

Friday 4th September,

To: All Parents at the British School of Amsterdam

Dear Parents,

You will have undoubtedly heard much about Swine Flu (H1N1 virus), both in the media in the Netherlands and in countries you may have visited during the summer holidays. We understand that you may have questions about the virus in general and how it may affect your child at School, hence this letter.

What are the symptoms of the H1N1 virus?

It is important that as the virus spreads, you know the symptoms of the disease so you can recognise it in yourself and others at an early stage. So far, most cases have been mild, with symptoms similar to those of seasonal flu. Only a small number of people have had more serious symptoms.

The typical symptoms are:

- a sudden fever (a high body temperature of 38°C/100.4°F or above), and
- a sudden cough.

Other symptoms may include: headache, tiredness, chills, aching muscles, limb or joint pain, diarrhoea or stomach upset, sore throat, runny nose, sneezing, or loss of appetite.

Prevention

Preventing the spread of germs is the most effective way to slow the spread of diseases such as the H1N1 virus. You should always:

- ensure everyone washes their hands regularly with soap and water,
- dry your hands with paper towels,
- clean surfaces regularly to get rid of germs,
- use tissues to cover your mouth and nose when you cough or sneeze, and
- put used tissues in a bin as soon as possible.

The School will ensure that good hygiene rules are explained to and followed by all members of staff and pupils.

As well as following the preventative measures above, the School has ensured that surfaces such as door handles, computer keyboards, banisters etc are cleaned on a daily basis.

Posters reminding everyone of good hygiene practices and how to prevent the spreading of the virus are displayed in each school.

What to do if your child is sick.

To prevent the spreading of the virus, children who have symptoms of the virus or who have been diagnosed with the virus **MUST NOT** come to school. Please telephone the school and inform the Receptionist that your child has the virus and will therefore be absent. We recommend that you call your Doctor if you have any cause for concern.

Of course, your child may suddenly show symptoms of the virus during the day at school. In such circumstances, you will be contacted and asked to collect your child. Children must stay at home for a minimum of 6 days.

Children who have been in contact with somebody with the virus but have no symptoms themselves may come to school.

The School follows the instructions of the GGD Amsterdam. The GGD would advise the School of any necessary closure. The School can also contact the Infectious Disease Department of the GGD for further advice.

It is possible that a large number of staff could be infected at the same time and the school would not have enough personnel to staff the school and guarantee the safety of the children. In such circumstances the school (or a section of the school) would be forced to close; you would be informed immediately.

We hope to have kept you well informed over the flu virus, for more information you can visit www.gezond.amsterdam.nl or www.nhs.uk .

We look forward to you all returning (or joining us) in September,

Yours sincerely,

M.W.G. Roberts
Principal.