

Plymouth Board of Education

Dear Parents/Guardians:

October 28, 2009

The Plymouth Public Schools, like many Connecticut school districts, have seen an increase in flu-like illness among our students. The students who are ill have been asked to *remain at home for at least 24 hours after they are fever free without the use of fever-reducing medications*. Their parents have been advised to contact their medical providers with any questions or concerns.

We want to take this opportunity to inform parents, students and staff that our school district is working with public health officials to do what we can to protect our students and staff. The school nurses will be watching for signs of flu-like illness in our students and will send students with flu-like symptoms home. We will continue to communicate with local and state health officials for updates on the situation and any change in our plans.

The most important action you can take at this time is to keep your child at home if he/she show signs of a flu-like illness (*symptoms include fever (100 degrees F. or higher), sore throat, cough, and body aches*). When you call the school to report your child's absence, please indicate the child's symptoms. Children who are well and who do not exhibit a flu-like illness **do not** need to stay home from school. However, ***students should not attend school if they start to show symptoms***. If symptoms develop while at school, ***arrangements must be made by parents for immediate dismissal***.

Most children recover from influenza without treatment. However, you may want to contact your medical provider for advice, especially if your child has any underlying health conditions that may put him/her at higher risk of complications from influenza. Those at higher risk include:

- People over 65 or under 5 years of age
- People with chronic lung disorders such as asthma or emphysema
- People with chronic heart, kidney, liver or blood disorders
- People with diabetes
- People whose immune systems are compromised by illness or medication
- Pregnant women
- People on long-term aspirin therapy

It is very important to teach children what we all need to do to prevent the spread of illness.

- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with the crook of your elbow or a tissue.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water, especially after you cough or sneeze. If water is not nearby, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- Try not to touch your eyes, nose or mouth. Germs often spread this way.

We will continue to keep you informed as more information becomes available. More information, including frequent updates, is available online at the following websites:

- Connecticut Flu Watch <http://www.ct.gov/ctfluwatch>
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) <http://cdc.gov/h1n1flu>
- Plymouth Board of Education <http://www.plymouth.k12.ct.us/>

Thank you for your attention concerning this matter, and best wishes for a very healthy and productive school year.

Sincerely you

Anthony W. Distasio, Ph.D.
Superintendent of Schools