The health and safety of students and staff is one of the priorities of Mesa Public Schools. Our school health offices and the district’s Health Services Department carefully monitor illnesses and comply with county and state health regulations.

While the influenza or flu season is generally associated with the winter season, sometimes students and staff continue to contract this illness throughout the spring. More recently, a strain of flu, known as “swine flu,” has been diagnosed in the U.S.

Swine flu is spread the same way as other flu viruses and has similar symptoms, according to the Arizona Department of Health Services. County health officials have reported that U.S. cases of swine flu have been mild and “not significantly” worse than other flu cases.

**Flu Symptoms**
- Fever, usually high
- Headache
- Extreme tiredness
- Dry cough
- Sore throat
- Runny or stuffy nose
- Muscle aches
- Stomach symptoms, such as nausea, vomiting and diarrhea, can also occur but are more common in children than adults.

**How Flu Spreads**
Flu viruses spread mainly from person to person through the coughing or sneezing of people infected with influenza. People may become infected by touching something with the flu virus on it and then touching their mouth or nose. Most healthy adults may be able to infect others beginning one day before symptoms develop and up to five days after becoming sick. You may be able to pass the flu virus to someone else before you know you are sick, as well as while you are sick.

**Prevention**
Prevention is the key to avoiding the flu and other infections. The custodians have products and a cleaning protocol that helps to fight the spread of contagious illnesses.

Because flu and other viruses are spread from an infected person to another by sneezing and coughing, school staff members talk with students about good health practices throughout the year.

The U.S. Center for Disease Control (CDC) offers the following tips for preventing infection:
1. Avoid close contact with people who are sick. When you are sick, keep your distance from others to protect them from getting sick too.
2. Stay home when you are sick. If possible, stay home from work, school and errands when you are sick. You will help prevent others from catching your illness.
3. Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when coughing or sneezing. It may prevent those around you from getting sick.
4. Washing your hands often will help protect you from germs.
5. Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth. Germs are often spread when a person touches something that is contaminated with germs and then touches his or her eyes, nose or mouth.
6. Practice other good health habits. Get plenty of sleep, be physically active, manage your stress, drink plenty of fluids and eat nutritious food.

**What Can Parents Do?**
If your child is sick, do not send them to school. Home is the best place for a sick child. If you are worried about your child’s symptoms or suspect they may have the flu, call your doctor.

Make sure the school office has updated emergency contact information. If your child becomes sick at school, the health office will contact you right away.

**Resources**

Online: The Mesa Public Schools Web site (click on “News”) has links to local, state and federal health agencies.

Phone: Call Community Information and Referral at (602) 263-8856 or 1-800-352-3792.