

August 26, 2009

RE: Influenza Virus Including the H1N1 Flu, Guidelines

Dear Parents,

The school district has been meeting with county school officials and members of the Livingston County Health Department during the summer months to prepare a county wide and local response to influenza outbreaks. Brighton Area Schools will continue to monitor student health and daily communications from our local health department as well as the CDC regarding influenza outbreaks including the H1N1 Flu. In an effort to prepare our school community, the district is publishing the CDC (Center for Disease Control) Communication Toolkit which applies to any flu virus circulating during the 2009/2010 school year including the 2009 H1N1 flu. The Toolkit provides a wealth of information for our parents and staff members.

The decision to close a school will be made following the CDC guidelines for school closure in affected communities AND the recommendation of the Livingston County Health Department Medical Director. These decisions would be made only when a district would be unable to secure needed substitutes if we experience an unusually high staff absenteeism or if the County Health Department advises the district to close a school under certain circumstances.

As a general rule, schools will remain open and we are asking our parents to please follow the guidelines and suggestions published by the CDC. The closure of a Brighton Area School(s) would be communicated to parents through the usual emergency school closing alerts and procedures: phone fan-out, WHMI, and television stations 2, 4 and 7.

School staff members have been alerted to the symptoms of influenza. Children who feel unwell at school or demonstrate symptoms of upper respiratory (or any) illness are evaluated for fever. As always, children with upper respiratory symptoms, fever, and/or diarrhea and vomiting will be sent home. We understand that parents have to work but we ask that you be considerate of others when evaluating your child. The CDC and Michigan Department of Public health recommend that children be fever free (without Tylenol or Advil for 24 hours before returning to school. The spread of all contagious illnesses could be greatly reduced if we took the time to get better before returning to school or work.

Announcements will be made at the high school and middle schools reminding students to practice good hand washing and respiratory etiquette, not to share eating and drinking utensils and to stay home when they are sick. Elementary teachers will verbally reinforce these lessons in the classroom. The district will follow standard cleaning protocols to safeguard the health and well being of our students and staff.

Hand sanitizer stations are available in all school cafeterias. Any donations of hand sanitizer for classroom or office use would be greatly appreciated!

Please keep sick children at home. When using our attendance lines to phone in your child's absence, we ask that you be specific about their symptoms. This helps us to provide the health department with meaningful information so that they can closely monitor health trends in the county.

Sincerely,

Greg Gray, Ph.D.
Superintendent of Schools

Kathy Posly, RN
School Nurse