

LITTLE FALLS TOWNSHIP PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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Bruce deLyon, Ed.D.
Superintendent

Office of the Superintendent

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Dear Parents/Guardians:

As this first correspondence of the 2009-2010 school year is provided for you on the protocols of the Little Falls School District with regards to the H1N1 virus, the administration has considered various scenarios to deal with a possible flu pandemic. The following information and district procedures have been established for the health, knowledge, and welfare of your children.

What Is Swine Flu?

Swine flu, identified as the H1N1 strain, contains a unique genetic makeup that distinguishes itself from other influenza viruses. H1N1 includes gene segments from North American swine, bird, and human flu strains and from Eurasian swine flu--a unique combination. It is a respiratory disease caused by Type A influenza. Its symptoms are similar to those of seasonal flu. In a pandemic, a condition spreads quickly among a population that does not have immunity. The reason H1N1 is being referred to as a pandemic is not because of the severity and danger of the flu itself, but rather due to the potential widespread geographic impact of the disease, most people have not developed any antibodies for this strain of flu.

What Are The Signs and Symptoms?

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) has concluded that many H1N1 symptoms are similar to seasonal flu symptoms: fever, cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, body aches, headache, chills, and fatigue. H1N1 transmission modes also match those for seasonal influenza. H1N1 seems to spread from person to person by particle respiratory droplet transmission (i.e., coughs or sneezes in close range of others). Transmission can also occur through contact with a contaminated surface. The virus can live on surfaces and infect individuals for up to eight hours. (CDC, 2009)

What Is Recommended?

As a district, we recommend the following for your children:

- Individuals should receive seasonal flu vaccines early in the season,
- Washing hands frequently and thoroughly with soap and water and avoiding touching mouth, noses, and eyes with unwashed hands or after touching surfaces;
- Not sharing water bottles and drinking containers;
- Avoiding people who are sick and exposure to coughing and sneezing;

- Individuals should also consider receiving the Swine Flu Vaccine after the seasonal flu vaccines when it is available;
- Coughing or sneezing into one's sleeve;
- Staying at home if one feels sick
- Seeking medical attention when appropriate, such as high fever, shortness of breath, chest pain, seizures, persistent vomiting, or inability to retain liquids.
- If your child presents with a fever (over 100 degrees) and flu like symptoms (cough and/or sore throat, headache, chills, and/or vomiting and diarrhea,) please keep him/her home.
- Report your child's illness and symptoms to your building registered nurse.
- Consider contacting your child's physician for medical assessment.
- Do not send your child back to school until the fever has been gone for 24 hours (without the use of aspirin or Tylenol).

What Is The District Doing?

Our staff is aware of the measures needed and reinforces them with our students, while our nurses are available each day to support our children and to contact you should your child become ill during the school day. Our custodial staff remains vigilant in its cleaning of our school facilities and equipment to reduce the chance that the flu affects our school community. These are recommended preventative measures, and we daily monitor our student and staff absences.

District protocol will be if a student becomes ill during the school day, he or she will be separated from others until able to be taken home. The same guidelines will apply to faculty and staff within the school.

Should the prevalence of swine flu escalate to the point that the district needs to close, in consultation with local and state health officials, it will be necessary for you to have plans for your child care. Should such a situation develop, it is likely that the school would need to be closed for a number of days.

Where Can I Find More Information?

The following resources might be helpful for further information:

www.cdc.gov/swineflu or www.nj.gov/health

NJDHSS Hotline – 1-866-321-9571

While we remain hopeful that our school community is not affected by the swine flu, if we do confront the illness, we shall keep you informed about our ongoing response protocol.

Despite all best preventative efforts, should the flu affect our district, we shall maintain as our first priority the safety and welfare of our school community.

Sincerely,

Bruce deLyon, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools