



MEDIA UPDATE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Tuesday, May 5, 2009

SCHOOL CLOSED FOR INFLUENZA-LIKE ILLNESS

VICTORIA – The Chief Medical Health Officer for the Vancouver Island Health Authority has recommended a temporary closure of Hans Helgesen Elementary School in Metchosin due to increased incidents of influenza-like illness. To date, there have been no confirmed cases of H1N1 influenza virus (human swine flu) among students at this school.

Over the past two days, an estimated 25 – 30% of students have been absent from school with fever, cough and nausea. The Chief Medical Health Officer has ordered the school closed effective immediately in order to reduce the potential spread of illness, determine the cause and allow sufficient time for specimen analysis to be completed. The school will be closed until at least Friday May 8. An update will be provided as soon as new information is available.

Public health staff are testing a number of students. Testing will include an assessment for H1N1 influenza virus, the strain of influenza that has recently been causing illness in Mexico and other countries. There have been 6 lab-confirmed cases on Vancouver Island to date.

The Medical Health Officer recommends that students be monitored for influenza like illness, which includes fever, cough, sore throat, headache, muscle aches, nausea and weakness. If you have any questions about symptoms or illness call **HealthLink BC at 8-1-1** twenty-four hours a day/seven days a week to speak to a nurse.

Please see the Vancouver Island Health Authority web site for further information at:
www.viha.ca

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