



NEWS RELEASE

DECEMBER 17, 2019 (Shakopee, MN) - Shakopee Public Schools is continuing to monitor the number of flu-related illnesses and symptoms among students and staff.

Recently, two schools reached a significant level of concern. On Monday, West Middle School had more than 300 student absences. Last Wednesday, Sun Path Elementary reported 100 student absences.

School districts are required to contact the Minnesota Department of Health when 5% of the student body is absent and reporting "influenza-like illnesses", or ILI. The MDH expects school district reporting of ILI to include the following: influenza, influenza-like symptoms, **and all other unspecified illnesses**.

At Sun Path Elementary, there was a large one day increase in the number of student absences related to influenza-like illness. Since the large increase on day one, ILI absences have remained fairly constant. It appears a similar pattern is happening at West Middle School. Yesterday, there was a large increase in the number of ILI absences reported at West. Today's absence numbers are similar to those reported yesterday.

Other schools in the district are currently reporting what would be considered typical influenza episodes, with numbers of absences that are currently much lower than those reported at Sun Path and West. ILI reports have been made to the Department of Health as Sweeney Elementary, Red Oak Elementary, and East Middle School are currently reporting absence rates a bit over 5% of their student enrollments.

Here is the breakdown of student absences counted as ILI being reported as of 11:30 a.m. Tuesday, December 17:

- West Middle School: 29.12%
- Sun Path Elementary School: 19.76%
- Sweeney Elementary School: 8.12%
- East Middle School: 6.86%
- Red Oak Elementary School: 5.85%
- Jackson Elementary: 4.78%
- Eagle Creek Elementary: 4.67%
- Shakopee High School: 3.34%
- Tokata Learning Center: 3.19%

The school district is closely monitoring the situation, and hoping the situation has, or is close to peaking in all impacted buildings. If things worsen, the district may need to take further actions in an effort to keep students and staff healthy and safe.

Shakopee schools encourages parents and guardians to keep their students home if they are exhibiting flu-related symptoms such as fever, dry cough, sore throat, headache, extreme tiredness, and body aches. These symptoms usually begin suddenly and may be severe enough to stop your daily activities.

The Department of Health offers the following guidance to protect one's self and others:

- Get vaccinated.
- Avoid being around others who are sick.
- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze, or cough or sneeze into your sleeve.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water or an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- Protect infants by not exposing them to large crowds or sick family members when flu is in your community.
- Do not share drinking cups and straws.
- Frequently clean commonly touched surfaces (door knobs, refrigerator handles, phones, water faucets).

Additionally, the district's custodial staff has increased their efforts to frequently clean commonly touched surfaces in our schools.

As of now, all schools will continue to follow their building schedules for the rest of the week.

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