

**4/5/09**

## Preparedness for H1N1

As the world is on alert about the H1N1 flu virus we are all showing concern about the possibilities of the virus spreading, and of course reviewing what we need to do at school should the flu virus spread into our own community.

Our school has a comprehensive policy, plan and procedures in the event of an epidemic or pandemic which is in-line with the Ministry of Health's guidelines for pandemics.

We strongly recommend to parents that the best possible source of advice regarding pandemic concerns and the preventative measures is either through your family doctor or the Ministry of Health. The Ministry of Health's website is [HYPERLINK "http://www.moh.govt.nz"](http://www.moh.govt.nz) [www.moh.govt.nz](http://www.moh.govt.nz). This link provides good information about the H1N1 virus, the symptoms to look out for, prevention steps and what to do if your child is sick. Further I advise parents that the school's Pandemic Action Plan, that provides the steps the school will take in respect to implementing the phases from preparedness through to implementing a recovery plan, if in fact the school needs to, can be found on the school's website located in the Community section – health corner.

However, it must be noted that all major decisions relating to a pandemic emergency come from the Ministry of Health and the school will be required to follow the procedures as directed. Decisions such as facility closures will be made in close consultation with district health authorities, the Ministry of Education and the Board of Trustees. The school's public health nurse [Cindy Eaton 383 6877] provides regular information and professional guidance for staff as requested or as needed. Should a pandemic occur, the school community will be kept informed of the school's pandemic procedures by way of school website communication and of course the media.

At school we teach the children about how best to prevent sickness. We aim to help your children understand that the frequent washing of hands with soap is an important prevention task. This year we have installed foaming soap dispensers in the children's toilets throughout the school to aid in hand washing. We also encourage all children to use tissues to cough and sneeze into, as this helps to stop the spread of a virus and we are advising children to stand well back from people who are sick.

Parents can help prevent the spread of winter ailments, by keeping your children at home when they are sick and not sending them back to school until they are well again. Sending sick children to school puts everyone at risk of catching the bugs that happen to be going around at the time.

Kevin Gooch  
Principal