

November 4, 2009

Dear Parent/Guardian:

I am writing to update you on the status of influenza-like illnesses (ILI) in our schools. Like many other districts in the state and region, we are beginning to see an increase in the number of students absent due to some type of flu-like illness. In many instances, it is being categorized by health care providers as H1N1. Regardless if it is or not, it is being treated as though it is.

Our school nurses, administrators and I continue to be contact with the New Hampshire Health and Human Services Department. As recently as Monday, November 2, I participated in a webinar on this issue. Public health officials continue to stress the importance of precautionary measures and they cite the following as basic steps:

- ❖ Wash your hands frequently
- ❖ Always cover your cough by coughing into your sleeve
- ❖ Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth
- ❖ Do not share drinking/eating utensils
- ❖ Avoid contact with ill persons if possible
- ❖ Clean frequently used surfaces
- ❖ Monitor your own health
- ❖ Stay home if you are sick

Of course it is critically important that parents are available or have made arrangements to pick up their ill children at school when they are contacted to do so. It is equally important that parents keep children home if ill.

In the webinar, Dr. Jose Montero, Director of Public Health Services, again stated that he is not recommending school closings nor the cancellation of large scale school or inter-scholastic events. However, it is very important for children and staff who are sick to stay home from school, as well as from special events such as dances, birthday parties, and other public gatherings. Children or staff who are ill should stay home, unless seeking medical care, until they have no fever for at least 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medications (e.g., Tylenol, Ibuprofen).

We continue to take a number of precautionary measures to prevent the spread of the flu. Our custodial staff uses an antiviral, antiseptic spray to clean commonly touched areas; classrooms with high absenteeism rates are sprayed with Lysol disinfectant; water fountains are cleaned twice daily; and all soap dispensers and Purell (alcohol-based hand cleaner) dispensers are maintained daily. Parents are notified immediately if their child reports to the health room ill. Those that do report are kept in the health office and given a mask to wear until they go home. The absentee rate is monitored daily.

I reiterate that students who are ill are encouraged to stay out of school. Sick students will not be penalized for staying home. Students who miss school due to illness will be given ample time to make up missed work.

I will continue to work with district personnel to closely monitor the daily status of this situation and, based on information and direction from the New Hampshire Division of Public Health, will act accordingly. If you seek additional information, please contact me or the school health office or visit the state website: [http://www.dhhs.state.nh.us/DHHS/DHHS Site/swineflu.htm](http://www.dhhs.state.nh.us/DHHS/DHHS%20Site/swineflu.htm).

Sincerely,

Phillip G. McCormack, Ed.D.  
Superintendent of Schools

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