

Buckeye Local Schools takes the health and safety of our students very seriously, and we want to keep you informed of our efforts to plan for potential health issues, whether they be immediate or future concerns.

Many experts believe a worldwide outbreak (pandemic) of influenza will happen at some point in our future. Clearly, no one knows exactly when this may occur, but there are activities the school district and families can do now to prepare ourselves. A pandemic outbreak could cause the disruption of many utilities and other services, a short- or long-term cancellation of schools, as well as many other challenges. Taking steps to prepare ourselves will reduce how pandemic or other emergencies affect all of us.

### **3 steps to get ready for pandemic influenza:**

- 1. Create a Plan**
- 2. Prepare a Kit**
- 3. Listen for Information**

### **#1 Create a Plan (Prevention)**

#### **At home you can:**

- *Practice daily good health habits* that keep your body in shape to fight the flu: eat a balanced diet; drink plenty of water; get some form of exercise; and get plenty of sleep and rest.
- *Get the whole family a seasonal flu shot every year.*
- *Wash your hands with soap and water*, especially after coughing, sneezing, using the bathroom, and before eating or preparing food. Hands should be washed long enough to sing “Happy Birthday” twice. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- *Cover your coughs and sneezes* with your elbow or a tissue, not your hands. Don’t sneeze into your hands. Immediately throw away used tissues and wash your hands.
- *Stay away from people who are sick* as much as possible. If you are sick, stay home. *Do not drink from other peoples beverages.*

#### **Buckeye Local Schools:**

- *Staff and students are being trained* to practice hand washing and covering coughs and sneezes.
- *Encourage children to practice* and share what they have learned at school.

### **#2 Prepare a Kit (Preparedness)**

#### **At home you can:**

- *Stockpile enough emergency supplies* to last up to a week. Include drinking water, flashlights, batteries, a battery-powered radio, canned or dried food that does not need to be cooked, medicines, and first-aid and personal hygiene supplies.
- *Go to one of the web resources* listed on this flyer for a detailed list of emergency supplies.

#### **Buckeye Local Schools:**

- *Staff is prepared to educate students* if the Health Commissioner or other officials close schools in the interest of public safety. These plans are in place and instructions will be announced to parents and school staff should a long-term closure or dismissal occur.

- District staff members have received preparedness information, and key staff members are trained to ensure that the district is ready to address the needs of our families and students.
- Provide information through the district's web sites and other web sites.

### **#3 Listen for Information (Response and Recovery)**

#### **At Home:**

- Be aware that schools could be closed for several weeks or several months at a time during a pandemic. Schools may close and re-open many times over several years, depending on the severity of a pandemic outbreak.
- Your child will still be expected to continue learning and complete school work as long as he or she is well enough. You will receive detailed information from the district on how education will continue when a long-term school closure occurs.
- Follow the advice of public health officials through radio, television, newspapers and internet messages.

#### **Buckeye Local Schools:**

- District staff will communicate with parents, staff, and students throughout the pandemic to ensure that educational and other needs are being met.
- School nurses will remain available for questions and concerns regarding health issues throughout the emergency and health requirements that must be met for students to return to school once the emergency is over.
- School counselors will remain available to provide academic support, community resources, and access to grief counseling resources.
- When schools re-open, students will return gradually. Depending on the circumstances, the district may be required to open schools, a few at a time or to completely re-enroll students only after they have completed a health screening. Detailed information will be provided as it is available.
- The school district will continue to work with community partners and public agencies to coordinate and update plans.

#### **Resources**

- [www.ohiopandemicflu.gov](http://www.ohiopandemicflu.gov) – information on preparedness, seasonal vs. pandemic flu, prevention and preparedness, and explaining flu to children.
- [www.redcross.org/news/ds/panflu](http://www.redcross.org/news/ds/panflu) – information on home care of people with pan flu

