



DERBY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

PO Box 373

Derby, Connecticut 06418

(203) 736-5027 • fax (203) 736-5031 • www.derbyps.org

Dr. Stephen Tracy

Superintendent of Schools

September 1, 2009

Dear Parents:

One of the challenges that we face as we resume our work with your children this fall is the return of the H1N1 flu virus, commonly called the “Swine Flu”. Health experts expect the H1N1 to be more widespread this fall than it was last spring – so it is quite likely that cases will be identified here in Derby, including in our schools.

Here’s what you can do to minimize the impact of the flu on your children and our community.

1. **Check your children every morning before sending them to school.**
2. **Keep your child home if s/he develops flu like symptoms.**

Staying home when sick helps to stop the spread of the flu and helps the sick person get well.

Any child with a fever* of 100 degrees F or 37.7 degrees C and sore throat or cough) should remain out of school until one day after the symptoms subside – typically seven to eight days. State health authorities are responsible for confirming whether or not a suspected case is actually the H1N1 virus, based on test samples provided by local physicians.

* If you don’t have a thermometer, feel your child’s forehead with your hand. If it is much warmer than usual, your child probably has a fever.

3. **If your child becomes ill at school:**

Children who appear ill while in school will be sent to the nurse for evaluation. Students with flu symptoms will be isolated from the general school population until they can make their way home.

4. **Family Illnesses:**

Students who have family members with the flu are expected to continue to come to school. Only individuals who develop flu symptoms themselves need to remain home.

5. **School Closings:**

Unlike last spring, health authorities are no longer recommending that schools be closed if cases of the H1N1 flu virus are identified in the school population. School closings will be considered only if the levels of staff or student absenteeism reach a point where the school can no longer operate effectively. Your principals, school nurses and I will be monitoring staff and student absenteeism to determine whether a step like this is called for.

6. **Precautions:**

Remind your children to cover their coughs with their sleeves (not their hands). Encourage them to wash their hands frequently throughout the day in order to minimize the spread of illness. Our classroom teachers will be supplied with bottles of hand sanitizer for this purpose.

7. **Cleaning:**

Our custodial staff will be stepping up their efforts to clean desks, doorknobs and other surfaces throughout the flu season.

8. **Planning Ahead:**

Now is a good time to think about the arrangements that you would make to assure that your child is safe at home if they become ill. Sick children should not be sent to another child care setting where they would be interacting with other people who are not sick.

For further information about the H1N1 flu and the steps that you can take to protect yourselves and your families, please refer to <http://www.ct.gov/ctfluwatch> and <http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu>.

Let's all do our best to insure that the new school year will be a healthy, happy and productive time for all of Derby's children.

Sincerely yours,



Stephen Tracy
Superintendent of Schools