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Public Health Department**

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Dear Parent

Seasonal Flu – Advice to protect children – *Catch it, Bin it, Kill it 2011.*

As you probably know, seasonal flu is circulating in Jersey and H1N1 – the swine flu virus – is the main circulating flu virus this winter. Fortunately, there have been only a small number of cases of confirmed H1N1 so far here in Jersey, and all have recovered well. Our efforts are focused on encouraging people most at risk of serious complications of flu to be immunised – those with certain medical conditions and also pregnant women. It is now time to remind *everyone* in the wider population how they can protect themselves from flu infection.

Once again, schools have a crucial role to play. Some revision from 2009 - this is because viruses can spread very easily between children and then on to their families. Although more than 8 out of 10 of our children received the H1N1 vaccine in late 2009, its protective effect will have reduced to some extent. School outbreaks are less likely than in 2009, but the possibility cannot be ruled out and school closures may need to be considered. We are keeping the situation under close review. To help slow the spread of the virus, all schools will be displaying posters and other materials in classrooms about flu. The posters are part of a wider public education campaign which will focus on encouraging islanders to reduce infection by:

- Covering their nose and mouth when coughing or sneezing, using a tissue whenever possible and disposing of used tissues safely and quickly
- Washing hands frequently with soap and water to reduce the spread of the virus
- Cleaning hard surfaces (e.g. door handles) frequently using a normal cleaning product

It would be extremely helpful if you could encourage your child to follow this advice at home.

In addition, and most importantly, if your son or daughter is unwell with flu-like symptoms - especially if they have fever (raised temperature) – please look after him or her at home until well again. Please do not risk infecting others by sending an ill child to school. If any child comes to school unwell with flu symptoms, or becomes unwell during the school day, the school will contact you to take them home. Please ensure the school has up to date contact details for you.

Thank you for your help and understanding. Further information about flu is available on www.gov.je/flu

Yours sincerely

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