flu and schools', which answers some specific questions related to schools.

You can also find some guidelines in the government leaflet about swine flu that was distributed to your household, or you can find the leaflet online at www.direct.gov.uk/en/Swineflu/DG_177831.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'I. O'Mara', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Mrs I O'Mara
Headteacher