

SCOTT COUNTY VIRGINIA PUBLIC SCHOOLS

"Every Child, Every Opportunity"

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L. Stephen Sallee, Jr.
David M. Templeton



DIVISION SUPERINTENDENT

John I. Ferguson
340 East Jackson Street
Gate City, Virginia 24251
Phone: (276) 386-6118
Fax: (276) 386-2684

February 8, 2019

Dear Parent/Caregiver and Staff:

As you may be aware, influenza season has arrived in the area. We are aware that a number of children have become sick with influenza or influenza-like illnesses in our area and in the Scott County School District. I, in collaboration with the Scott County Health Department want you to know the steps that the school is taking and that you can take to control this important public health issue.

Influenza, or the flu, is a contagious respiratory disease caused by influenza viruses that can cause mild to severe illness. Flu viruses usually spread from person to person when an infected person coughs or sneezes. Sometimes people might become infected by touching something, such as a surface or object, with flu viruses on it and then touching their mouth or nose. Effective measures to reduce the spread of infection are known and are shared below.

Scott County Schools have provided the resources (materials and staff) and have taken the following steps to prevent the spread of influenza in the school and recommend families adopt these also:

- **Encourage good hygienic practices**

- Wash hands with soap and water often, especially after being around someone sick.
- Cover your mouth and nose with a disposable tissue when coughing or sneezing or use your upper sleeve, but do not use your hands.
- Dispose of facial tissues that contain nasal secretions after each use. Wash hands afterwards.
- Avoid touching the eyes, nose or mouth.
- Routinely clean and disinfect commonly touched surfaces (toys, doorknobs, desks, keyboards, etc.) with disinfectant wipes. The staff have implemented enhanced cleaning in schools.

- **Reduce the spread of illness**

- Individuals should stay home from school, work, and errands when sick.
- Students or staff who are sick should remain home until they are fever-free for a full 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medication. Efforts to identify ill children at school are enhanced, so that parents/guardians are notified and the children return or remain at home until they are well and can return to school.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.

- **Talk to your healthcare provider about flu vaccination**

- The single best way to protect you and your family against flu is to get vaccinated. All persons aged 6 months and older are recommended to get vaccinated each year, with rare exceptions.
- Flu vaccination is usually 40-60% effective in preventing the flu in healthy persons. Even if some people who are vaccinated get the flu, vaccination can still offer some protection to reduce the severity of illness.
- Receiving flu vaccine later in the season can still provide important protection since flu viruses can circulate as late as May.
- Most individuals will be protected against influenza within 2 weeks after vaccination.

- **Antiviral medications**

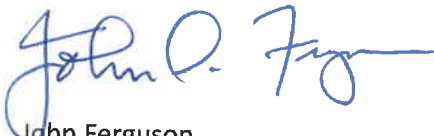
- These can be used to treat or prevent the flu. Talk with your healthcare provider to get more information.

- **Enhance influenza awareness**

- Please see the enclosed fact sheet on influenza.

If you have any questions, please contact your child's doctor or your local health department at 276 386 1312.

Sincerely,



John Ferguson
Superintendent, Scott County Schools



Eleanor S Cantrell, MD
Director, Lenowisco Health Dist.