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St. Thomas Primary School  
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[www.stthomasprimaryschool.co.uk](http://www.stthomasprimaryschool.co.uk)

16/10/09

Dear Parent / Guardian

This letter contains the latest advice from the Local Authority to all schools and parents regarding swine flu. Although I am aware that there were a couple of cases of swine flu over the summer holidays I have not received notification of any new cases during this half term.

You need not be unduly concerned. Swine flu has been circulating in our communities for some time now and although unpleasant it is a mild disease and the vast majority of people who contract it, including children, experience only minor symptoms.

We have sought advice from the Health Protection Agency, NHS Devon and Devon County Council in dealing with this issue. The latest expert scientific advice is that individual school and nursery closures to stop the spread of disease are of limited benefit as swine flu is now circulating more freely in the local community.

National guidance on the issue is also clear. School and nursery closures are likely now only in exceptional circumstances or if safe staffing levels are not possible due to illness. Prophylaxis or preventative antiviral medicine to contain the infection is no longer recommended in schools.

The current national advice is to continue with "business as usual" and the school and I would be grateful if you would do all you can to support us in this.

#### Our advice to you

If your child shows no sign of the illness, they should continue to attend school.

However, children who have symptoms of flu-like illness should stay away from school and as far as possible not mix with others until they have recovered and are free of symptoms. This is to avoid spreading the infection. Siblings of infected children who show no symptoms should continue to attend school.

#### Sources of advice and support

If you think your child has swine flu you can contact the National Pandemic Flu Service on 0800 15 13 100 or at [www.pandemicflu.direct.gov.uk](http://www.pandemicflu.direct.gov.uk). They will check symptoms and may suggest a course of antiviral drug treatment.

This is designed to reduce the symptoms and aid recovery.

People with serious underlying health conditions should contact their doctor by telephone if they think they have swine flu. Pregnant women, children

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under one year of age, adults and children whose condition suddenly gets worse, or those whose condition is still getting worse after 5 days (if a child; 7 days for an adult), should also contact their GP by telephone.

If you have been advised that your child needs antiviral treatment, please let the school know as soon as possible.

It's important to point out that most people who have swine flu make a quick recovery at home. However, you should do what you can to prevent the infection from being spread to others by ensuring your family take simple precautions:

- Covering your nose and mouth when coughing or sneezing, using a tissue when possible.
- Disposing of dirty tissues promptly and carefully.
- Washing your hands frequently with soap and water to reduce the spread of the virus from your hands to your face or to other people.
- Cleaning hard surfaces (such as door handles) frequently using a normal cleaning product.
- Making sure your children follow this advice.

If you would like further advice please contact either NHS Direct on 0845 4647 or visit the Health Protection Agency website (<http://www.hpa.org.uk>), which includes advice for parents and carers of children.

Yours sincerely,

Justin Stone