

June 9, 2009

Dear Parents and Staff,

As part of our continuing responsibility to keep you informed about the health and safety of our students and staff as we come close to the end of the school year, we would like to give you an update on the status of the impact of the H1N1 virus in our schools. We have had a number of students and staff who have demonstrated symptoms associated with the H1N1 virus. In some buildings, absences have been fluctuating, although not in a pattern that is inconsistent with the winter flu season. Because the State rarely tests now for H1N1, there have been only some cases of confirmed H1N1 virus. Fortunately, those affected have not had severe cases and recover as expected. Other students and staff have reported their symptoms to their doctors. We have not had an absentee rate that suggests closing any of our schools.

Flu-like symptoms include fever greater than 100° F plus body aches, runny or stuffy nose, and sore throat. The virus is spread by human contact. It does not survive on surfaces. Therefore, there are no special cleaning measures that can be taken that would be effective in stopping the spread of the virus. Consistent with recommendations from the Center for Disease Control and Prevention and the Norwalk Dept. of Health, we continue to emphasize advising your children:

- When you cough or sneeze, cover your nose and mouth with a tissue or your sleeve (if you do not have a tissue). Throw used tissues in a trashcan.
- After you cough or sneeze, wash your hands with soap and water, or use an alcohol-based hand gel.
- Do not share drinking cups or food.

Provide your child with a small package of tissues to carry and a small bottle of hand sanitizer, if possible. If you think your child is ill with flu, he/she should avoid close contact with others as much as possible. Call or see your doctor.

According to the latest CDC recommendation, if your child has experienced these symptoms, please keep your child at home until your child has been free of the symptoms for at least twenty-four hours. If your child has actually been diagnosed with Influenza A, your child should remain home for seven days after diagnosis/symptoms appear.

We continue to work closely with the Norwalk Department of Public Health. As we have shared with you before, our nurses and administrators are vigilant in monitoring the reasons for absence and sharing any information with us that requires further investigation. Parents have also been responsible in advising us if their child has become ill with flu like symptoms.

You may get more information from the following websites:

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: www.cdc.gov/flu/swine
- Department of Public Health: www.ct.gov/ctfluwatch/swineflu
- Norwalk Dept. of Health: www.norwalkct.org (scroll to Emergency Management link)

I hope this information has been helpful. Again, we will keep you informed as necessary.

Sincerely,



Salvatore J. Corda, Ph.D
Superintendent of Schools

