

The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Public Schools

Evergreen Avenue and Cedar Street
SCOTCH PLAINS, NEW JERSEY 07076

Margaret W. Hayes, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools

Phone: (908) 232-6161, ext. 40

September 10, 2009

Dear SP-F Parents & Guardians,

As we begin the new school year, please be advised that the Scotch Plains-Fanwood School District continues to work with the Union County Health Department, the Center for Disease Control (CDC) and other school districts to prepare for the possible increase in the Novel H1N1 influenza (swine flu) that is anticipated this fall.

Important recommendations from the Center for Disease Control (CDC) issued on August 5, 2009 about the amount of time persons with flu-like illnesses should be away from others, stipulates that those with symptoms and illnesses **should remain home at least 24 hours after they are free of fever and without the use of fever reducing medications**. Subsequently, we cannot emphasize enough the importance of keeping your child home if he or she is not feeling well and until recovery is complete. Students should not be sent back to school unless all symptoms of their illness have disappeared. They should be fever-free for 24 hours and they should not have vomited or had diarrhea in the last 24 hours. An extra day of rest is very beneficial as it speeds up recovery and prevents the spread of influenza or other respiratory illnesses to others.

It is important to us in the Scotch Plains-Fanwood Public Schools that we keep our students and staff safe and healthy. We continue to receive health updates from the New Jersey Department of Education and the New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services regarding changes in protocols and procedures. We will continue to share information that we receive about the H1N1 flu, as appropriate.

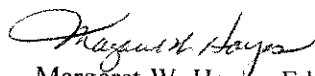
To help keep our students as healthy as possible, we ask that you assist the district in promoting good hygiene by talking with your children, regardless of their ages, about hand-washing and basic hygiene. If you would like to send some liquid hand sanitizer or a package of disposable antimicrobial wipes to school with your child, please feel free to do so. Regular hand washing is the number one recommendation of all health organizations and medical professionals when asked how best to prevent influenza and other contagious illnesses from spreading. According to the CDC, up to 80% of infections are transmitted by our hands.

As a school district, our classrooms and common areas will be cleaned on a daily basis with a disinfectant cleaner that is effective in killing influenza germs. Please be sure to notify your child's school in the event your child becomes ill so that we may monitor the number of flu-like cases in our schools.

Please refer to the back of this letter for a Department of Education communication from Dr. Carmen Centuolo, Executive County Superintendent of Schools and Lester Jones, Director of the Union County Office of Health Management. This letter includes some helpful suggestions to keep our schools functioning as usual.

Thank you for your patience and understanding as we work together to support the health of our students and families, as well as our staff.

Sincerely,


Margaret W. Hayes, Ed.D.

**State of New Jersey
Department of Education
Union County Office
300 North Avenue East
Westfield, NJ 07090**

September 3, 2009

Dear Parent,

As you may know, flu can be easily spread from person to person. Therefore, we are taking steps to reduce the spread of flu in our schools. We want to keep the school open to students and functioning in a normal manner during this flu season. **But, we need your help to do this.**

We are working closely with the New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services and Local Health Departments to monitor flu conditions and make decisions about the best steps to take concerning schools. We will keep you updated with new information as it becomes available.

If the flu becomes more severe, schools may take additional steps to prevent the spread such as:

- conducting active fever and flu symptom screening of students and staff as they arrive at school,
- making changes to increase the space between people such as moving desks farther apart and postponing class trips, and
- dismissing sick students from school.

For now we are doing everything we can to keep our school functioning as usual. Here are a few things you can do to help.

- **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. Covering up their coughs or sneezes using the elbow, arm or sleeve instead of the hand when a tissue is unavailable.
- **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*.

Each of our school districts and health departments in the county are collaborating on influenza prevention measures and guidelines regarding vaccine administration. For more information, visit www.flu.gov, or call 1-800-CDC-INFO for the most current information about the flu. For more information about flu in your community and what your school is doing, visit your school district website or call your local health department. We will notify you of any additional changes to our schools' strategies to prevent the spread of flu.

Sincerely,

Lester Jones, Director
Union County Office of Health Management

Carmen M. Centuolo, Ed D.
Union County Executive Superintendent
of Schools