

WAPPINGERS

Central School District



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JAMES PARLA, SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS



October 7, 2009

Dear Parents/Guardians:

The purpose of this letter is to keep you informed regarding the potential H1N1 influenza health challenge the entire nation may be facing. Although we previously posted a letter on our website about this, I want to continue to emphasize the importance of remaining focused on this issue.

Our district has received much information from the Dutchess County Department of Health and the Center for Disease Control (CDC). Our nurses have the necessary procedures in place to address this issue. We shall make every effort to respond to changing circumstances and to call upon experts to assist us as needed. Please note the following:

1. Students and staff will be strongly encouraged to stay home when sick. According to the CDC, those with flu like symptoms should stay home for at least 24 hours after they no longer have a fever, or signs of a fever, without the use of fever reducing medicines. They should stay home even if they are using antiviral drugs. Any children who are determined to be sick while at school will be sent home.
2. Our desire to communicate quickly with parents reinforces the need for emergency information to be kept updated.
3. We will make every effort to separate students and staff identified as symptomatic from others. If necessary, this might involve a separate section of a room that will be set-off as much as possible. The CDC recommends that they wear a surgical mask while waiting to go home, if possible. The district has supplied each nurse's office with masks.
4. All school bathrooms will be checked to ensure an ample supply of hand soap and water. We have also provided hand sanitizers in numerous locations in each school and we are in the process of expanding those locations. We will encourage hand washing in classrooms as much as possible using soap and water, if available, and the use of hand sanitizers under adult supervision.
5. Our facilities department will check water fountains to ensure they are working properly and if not, they will be shut down for repairs. You may send your child to school with bottled water. Please check the student handbook for guidelines regarding bottled beverages in your child's school as each level's guidelines differ.
6. All schools will practice routine and *non-routine* cleaning of classrooms and common areas. School staff will routinely clean areas that students and staff touch often with appropriate cleaners. Our transportation department also cleans the regularly-touched

surfaces on the buses. Both departments use a product that is safe for the environment and also destroys a broad range of germs and viruses including H1N1 or swine flu.

7. All schools will reinforce the importance of respiratory etiquette. Students will be reminded to cover noses and mouths with a tissue when coughing or sneezing.
8. We ask that you know the signs and symptoms of the flu. They are: fever (100 degrees Fahrenheit); cough, sore throat, a runny or stuffy nose, body aches, headache and feeling very tired. Some people may also vomit and/or have diarrhea.

In summary, we will continue to collect information from all health agencies and disseminate it to the school community as it becomes available to us. Please check our website periodically for any new information.

Just as we will confer with health experts, we encourage families to do so as well. For more information about the flu, visit www.flu.gov or call 1-800-CDC-INFO. All health decisions regarding your children should be made in consultation with your family physician.

Sincerely,

James Parla
Superintendent of Schools