

# WAPPINGERS

Central School District



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JUDITH BELFIELD, ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT FOR CURRICULUM & INSTRUCTION

September 3, 2009

Dear Parents and Guardians,

As you have heard in the news, there is concern that there may be an elevated H1N1 Influenza (swine flu) outbreak in schools this fall. Therefore, we are taking steps to reduce the spread of flu in the Wappingers Central School District. We want to keep our schools open to students and functioning in a normal manner during this flu season. **However, we need your help to do this.**

We are working closely with the Dutchess County Department of Health to monitor flu conditions and make decisions about the best steps to take concerning the operation of our schools. We will keep you updated with new information as it becomes available.

The flu can be easily spread from person to person. **Here are a few things you can do to help prevent the flu from spreading.**

- **Teach your children to wash their hands** often with soap and water or an alcohol-based hand rub. 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 tissues. Teach them to cover up their coughs or sneezes using the elbow, arm or sleeve instead of the hand when a tissue is unavailable. Remind your child to wash their hands after using a tissue.
- **Know the signs and symptoms of the flu.** Symptoms of the flu include fever (100 degrees Fahrenheit, 37.8 degrees Celsius 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 drugs. 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*. Please make sure that your child's school has up-to-date emergency contact information.
- **Proactively plan for child care if your child gets sick.** If necessary, find alternative child care arrangements. Work with your child's teacher or guidance counselor for homework or missed assignments if your child is absent from school.

In our schools, we are emphasizing the importance of hand washing and respiratory etiquette with our faculty, staff and students. We will remain vigilant in our efforts to clean surfaces that have frequent hand contact.

For more information about the flu, visit [www.flu.gov](http://www.flu.gov) or call 1-800-CDC-INFO for the most current information about the flu. We will continue to post any necessary updates on our website. We will notify you of any additional changes to our District's strategy to prevent the spread of flu.

Sincerely,

Judith Belfield  
Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction  
Chair, District Crisis Team