October 26, 2009

Dear Student:

It has come to our attention that you have been absent from classes due to an illness. With this being flu season Kaskaskia College has taken effective steps to inform students and staff on what to do when students are faced with these circumstances. As you may know, flu can be spread easily from person to person. Therefore, we are taking steps to prevent the spread of flu at Kaskaskia College for as long as possible, and want to inform you of these steps so that you can help us to limit the spread of flu on campus.

We are working closely with the local and state health department 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 our institution operating as usual. Here are a few things you can do to help:

- **Practice good hand hygiene** by washing your hands with soap and water, especially after coughing or sneezing. Alcohol-based hand cleaners also are effective.
- **Practice respiratory etiquette** by covering your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. If you don’t have a tissue, cough or sneeze into your elbow or shoulder, not into your hands. Avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth; germs are spread this way.
- **Know the signs and symptoms of the flu.** A fever is a temperature taken with a thermometer that is equal to or greater than 100 degrees Fahrenheit or 38 degrees Celsius. Look for possible signs of fever: if the person feels very warm, has a flushed appearance, or is sweating or shivering.
- **Stay home if you have flu or flu-like illness for at least 24 hours after you no longer have a fever** (100 degrees Fahrenheit or 38 degrees Celsius) or signs of a fever (have chills, feel very warm, have a flushed appearance, or are sweating). This should be determined without the use of fever-reducing medications (any medicine that contains ibuprofen or acetaminophen). Don’t go to class or work. Contact your instructors to inform them of your illness as soon as you are able to do so.
- **Talk with your health care providers about whether you should be vaccinated for seasonal flu.** Also if you are at higher risk for flu complications from 2009 H1N1 flu, you should consider getting the H1N1 vaccine when it becomes available. People at higher risk for 2009 H1N1 flu complications include pregnant women and people with chronic medical conditions (such as asthma, heart disease, or diabetes). For more information about priority groups for vaccination, visit [www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/vaccination/acip.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/vaccination/acip.htm).
If this year’s flu season becomes more severe, we may take the following additional steps to prevent the spread of the virus:

- **Allow students, faculty, and staff at higher risk for complications to stay home.** These students, faculty, and staff should make this decision in consultation with their health care provider.
- **Find ways to increase social distances** (the space between people) in classrooms such as moving desks farther apart, leaving empty seats between students, holding outdoor classes, and using distance learning methods.
- **A flexible attendance policy will be in effect.** Students who are absent from class must provide the instructor with a doctor’s note in order to receive forgiveness for class time missed. Students will be given additional time to make up assignments as approved by the instructor.
- **Extend the time sick students, faculty, or staff stay home or in their residence.** During severe flu conditions sick people should stay home for at least 7 days, even if they feel better sooner. Those who are still sick after 7 days should continue to stay home until at least 24 hours after symptoms have gone away. Symptoms of flu include fever or chills and cough or sore throat. In addition, symptoms of flu can include runny nose, body aches, headache, tiredness, diarrhea, or vomiting.
- **Suspend classes.** This decision will be made together with local and state public health officials. The length of time classes should be suspended will depend on the goal of suspending classes as well as the severity and extent of illness.

For more information about flu in our community and what our institution is doing, visit our H1N1 Web Site at [www.kaskaskia.edu/Security/FluInfo.aspx](http://www.kaskaskia.edu/Security/FluInfo.aspx)

For the most up-to-date information on flu, visit [www.flu.gov](http://www.flu.gov), or call 1-800-CDC-INFO (232-4636).

We will notify you of any additional changes to our institution’s strategy to prevent the spread of flu on our campus.

Sincerely,

Sedgwick Harris  
Vice-President of Student Services