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Co. Clare.

17th August 2009

Re: Influenza A (H1N1) - Swine Flu

Dear -----,

The return to centres of pupils and staff from the end of this month has posed concern with regard to the possibility of some pupils and staff presenting with symptoms of the Influenza A (H1N1) – Swine Flu.

Please find attached some documents prepared by the relevant authorities in the Health Service Executive (HSE) and the Department of Education and Science with regard to the procedures to be adopted in the event of having to deal with potential outbreaks of the flu.

1. Attachments

a) Information Sheet for Schools, Colleges and Centres of Education on Influenza A (H1N1)v.

This sheet outlines the actions to be taken in the event of students presenting with symptoms of the influenza. It advises that schools should remain open unless the Department of Public Health of the HSE advises closure.

b) Employers Guide to Plan for the Pandemic

The employers guide attached outlines steps employers should take particularly in relation to displaying posters, making tissues and hand sanitisers available in common areas.

c) HSE update on the Influenza A (H1N1)v.

This update contains the latest information available on the flu outbreak.

d) Sanitisers

There are some products available that meet the recommendations of the HSE in addressing Swine Flu. Schools should give consideration to the purchase of some sanitising equipment to deal with the situation. It will be necessary to consider the number required for each school and where such equipment might best be placed taking into account supervision issues. As most centres may find it necessary to purchase some sanitisation equipment a common purchase via the VEC is the recommended approach. The VEC has already taken steps to commence this process. Therefore please contact Martina Quinn before any decision to purchase is made.

2. Immunisation Programme

Please also note that the HSE has confirmed that it is currently in the process of putting a national immunisation programme in place. This programme will be confirmed in the coming weeks. The immunisation will be given to prevent the spread of influenza, immunisation teams will be contacting schools at local level to arrange administering the immunisation.

3. Information

The Department of Education and Science has posted the most up date advice available in relation to Influenza A on its website at www.education.ie

The Department has requested that all schools made aware of this material on the website and to monitor the website on an on-going basis, as updates will be posted as required.

The HSE also provides information and advice on the Flu at www.swineflu.ie

The websites of the Department of Health and Children www.dohc.ie and HSE www.hse.ie can also be accessed for will also provide a source of advice for schools, all websites are being updated as the situation evolves.

4 . Further Information

Further updates and information will be sent to you as it becomes available

The situation will be monitored on an ongoing basis and if necessary meetings will be held to discuss the approach to be taken in responding to the outbreak.

Should you require any further information please do not hesitate to contact Aobhan Haverty.

5. HSE Information Line

The HSE operates a 24 hour flu information line at

Freephone 1800 94 11 00

6. Acknowledgement

Please acknowledge the receipt of this letter and attachments or the accompanying e-mail by contacting Breda at 065 6866470 or at bkennedy@clarevec.ie.

Yours sincerely,

George O'Callaghan
Chief Executive Officer