

MILFORD SCHOOL DISTRICT

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Dear Parents:

I hope that you and your children enjoyed a smooth opening to the 2009-2010 school year and that the year is a productive one for you. The introduction of public kindergarten, implementation of the new eighteen year old drop-out age, and the beginning of a new relationship with students from Mason will certainly provide an exciting year for our school district. Please reference our school website at www.milfordschools.net for more detailed information about the opening of schools.

One of the challenges that we will all face this year is managing the H1N1 pandemic. Please be aware that we are staying in close contact with the New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services, national Center for Disease Control, and Bill McKinney, Milford Health Inspector. Administrators and nurses have also met this summer to understand the best practices associated with mitigating the spread of H1N1. We have created a link on our school website for you to review documentation about H1N1.

Health and Human Services reminds us that a pandemic relates to the spread of a disease, not the severity. Indeed, they tell us that seasonal flues are more likely to result in serious illness than H1N1. We are being informed that 30% of us will contract H1N1 within the next six months. H1N1 is not exclusive to schools – it can be contracted in supermarkets, libraries, movie theatres, and all areas that we frequent in society.

Nevertheless, there are steps we can take to help prevent the spread of H1N1. As parents, please teach your children about good hygiene, particularly hand-washing, coughing, and sneezing. Again, check out the District's link on the website. You can also help by providing personal sized hand sanitizers for your children to carry with them for more frequent hand cleaning while in school.

As a school district, we will continue our practice of vigilant cleaning and maintenance. Our custodial staff will continue to disinfect frequently touched hardware on a daily basis and will attempt to wash desktop surfaces often. Teachers will talk with students about good hygiene.

Health and Human Services will not be confirming H1N1 cases this year due to the inevitability of the disease. Rather, our school nurses will report regularly to HHS the number of cases of parents who keep their children out of school for influenza – like illnesses (ILI). Needless to say, we will not have this information unless you report it to the nurses, so please let the school nurses know of ILI symptoms when you report absences. Your child's school Principal will provide directions for you as to how to do that. We will attempt to provide that same information to you in an updated fashion on the District's website. This will let you know the number of cases of students absent from your child's school due to ILI (influenza like illness).

Please do not send your child to school should he or she exhibit H1N1 symptoms, fever over 100 degrees coupled with either a sore throat, cough, or sneezing, and until a fever has subsided, without medication, for a period of 24 hours. Some people with H1N1 are sick for five to seven days. I know that this is difficult on working parents, but it is important in mitigating contagion.

We understand that a vaccine is being developed and may be available in the fall. Once we learn of the details of this, the school district will determine a course of action. Until that time, we can all focus on prevention and reducing the spread of H1N1. Again, I recommend that you access the district's website and accompanying link to H1N1 information. As we learn more, we will keep you informed through website information. Thank you and have a great school year.

Sincerely,

Bob Suprenant
Superintendent of Schools