

## **Pandemic Influenza Information Sheet**

With the threat of an influenza outbreak in the news, we felt it was important to share some preventative information with community members, parents and faculty and staff.

### **DEFINITION**

Pandemic influenza is a global outbreak of disease that occurs when a new influenza A virus appears in humans, causes serious illness and then spreads easily from person to person worldwide. Three major influenza pandemics swept the globe in the 20th century causing millions of deaths, and no one knows for sure when the next pandemic may strike.

Influenza epidemics happen nearly every year (often called seasonal influenza), and cause an average of 36,000 deaths annually in the United States.

### **STEPS OF ACTION FOR STAFF**

Faculty and staff members have been provided with the following infection control strategies to help minimize the transfer of infection in the classroom. The same strategies could be applied at home.

1. Hand hygiene – exp. Frequent hand washing and using hand sanitizer.
2. Environmental controls – exp. Washing or spraying disinfectant on common items students come in contact with such as desks, door knobs, pencil sharpeners, and drinking fountains.
3. Respiratory etiquette – exp. Coughing into elbow, using a tissue
4. Social Distancing – exp. Separate infected student(s) as soon as symptoms appear, space desks a distance apart

Parents and community members are encouraged to practice voluntary home isolation of sick and treatment with antiviral.