

Halifax Elementary School

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Claudia Motta, Principal

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October 29, 2009

Dear Parents/Guardians,

Clearly, public awareness is heightened regarding the H1N1 flu. Late yesterday afternoon the first case was confirmed at Halifax Elementary School. While this is certainly no cause for alarm, I would like to take this opportunity to remind you of the precautions that should be taken.

- Get the flu vaccine, especially if you have a condition which makes health complications from the flu more likely.
- Wash your hands **often** with soap and water, or use an alcohol-based hand gel.
- Cough or sneeze into a tissue or into the inside of your elbow if you don't have a tissue. Throw tissues away and wash your hands. Always wash your hands before touching your eyes, nose or mouth.
- Use a household cleaner to clean things that are touched often, like door knobs, toys, phones and faucets.
- Avoid close physical contact with people who are sick. Try to stay at least 3-6 feet from someone who is sick with the flu.
- People with young children, a weak immune system or a chronic illness should avoid large crowds, if possible.
- **Stay home from work and school if you get sick with a flu-like illness and avoid contact with others so the virus does not spread. Stay at home until you have been free from fever for at least 24 hours after your last dose of fever-reducing medication (like Tylenol, Advil or Motrin).** For most people this will mean staying at home for about four days.

To help you decide whether or not your child should stay home from school, I offer the following checklist from the Massachusetts Department of Public Health.

SHOULD I KEEP MY CHILD HOME FROM SCHOOL?

- Has your child had a fever of 100.4 degrees or more in the past 24 hours? Yes or No
- Does your child have a cough **OR** sore throat? Yes or No

If you answered **YES** to both questions above, **keep your child home**. Your child has an influenza-like illness.

CAN MY CHILD RETURN TO SCHOOL?

- Has your child had a fever of 100.4 degrees or more in the past 24 hours? Yes or No
- Has your child had acetaminophen (Tylenol) or ibuprofen (Motrin or Advil) in the past 24 hours? Yes or No

If you answered **NO** to both questions above, your child **can return** to school.

If you answered **YES** to either one of the questions above, your child **CANNOT return** to school. Keep your child home for at least another day to observe for additional symptoms. Then use the check list questions again to decide whether you should continue to keep your child home.

I want you to know that the Halifax Elementary School continues to take active measures to promote a clean and safe learning environment for your children. Please be assured that you will be advised of any changes in the situation. Frequently check the website: <http://www.halifax.mec.edu>.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

Claudia J. Motta
Principal