

MONSON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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Patrice L. Dardenne, Superintendent of Schools

Donald R. Smith, Director of Business & Facilities

September 3, 2009

Dear Parents Guardians,

As you probably know, the H1N1 flu virus is making its rounds again this fall and there has been much concern about its spread and effect on all of us, including the schools. We understand that many people are worried and we hope this letter will help address your concerns.

Over the next week I will be meeting with a representative of the Monson Board of Health to coordinate our efforts regarding this issue. In addition, I will be participating in a state wide conference call being conducted by the Department of Education and the Department of Public Health. This call will serve to help us establish the process we will take and the procedure we will develop to address the situations which may arise as a result of H1N1. As we develop our response we will continue to communicate with you to ensure that everyone is aware of all activities and procedures.

In the interim, the most productive thing we can do is work on reducing the risk of getting the flu. Here are some recommendations, from health organizations, which will go a long way towards reducing the risk of getting the flu and how to protect others from becoming infected.

- **Teach your children to wash their hands often.** Washing with soap and hot water for at least 20 seconds is ideal (that is about as long as it takes to sing the “Happy Birthday” song twice).
- **Teach your children the proper use of hand sanitizer.** Gels, rubs, and hand wipes all work well, as long as they contain at least 60% alcohol. Hand wipes must be disposed of properly.
- **Teach your children to cough or sneeze into their sleeve—not their hands!** Cover coughs and sneezes with tissues or by coughing into the inside of their elbow. They should wash their hands after blowing their nose or coughing into a tissue.
- **Teach your children to avoid touching their nose, mouth or eyes.** They should keep their hands away from their face.

If we all practice good hygiene, health officials believe we can limit the spread of swine flu in our schools and child care centers. We will be working within the schools to promote these behaviors as well.

The Monson Public Schools provide Equal Educational and Employment Opportunities without regard to race, color, sex, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, and disability.

Finally, we have posted on the Monson Schools website (www.monsonschoools.com), a number of documents from the Department of Public Health which have valuable information regarding flu symptoms, Information for parents about flu in schools, and a fact sheet about H1N1. As we gather additional information we will post additional documents for you to access.

If you have any additional questions please feel free to contact your child's school and speak with the school nurse or the principal. At present, it is important that we monitor the situation closely and be prepared to act if the situation warrants it.

Thank you for your cooperation in keeping our children and our schools healthy.

Sincerely,



Patrice L. Dardenne
Superintendent of Schools