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Dear Parents and Students

Update on H1N1

Following on from last week's letter regarding a student in a Year 8 class having H1N1, I am writing to inform you that the sibling of the pupil, who is in Year 11 JH, has also tested positive. We were recently informed of this and the family had once again, taken the proactive step of not sending their child to school since Tuesday, 24th November, which undoubtedly minimised the possibility of other members of our community becoming ill.

We made the decision to not close the Tutor Group that the pupil is in because he had not been at school for seven days when we were informed of the case. I am pleased to report that both students are recovering well and will return to school on Sunday 6th December. In both instances, these cases were not confirmed by a government laboratory which is part of the criteria that various Ministries use for closing classes in a school. I would like to thank the entire family for acting so responsibly by keeping their children at home when they were ill.

Please rest assured that we are doing our utmost to protect your child/ren's well being and cater to their academic needs. As a school, we have implemented the following precautions:

- We have banned indoor public gatherings. All assemblies including the humanities quiz on the last day of term have been cancelled. Classes will run as normal during the last day of term.
- Unfortunately, we have to postpone our annual 'Celebration at Christmas' until spring time. However, we will still be taking part in the Christmas Carols at the British Embassy on Wednesday 9th December.
- All teachers are sending pupils that display any symptoms of illness to the school Doctor, who in turn is sending them home if there is the slightest concern of flu symptoms.
- We have sanitizer in all classrooms and our building areas are cleaned and sanitised thoroughly several times a day as an additional precaution.
- We have a supply of masks on-site. Anybody that has any symptoms of illness that is entering the medical office will be required to wear a mask.

Update on H1N1 procedures for families

We have been in contact with various experts and authorities in order to keep abreast of the latest developments regarding H1N1. As a result we would like to alert you to the following:

- Those deemed to be most at risk are people that are under the age of five, over the age of sixty-five, obese, pregnant or have other health related issues.
- People that are diagnosed with H1N1 are no longer required to be admitted to any government institutions. The advice we received is that being isolated at home is the best course of action. If flu like symptoms continue for greater than three days, then medical support is recommended, which in many cases can occur over the telephone.
- In most instances, symptoms are mild and staying at home in bed while drinking plenty of fluids will be sufficient to overcome the flu.
- If anybody in your immediate family is suspected, or does indeed have H1N1, please refrain from sending any of your children to school until an incubation period of seven days is passed.
- There are various guidelines which exist regarding how long to stay away from work/school during periods of illness. We are following the most conservative of the recommendations and are insisting that when showing signs of flu symptoms, students should avoid school for seven days.

Tamiflu is only available at Ministry of Health approved hospitals. I have attached a list of these hospitals.

It is possible to take a quick test at the Asslam Hospital in Maadi, where a throat swab can identify whether a flu infection is Influenza A or Influenza B (H1N1 is a type of Influenza A). This test provides results within one hour.

It is also possible to be tested for H1N1 itself by Dr. Wafa on Road 200, 2B in Maadi. Her phone number is 012- 318 1995. The cost of the test is 800 LE. If the test is completed before 12.00 noon, then results are available during the same day. The results of these tests are not reported to the government.

In terms of advice and information, I am particularly grateful to our own Doctor Rania who has been very busy in keeping us updated with information and looking after the health care of our student population. Additionally, I would like to thank Ms. Deborah Hambric from BP. She has been very supportive in providing us with guidance.

I recommend visiting the following web-sites for further information:

<http://www.who.int/csr/disease/swineflu/en/index.html> and <http://www.cdc.gov/H1N1FLU/>

A final note that the regular washing of hands and good respiratory etiquette are the best ways of preventing the spread of viral infection.

I wish everybody good health throughout the remaining days of term and beyond.

Yours sincerely

Martin Van Rijswijk
Principal

