

Dear Parent and Guardians,

As you know, the H1N1 influenza can be easily spread from person to person. Therefore, we have been and will continue to take steps to reduce the potential spread of H1N1 flu in the Hamilton Township School District. It is our desire to keep the school open to students and functioning in a normal manner during this flu season. **But, we need your parental help to accomplish this goal.**

The Hamilton Township School District was represented at the H1N1 summit in South Brunswick, New Jersey on Tuesday, August 25, 2009. At that time, the latest information and recommendations for schools were presented. As a district we will continue to work closely with the Atlantic County Health Department and the New Jersey Department of Education to monitor influenza conditions and make decisions about the best steps to take concerning our schools. It is our district goal to keep you updated with the latest information as it becomes available. Over the course of the summer no new cases of H1N1 influenza in Hamilton Township were reported to us by the County Health Department. However, as we return to school and enter the influenza season it is likely that we will see a reemergence of the H1N1 virus.

For now we are doing everything we can to keep our school functioning as usual. You will notice sanitizing hand dispensers and posters in the buildings reminding our staff and students to practice safe hygiene. As noted in prior communications, here are a few things you can do as parents 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.

As a district we are encouraging you and your family to take every precaution in preventing the H1N1 and seasonal flu virus this year. The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and World Health Organization (WHO) have indicated that children ages six months through twenty four, pregnant women and individuals 25 through 64 years of age who have health conditions are most at risk for H1N1 illness. Please contact your family pediatrician or primary health care provider to arrange for the flu vaccination(s) when it becomes available this fall.

Over the coming weeks we will continue to update our school website on a weekly basis with the current information regarding the H1N1 and seasonal influenza. Please visit hamiltonschools.org for this information. Likewise, phone communication from the Superintendent's office related to influenza will be made to the parents of our students, as needed, to provide families with the latest information.

For additional information, visit www.flu.gov, or call 1-800-CDC-INFO for the most current information about the flu. As always, we will notify you of any additional changes to our school's strategy to prevent the spread of flu. On behalf of the district administration and our entire staff we wish you and your family a healthy 2009-2010 school year.

Sincerely,

Mrs. Michelle Cappelluti, Superintendent of Schools