



OLD SAYBROOK PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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Dear Parents and Guardians:

As you know, there is an increased awareness in our community, our state, and our nation regarding the H1N1 influenza. In Old Saybrook and the surrounding communities, there is a slight increase in the number of individuals who are reporting flu-like symptoms. I have discussed the situation with Mary Jane Engle, Director of Health for the Connecticut River Area Health District (CRAHD) and our school medical team. According to Dr. Matt Cartter, the State Epidemiologist, since it is too early for seasonal flu, it is safe to assume that flu-like symptoms that have no other known cause are from the H1N1 virus.

For most people the symptoms and severity of H1N1 flu continue to be mild. However, flu can be easily spread from person to person. Therefore, we are taking steps to reduce the spread of flu in our schools. Our goal is to keep the schools open to students and functioning in a normal manner during this flu season. But we need your help to accomplish this.

There are important actions that you can implement now to help keep you, your child, and family well during the flu season. Here are a few things you can do to maintain good health.

- Emphasize to your children that they wash their hands often and thoroughly with soap and water.
- Teach your children not to share personal items such as beverages, food or unwashed utensils, and to cover their coughs and sneezes with a tissue, their elbow, arm or sleeve instead of their hands.
- Encourage your children to eat well, exercise, enjoy fresh air daily, drink fluids, and get plenty of sleep.
- Know the signs and symptoms of the flu. Symptoms of the flu include fever (100 degrees Fahrenheit or greater), cough, sore throat, a runny or stuffy nose, body aches, headache, and fatigue. Some people may also vomit or have diarrhea.
- Keep sick children at home for at least 24 hours after they no longer have a fever or do not have signs of a fever, without using fever-reducing medicine.
- Please do not send children to school if they are ill. If a child becomes ill while at school, you will be contacted and asked to take your child home.

The health district's website, www.crahd.org, will be the primary site to obtain the most current information about the flu and flu clinics. We will also post information on the Old Saybrook Public Schools website www.oldsaybrook.k12.ct.us.

We continue to work closely with the State Department of Public Health and the Connecticut River Area Health District (CRAHD) to monitor flu conditions and make decisions about the best steps to take concerning our schools. We will keep you updated with new information as it becomes available.

Thank you for your cooperation and vigilance in maintaining good hygienic practices and in keeping your children home if they exhibit flu-like symptoms. We appreciate your assistance. If you have additional questions or concerns please do not hesitate to contact Mary Jane Engle at 860-661-3300, your child's school nurse, or me.

Sincerely,

Joseph Onofrio II
Superintendent of Schools