



TO: Parents and Students

FROM: Dr. Michael R. Dewese, CCSU Superintendent

DATE: August 20, 2009

RE: The Flu

Background

In June, the World Health Organization (WHO) declared “pandemic status” with the H1N1 (“Swine”) flu, due more to the flu strain’s persistence and rapidness of spreading, and less so because of its particular severity. Public health officials are urging institutions to approach H1N1 in the broad general category of “influenza.” As such, institutions are being advised to act, but not overreact.

Schools are an important variable in public health matters, and we will do our part as school starts up again. We are taking our guidance indirectly from the Center for Disease Control CDC and directly from our Vermont Department of Health (VT DOH).

Our Actions

- **Education, Both At Home and School:**
 - As a school–community, we need to stay regularly informed. The following serve as excellent resources for up–to–date information:
 - CDC: <http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/>
 - VT DOH: <http://healthvermont.gov/panflu/SwineFlu.aspx>
 - We know that influenza is thought to spread mainly person–to–person through coughing or sneezing of infected people.
 - There are “teachable moments” for all of us with our children in respect to sharing knowledge and best practices.
- **Everyday Actions We Can All Take ... At School and at Home:**
 - Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when coughing or sneezing. Dispose of tissues afterwards. If tissues are not available, cough or sneeze into the arm or sleeve.

- Wash hands with soap and water, especially after coughing or sneezing. Alcohol-based hand cleaners can also be effective.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth (as germs are spread that way).
- **Stay Home As Appropriate**
 - Health officials urge students and employees not to return to school for 24 hours after they no longer have a fever (without the use of fever-reducing medicines). In this way, we can reduce (re)infection exposures.
- **School Supports**
 - We will experiment this new school year with the availability of EPA approved wipes or disinfectant sprays in classroom areas. Students are encouraged to use these products on appropriate surfaces (such as desk and tabletops, but not monitors) for preventive or responsive uses. The products will be an additional resource to our standard housekeeping practices.
 - We will also experiment this new school year with the placement of hand sanitizers in the lunch lines. Students are encouraged to make use of this new resource.
- **Sensitivity and Flexibility**
 - We have requested teachers make academic accommodations for students who are either home-bound recovering (or who have returned to school after recovering) from the flu. We don't want students to feel unnecessary pressure to return to school too soon.

Thank you for being part of the solution as we institutionally address the flu in the upcoming school year.