



October 20, 2009

Dear Parents and Guardians:

On Monday, October 19, 2009 I received notification that a member of the Clinton school community tested positive for H1N1 influenza. I have discussed the situation with Mary Jane Engle, Director of Health of the Connecticut River Area Health District (CRAHD) and our school-nursing supervisor.

We continue to work closely with the State Department of Public Health and the Connecticut River Area Health District (CRAHD) to monitor flu conditions and make decisions about the best steps to take concerning our schools. We will keep you updated with new information as it becomes available. According to Dr. Matt Cartter, the State Epidemiologist, it is too early for seasonal flu, so it is safe to assume that flu-like symptoms that have no other known cause are H1N1.

For most people the symptoms and severity of H1N1 flu continue to be mild. However, flu can be easily spread from person to person. Therefore, we are taking steps to reduce the spread of flu in our schools. Our goal is to keep the schools open to students and functioning in a normal manner during this flu season. But, we need your help to do this.

There are important actions that you can take now to help keep you, your child and family well during the flu season. Here are a few things you can do to help.

- Teach your children to wash their hands often with soap and water. You can set a good example by doing this yourself.
- Teach your children not to share personal items like drinks, food or unwashed utensils, and to cover their coughs and sneezes with a tissue, their elbow, arm or sleeve instead of their hand.
- Know the signs and symptoms of the flu. Symptoms of the flu include fever (100 degrees Fahrenheit or greater), cough, sore throat, a runny or stuffy nose, body aches, headache, and feeling very tired. Some people may also vomit or have diarrhea.
- Keep sick children at home for at least 24 hours after they no longer have fever or do not have signs of fever, without using fever-reducing medicine. Keeping children with a fever at home will reduce the number of people who may get infected.
- Do not send children to school if they are sick. Any children who are determined to be sick while at school will be sent home.
- Make arrangements for other trusted family or friends to care for your child if they are sick and you cannot be home with them. This plan should not involve possible exposure to other well children.

The health district's website, www.crahd.org, will be the primary site to obtain the most current information about the flu and flu clinics. We will also post information on the Clinton Public Schools website www.clintonpublic.org.

Thank you for your cooperation and vigilance in maintaining good hygienic practices and in keeping your children home if they exhibit flu-like symptoms. Your efforts are greatly appreciated. If you have additional questions or concerns please do not hesitate to contact Mary Jane Engle or me. I can be reached at 664-6500 and Mary Jane can be reached at 661-3300.

Sincerely,

Jack Cross,
Superintendent of Schools

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