

**Subject:** Preventing the Spread of H1N1

**Date:** September 2, 2009

Dear Parents and Guardians:

Carroll County Public Schools is working with local, state, and federal officials to prepare for this year's flu season. We need your help to offset any interruptions to your child's education caused by the flu.

This year, there are two (2) different types of flu that may affect our school community this fall. They are:

1. The Seasonal Flu
2. The H1N1 Novel Flu (Swine Flu).

We are concerned about the health of our students, employees, and the members of our community. The best way the school system can help right now is to provide you accurate information on what we can do to slow down the spread of the flu in our school community.

Throughout the coming months, I will be providing you information about H1N1 through AlertNow newsletters. As we get more detailed information on more formal efforts to combat both types of flu, including information on school-based vaccination, we will inform our community.

The CDC informs us that the following measures are recommended to slow down the spreading of these viruses.

- **Encourage your children to wash their hands.** Soap and water work fine or you can also use an alcohol-based hand rub. You can set a good example by doing this yourself.
- **Encourage your children not to share personal items.** Drinks, food or unwashed utensils should not be shared. They should cover their coughs and sneezes with tissues or use 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.

- **Please note:** Children who come to school sick or get sick while at school ***may be sent home***.

We will also be reinforcing these basic principles of prevention in our schools. Again, I will be sharing more information with you as it is received.

If you wish to vaccinate your child for the seasonal flu, the Carroll County Health Department will be holding a series of clinics. Please visit their website at <http://www.carrollhealthdepartment.dhmh.md.gov/> for additional information.

Thank you for your help regarding this important matter. By working together, we can create a healthier Carroll County for everyone.

Sincerely,

Chuck Ecker

Superintendent of Schools