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Director of Health Services

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December 16, 2016

Dear Parents/Guardians,

We wanted you to be aware that the University of Missouri in Columbia is experiencing an outbreak of the infectious disease commonly called mumps. According to the Missouri Department of Health & Senior Services, as of December 14, 2016, there have been 228 cases of the mumps among persons associated with the university. There is concern that students dispersing to their homes across the state during winter break may bring the mumps virus into our community also.

**What is mumps and what are the symptoms?** Mumps is an infection caused by the mumps virus. Mumps is spread by mucus or droplets from the nose or throat of an infected person, usually when a person coughs or sneezes. Surfaces of items (e.g. toys, desks) can also spread the virus if someone who is sick touches them without washing their hands, and someone else then touches the same surface and then rubs their eyes, mouth, nose etc. The most common symptoms of the mumps are fever, headache, muscle aches, tiredness and loss of appetite followed by the onset of swelling the salivary glands close to the jaw or under the ears. Symptoms usually appear 14 – 18 days after exposure to the virus, but may take as long as 25 days to develop.

**Who can get mumps?** Anyone who is not immune from either previous mumps infection or from vaccination can get mumps. The two dose MMR vaccine, which is required for school entry, prevents most, but not all, mumps infections. The CDC reports that the MMR vaccine is approximately 88 percent effective at preventing the disease. Of those people who do get mumps, up to half have very mild or no symptoms, and therefore do not even know they were infected with mumps.

**How do I protect my family?** The mumps vaccine (a component of the MMR vaccine), is the best way to prevent mumps. If you are not sure if you or your child has received the mumps vaccine, you should contact your primary care provider. Other things people can do to prevent mumps and other infections is to wash hands well and often with soap and water, and to teach children to wash their hands too. Eating utensils should not be shared, and surfaces that are frequently touched (toys, doorknobs, tables, counters, etc.) should also be regularly cleaned with soap and water, or with cleaning wipes.

**What should I do if symptoms develop?** If your child or anyone in your household develops symptoms of mumps you should notify your primary care provider immediately. If your primary care provider confirms a case of the mumps, please contact your school nurse as soon as possible. Persons with mumps should remain at home for five days after the swelling of the glands began.

**What is the treatment for mumps?** There is no specific treatment. Supportive care should be given as needed. If someone becomes very ill, they should seek medical attention. If someone seeks medical attention, they should call their doctor in advance so that they don't have to sit in the waiting room for a long time and possibly infect other patients. Fevers in children should not

be treated with products containing aspirin, as use of these products with viral infections may result in a serious condition called Reye's Syndrome.

**If I was exposed to someone with mumps, what should I do?** Not everyone who is exposed to someone with mumps will get sick. If a person has been vaccinated with two doses of mumps vaccine, it is very unlikely they will get mumps. However, if a person hasn't been vaccinated, it is possible they could get sick and they should watch for symptoms of mumps. Additionally, if a person hasn't been vaccinated, this is a good time to get another dose of mumps vaccine, and to make sure that everyone else in the house where they live is also vaccinated. Mumps vaccine has not been shown to be effective in preventing disease after exposure, but vaccination of exposed susceptible persons will reduce the risk of disease from possible future exposures. If symptoms develop (generally 16-18 days after exposure), the person should not go to school or work for at least nine days and should contact their medical provider.

If you would like more information about the mumps virus or the MMR vaccine, please visit the CDC web site at <http://www.cdc.gov/mumps/>. More information may also be found in the DHSS Health Advisory "Mumps Cases in Central Missouri" released on November 18, 2016 at <http://health.mo.gov/emergencies/ert/alertsadvisories/pdf/advisory111816.pdf> and "Update 1: Mumps Outbreak in Missouri" released on December 8, 2016 at <http://health.mo.gov/emergencies/ert/alertsadvisories/pdf/hu12816.pdf>.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me or your school nurse. Thank you so much for helping us keep our schools a healthy place for all students to learn.

Sincerely,



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