



WARREN TOWNSHIP SCHOOLS

Office of the Superintendent
213 Mt. Horeb Road
Warren, New Jersey 07059
908/753-5300 (x5702)

May 8, 2009

Dear Parents/Guardians:

This is the third of three letters from me to you that have been intended to provide updates (and to serve as an ongoing dialogue between home and school) concerning the "H1N1 flu" (also known as the "swine flu").

The New Jersey Commissioners of Education (Ms. Lucille Davy) and Health and Human Services (Ms. Heather Howard) have issued a joint letter, dated May 5, 2009, to all parents and guardians in the state. Their letter is attached to this one (both the English and Spanish language versions are included). In their letter, the commissioners stress the very same things that we have been emphasizing here in Warren (the need to focus on facts, the critical role good hygiene habits have in preventing the spread of this and all other flu viruses, etc.).

Please read their joint letter carefully, as it contains good details on things such as exactly which symptoms constitute flu symptoms (versus which constitute things like seasonal allergy reactions). The distinction is critical. Their letter also goes into great detail as to what to do should your child become sick. And here's where I would like to emphasize where their new, H1N1-specific guidance intersects with our normal protocols. The combination of the two results in the following twofold guidelines that we will follow here in Warren:

1. Children who are sick with flu-like illness should stay home from school for seven days after the onset of symptoms (or even longer if they still have symptoms). This part is new guidance from the state, issued to be extra careful in preventing the spread of this new, unique strain of flu. They should also avoid for seven days public places like shopping malls or other areas where social interaction takes place (like a friend's house). When calling the school to report your child's absence, please be sure to make it clear that the absence is because of flu-like symptoms (this is very important—accurate records are needed as part of the overall effort to limit the spread of H1N1 and to distinguish it from other flu strains).
2. Coupled with this new seven day requirement from the state, our local protocols are the same as they always have been and remain in effect. That is, in addition to the state's "7 days from onset" requirement, a child must be fever free for a period of 24 hours before returning to school (our local, "24 hour fever free" piece).

Of course, parents/guardians are always encouraged to seek the advice of their family doctor should they have any questions about symptoms, flu severity or anything else that is cause for worry about the health of their child. All doctors in the state are aware of the state's "7 days from onset" rule and our local "24 hour fever free" protocol is a standard practice, so doctors will be familiar with it as well. As is always the case, another option available to you if you have any questions is to reach out to your child's school nurse here in Warren.

Lastly, our district website, www.warrentboe.org, has informational documents on the H1N1 flu strain as well as links to other sites with more information. Additionally, Warren Township's Health Department, under the leadership of Mr. Kevin Sumner, can be reached at 908/753-8000 (x239) and they are an excellent source of information.

It remains important for all of us to stay as careful as we can this year when it comes to flu prevention. I am very aware that this topic can be the cause of much concern and anxiety. Please know that we will continue to monitor this situation closely and will continue to communicate with the entire Warren school community on a regular basis.

Sincerely,

James A. Crisfield

James A. Crisfield, Ed.D.
Superintendent

attachments (5/5/09 letter from commissioners—two language versions)