



ERRINGTON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

1390 Fairdowne Road, Errington, BC V0R 1V0
Phone: (250) 248-8446 Fax: (250) 954-1593
Website: <http://ees.sd69.bc.ca>

Principal: Mrs. Sheila Morrison

Email: smorrison@sd69.bc.ca

Principal: Ms. Jennifer Fuhrmann

Email: jfuhrmann@sd69.bc.ca

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Dear Parents,

As you know, we are well into the usual "Cold and Flu Season". We have been made aware of at least 2 EES students who are home with influenza (flu) and 1 reported case of strep throat. There are many different strains of Influenza and other illnesses. Individuals respond to illness in many different ways.

We monitor student attendance closely and during this time of year, illness is common. We would like to remind you that if your child shows signs of a communicable infection, it needs to be diagnosed and treated by a medical provider. Please contact us at the school if your child has a communicable infection so that we can work with you on determining if and how long your child needs to be absent from school. We use a guide provided by Island Health to help us prevent the spread of common childhood illnesses. When calling in your child's absence, we also appreciate knowing what kind of illness is causing them to be away. We track patterns and are required to report to Island Health if there is an unusual number of absences due to illness.

This is a good time to remind you of the importance of good hygiene and handwashing. Please see the following link to the EES website for further information (from Island Health) about Routine Practices, and Handwashing:

<https://www.sd69.bc.ca/school/EES/parents/Newsletters/2019-2020/Routine%20Practices%20and%20Hand%20Washing.pdf> .

If you would like further information or would like to determine whether or not your child should be taken to the doctor, there are 2 resources available: Island Health (Parksville office, 250-947-8242) has an Influenza option. HealthLink BC has a 24-Hour Nurse Hotline (dial 8-1-1).

Thank you for your consideration.

Yours truly,

Mrs. Sheila Morrison
Principal

Influenza

What is it?

Influenza (the flu) is a respiratory illness caused by Influenza A and Influenza B viruses. Influenza season in Canada is usually November through April.

Signs and symptoms of influenza may include:

- Fever
- Cough, sneezing, runny nose
- Headache
- Body aches and pain
- Exhaustion
- Sore throat
- Nausea, vomiting, and diarrhea are more common in children than adults.

Influenza is most serious for babies less than 2 years of age, adults over 65 years of age, and people with chronic illnesses.

How is it spread?

- Breathing in droplets containing influenza virus that have been coughed or sneezed into the air by an infected person.
- Direct contact with the hands of an infected person (e.g., shaking hands, holding hands).
- Contact with an object contaminated with the influenza virus (e.g., toys, furniture, doorknob, taps, computer keyboard, telephone, shopping cart handle).



Influenza viruses can live for several hours on hard surfaces. Caregivers may get the flu virus on their hands by assisting a child to use a tissue and then spread it to other children by touching them.

Incubation period

Usually 1 – 4 days from contact with an infected person

When is the person contagious?

Usually from 1 day before to 5 days after symptoms develop (up to 7 days after symptoms develop for young children)

How to prevent spread of the illness to other children.



Child may attend school or child care if they feel well enough to take part in activities.

Carefully dispose of (or clean, if applicable) articles contaminated with nose and throat secretions of an infected child.

For more information, refer to [Routine Practices](#).

Handwashing is the best way to stop the spread of infections.



Influenza vaccine is recommended and provided free for:

- ***children 6 to 23 months of age***
- ***household contacts and those providing regular child care to children 0 to 23 months of age***
- ***children and adults with a health condition that places them at high risk for influenza.***