

Smoky the Bear (and the Flu)

Smoky the Bears reminds us that, *"Only You Can Prevent Wildfires."* In this time of the novel H1N1 influenza, *"Only Parents Can Prevent Sick Children from Coming to School."*

We need parents' help in keeping children from coming to school sick. Simply put, it is a public health interest. Recently, our schools are not only seeing absences, but unfortunately are also sending dozens of sick children home each day. We continue to stress the importance of keeping sick children home.

We are pleased that children want to attend school, even when ill. But that's unacceptable. Coming to school when sick is unnecessary, but even worse is potentially dangerous given the real concerns over contagion. Our schools are being very accommodating with students who are out sick, helping them to keep caught up on missed school work.

We've talked to our students and staff about staying home while sick. We have also gone the extra steps and provide EPA-approved sanitizing wipes for use on appropriate surfaces and hand sanitizers for use in school lunch lines. Now, we turn to parents, to help us outside the school walls and prevent the spread of illness among our schools and communities.

Our staff is doing everything they can to educate and encourage proper hygiene. Simple steps such as covering your nose and mouth during coughing/sneezing, washing hands properly and frequently, and staying home while sick help prevent the spread of illness. A valuable resource to learn more about these steps and the novel H1N1 flu is www.flu.gov. Please keep in mind that our teachers are able to accommodate students who are absent for an extended period of time.

So, I implore adults to conjure up an image of our old friend Smoky as you do your part to help prevent the spread of illness in our community.

Sincerely,

Dr. Michael Deweese, CCSU Superintendent