



GRAVENSTEIN UNION SCHOOL DISTRICT

Linda J. LaMarre, Superintendent

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October 22, 2009

Dear Parent or Student Guardian,

I sent a letter to families two months ago reminding all that we expected to see some increased cases of colds or flu this year causing higher absenteeism. I thought I would give you an update on our attendance so far. Overall, we have had average school attendance.

Every year a particular class may have a higher than average absenteeism rate due to an illness such as strep throat, cold or flu that appears to “go around the room”. This week, for example, we have had more than the normal absence in one particular 3rd grade classroom. Even in that classroom, the students have not all had the same symptoms. Reports from parents have been a variety of colds, congestion, some fever or other flu-like symptoms.

We are doing everything we can to keep illnesses from spreading such as having windows and doors open for fresh air as appropriate and all classrooms at both campuses have sinks with water and anti-bacterial soap dispensers. Many classrooms also have anti-bacterial hand gel available. Disinfecting wipes have been purchased for every classroom for teachers to use as needed. Students are sent home if they are sent to the school office and are found to have a fever.

Here are some reminders of what you can do to help:

- **Teach your children to wash their hands** often with soap and water or an alcohol-based hand rub. You can set a good example by doing this yourself.
- **Teach your children not to share personal items** like drinks, food or unwashed utensils, and to cover their coughs and sneezes with tissues. Covering up their coughs or sneezes using the elbow, arm or sleeve instead of the hand when a tissue is unavailable.
- **Know the signs and symptoms of the flu.** Symptoms of the flu include fever (100 degrees Fahrenheit, 37.8 degrees Celsius or greater), cough, sore throat, a runny or stuffy nose, body aches, headache, and feeling very tired. Some people may also vomit or have diarrhea.
- **Do not send children to school if they are sick.** Any children who are determined to be sick while at school *will be sent home*.
- **Keep sick children at home** for at least 24 hours *after* they no longer have fever or do not have signs of fever, without using fever-reducing drugs. Keeping children with a fever at home will reduce the number of people who may get infected.
- **Vaccinate your child** for both the seasonal flu and H1N1. Information on Saturday, October 24 clinics is on our website www.grav.k12.ca.us.

Thank you,

Linda J. LaMarre, Superintendent

Gravenstein Elementary School

3840 Twig Avenue
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Grades PreK—5th

Hillcrest Middle School

725 Bloomfield Road
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707-823-7653
Grades 5th—8th