

NORTH COLONIE CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

91 Fiddlers Lane
LATHAM, NEW YORK 12110-5349

October 23, 2009

Dear Parents:

We have been monitoring our student attendance at school on a regular basis as requested by the NYS and Albany County Departments of Health, as part of the 2009 H1N1 influenza response plan. Recently, there has been an increase in the number of students who are sick with flu-like illness in our school community and in the Capital Region. Influenza-like illness can be caused by the 2009 H1N1 influenza virus, the seasonal influenza virus, or other respiratory infections. However, national surveillance data has shown that the vast majority of influenza-like illness circulating in the United States at this time is H1N1 influenza.

Albany County Health Department officials are working closely with our school nurse and school administrators on strategies that reduce the spread of flu. Our goal is to keep you, your children, and our school community healthy. We really need your help to do this. Therefore, as an important reminder, the County Health Department asks that you take the following steps:

- **Know the signs and symptoms of the influenza.** Symptoms include fever, cough, sore throat, a runny or stuffy nose, body aches, headache, and feeling very tired. Some people may also have nausea or vomiting and not everyone will have fever.
- **Keep sick children home** while they have flu symptoms and for 24 hours after the fever goes away, without the use of fever-reducing medicine. Keeping sick students at home means that they keep their viruses to themselves rather than sharing them with others.
- **Teach your children to wash their hands** often with soap and water. You can set a good example by doing this yourself. The use of hand sanitizers (with or without alcohol) may also be helpful at times when hand washing isn't possible.
- **Teach your children to cover their mouths** when they cough or sneeze. Give them tissues to use. When tissues are not available, teach them to cover up their cough or sneezes by using the inside of their elbow or arm instead of their hands.
- **Teach your children not to share personal items** like toothbrushes, drinks, food, or unwashed utensils.
- **If your child has chronic health problems** and displays flu-like symptoms, contact your healthcare provider immediately. Your provider may decide to order an antiviral medication for your child.

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- **Get your child vaccinated for both the seasonal flu and the 2009 H1N1 flu when vaccine becomes available.** A flu vaccine is the single best way to protect against influenza illness.
 - Seasonal flu is the typical flu that is seen during yearly flu seasons. It is still early in the flu season and there is time to receive the vaccine. Currently, many doctors are experiencing a delay in receiving shipments of the seasonal flu vaccine, so please be patient. You may contact your health care provider or visit www.albanycounty.com/health for more information about seasonal flu clinics.
 - 2009 H1N1 is the new flu strain of influenza. Children are considered a priority group and are strongly recommended to get this vaccine. Initially, the 2009 H1N1 vaccine will be available through health care providers. The Albany County Department of Health is also planning to conduct community mass vaccination clinics as soon as more 2009 H1N1 vaccine is available. The dates and locations of public H1N1 vaccination clinics will be widely publicized.


It is important for all parents and caregivers of our students to plan ahead for child care at home, in case your child gets sick. If your child does get sick, monitor his or her health, as well as the health of any other children in the household, by checking for fever and other flu-like symptoms.

Please see the [Seasonal and 2009 H1N1 Flu: A Guide for Parents](#) from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention that we have included with this letter. We will continue to keep you updated with new information as it becomes available. You will also find additional information on this topic posted on our website, www.northcolonie.org

Thank you very much for your continued cooperation.

Enclosure

Sincerely,



Randy A. Ehrenberg
Superintendent of Schools