

Dear Parents,

There has been much in the media about H1N1 Influenza and more recently about influenza and educational institutions. The flu season will last through the fall and winter. More than one kind of flu virus will be spreading this season, including seasonal flu and the 2009 H1N1 flu. Thompson Rivers University has prepared for the potential impact that pandemic influenza may have on the 2009-2010 academic year. The university has the following priorities for this coming school year:

1. To preserve and protect the health, safety, and wellbeing of all members of the University community.
2. To continue to operate as normally as possible to minimize the disruption of instruction, research, and the day to day activities in the workplace.
3. To provide responsive communication to all members of the University community during and post H1N1 influenza.

We are working closely with the public health officials from the Interior Health Authority to monitor flu conditions and make decisions about the best steps to take concerning our institution. We will keep you updated with new information as it becomes available to us.

For now, we are doing everything we can to keep the university operating as usual. Since the influenza virus is spread easily from person to person (e.g. through coughing and sneezing) and can survive on some surfaces for several hours or days. It is important to follow these simple steps to minimize the spread of the influenza virus and to keep the university community healthy:

- **Practice good hygiene.** Wash hands frequently with soap and water, especially after coughing, sneezing, or contacting high-touch surfaces (e.g. doorknobs, elevator buttons, tables, and keyboards).
- **Practice respiratory etiquette.** Use a tissue when coughing or sneezing to prevent the spread of respiratory droplets as this is the main way that flu is spread from person to person. If a tissue is not available then cough or sneeze into your elbow or shoulder, not your hands.
- **Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.** The flu virus is spread this way.
- **Self-isolate (stay home) if sick with flu like symptoms.** Remain home, except to seek medical care, for 7 days from the onset of symptoms.
- **Stay away** from social gatherings (e.g. concerts, sporting events, or hanging out with friends) if sick with flu like symptoms.

If there are any significant changes related to the operation of the university during the 2009-2010 academic year these messages will be communicated through the university e-mail system, the TRU webpage, and through local media.

At this time, there is no cause for concern. Health care professionals are; however, encouraging you to **stay informed, stay healthy, and be prepared.**