

3 July 2009

Dear Parent

**Re: Swine flu – change in guidance.**

On 2 July the guidance from national government has changed, as more people start to catch Swine Flu, it makes sense to move from intensive efforts to contain the virus to focusing on efforts to treat the increasing number of people who have the disease.

Across the UK, there are now signs that the spread of the virus is accelerating, although there currently remains a small number of cases in Bury. The Government has always made it clear that at some point they would need to change from policies of containment to ones of treatment.

This new national policy means that GPs will be able to diagnose Swine Flu on the basis of symptoms alone, rather than waiting for laboratory testing. This is called a 'clinically presumed case'. The NHS will no longer trace close contacts and will no longer issue antiviral drugs (Tamiflu) to these people. The new policy also means that there will also be changes to the way these drugs are distributed to people who are diagnosed with Swine Flu.

**Following advice from the Bury Primary Care Trust (PCT), if a case of Swine Flu is confirmed at a school all pupils and members of staff should continue to attend school as normal, providing they are well. This is in line with national guidance from the Government.**

Whilst, this change in guidance may create some concern, it is important to understand that this is the national guidance which all NHS organisations across the country are being asked to follow. As a parent of a young child it is important that you remain vigilant for the signs and symptoms of Swine Flu and if you have any concerns you contact your GP by phone or ring NHS Direct. Information is provided below about the signs and symptoms and what you need to do:

**What are the symptoms of swine flu?**

The symptoms of swine flu are similar to the symptoms of ordinary flu. They include fever, chills, cough, headache, sore throat, runny nose, aching muscles and joints. Some people with swine flu have also reported vomiting and diarrhoea. If you have two or more of these symptoms you should contact your GP or NHS Direct by phone.

Anyone who has a fever and flu-like symptoms should stay at home and contact NHS Direct on 0845 4647 or their GP by phone for advice. They should not go to school or work, and should not attend health settings such as GP surgeries, walk in centres or hospital A&E departments.

### **Further information on Swine flu**

For more details call the swine flu information line on 0800 1513 513.

Information can also be obtained from the swine flu information leaflet that has been sent to all households in the country. This leaflet can also be obtained electronically from the Department of Health's website at:

<http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/index.htm>

Further information is also available on the NHS direct and Health Protection Agency websites at:

[www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk](http://www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk)

I am most grateful for the support and understanding of parents. Obviously we will continue to review the situation and to act on the advice of the PCT.

Yours sincerely

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Headteacher