

August 14, 2009

Dear Parent/Guardian:

The Shaler Area School District will be launching a district-wide effort to remind our visitors, staff, and students about the importance of **“HAND WASHING”** as an effective means of preventing the spread of many common bacteria and viruses that cause illness, including the influenza or “flu” virus.

While Novel Influenza A (H1N1) continues to make headlines, the Shaler Area School District wishes to be proactive in monitoring the situation. We are asking for your support in helping our staff and school nurses to reinforce the importance of personal hygiene with our students by reminding them to:

- Wash hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds after: using the rest room; sneezing; coughing and/or wiping their nose; playing outside or sharing exercise or play equipment; and before eating.

The district will clean school facilities daily, disinfect all athletic dressing rooms and shower areas, and provide hand soap in all buildings.

"H1N1 symptoms are similar to regular seasonal influenza and include fever with coughing, runny nose, or sore throat. Other symptoms reported by people who have contracted H1N1 include: tiredness, appetite decline, nausea/vomiting, and diarrhea." The diagnosis requires fever with a respiratory symptom. If you suspect that your child has influenza or exhibits the symptoms of influenza such as those listed, health care professionals recommend that you:

- Keep your child home from school and seek medical treatment from your physician.
- Inform your school office/school nurse if the child is ill and it is determined that he/she has influenza.
- Instruct your child to cover his/her nose and mouth with a tissue when coughing or sneezing. If a hand is used, instruct your child to wash his/her hands with soap and water.
- Teach your child to cover his/her cough with the forearm and bent elbow area.
- Avoid close contact with others who are sick.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth. Germs are often spread when a person touches something that is contaminated with germs and then touches his/her eyes, nose or mouth.

Should your child be diagnosed with **H1N1 Flu**, the recommendations are for a child or staff member to stay home until 24 hours after the fever is gone (less than 100 degrees) without the use of fever reducers (a doctor’s clearance may be required in order for your child to return to school). For additional information, please reference the Center for Disease Control (CDC) Website at:

<http://www.cdc.gov/SwineFlu/>.

The district will continue to consult with the Allegheny County Health Department and follow their recommended measures and actions. In the same respect, we ask for your support and cooperation with our “HAND WASHING” promotion and monitoring of your child’s wellness. We thank you for being our partners in education and look forward to the start of an outstanding year.

Sincerely,

The Shaler Area Administrative Team