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The Swine Flu outbreak in neighboring countries and in several U.S. states has many individuals wondering what steps they can take to proactively protect themselves against possible infection.

Here are some steps that may be taken to help ward off this virus:

1. If you are ill, stay at home. This applies to both students and staff. Follow the policies established for illness, fever, vomiting and diarrhea.
2. Post signage requiring handwashing both prior to entering and exiting a school building. This will keep germs from home outside and germs from school inside.
3. Implement designated handwashing times. It isn't enough to remind students to wash hands, they need to be monitored to ensure that washing is accomplished.
4. In "grown up" or staff areas, place hand sanitizer inside the doorway with signage instructing use.
5. Implement an accelerated disinfection schedule and assign someone to oversee the hourly disinfecting of desks, tabletops, and other nonporous surfaces with a solution of 1 part bleach to 10 parts water. **This solution must be made daily as it will loose its efficacy within 24 hours.
6. This particular strain of flu is characterized by an individual being contagious up to 48 hours prior to symptoms and continuing to potentially be contagious for 7 days after symptom onset. It is very important to NOT self diagnose and self treat at home – but to seek early evaluation and treatment from a primary care provider or hospital emergency room.

Thank you.