



Office of the Superintendent

May 1, 2009

Dear Catskill School District Staff and Parents:

I have attended two briefings at Greene County Health this week. The following is the protocol which we will be following based on the best practice discussion flowing from CDC and NYS Health Department.

Classroom Practices:

1. Encourage good hygiene for all students. At the elementary level, please have students wash their hands before leaving your room to go to lunch. Remind students to avoid touching their faces. Remind students to cough into their elbow, wash hands after coughing into them or after using a tissue.
2. Practice and model good hygiene yourself!
3. Remind students not to share water bottles, eating utensils.....or offer a "lick" of that ice cream cone!

Building Practices:

1. The facilities staff regularly sanitizes door knobs, desks, chairs, etc. The virus is reported to have a "shelf life" of two to eight hours. Therefore, our regular cleaning schedule for both classrooms and bus providers (who also sanitize vehicles regularly) is regarded as sufficient. I have asked Mr. Willabay, facilities director, to increase cleaning of door knobs and drinking fountains as an extra precaution.
2. Mr. Willabay will be purchasing and distributing a product similar to that which children use when brushing their teeth. The product is applied to teeth, brushing happens (or doesn't!), and stain is visible on unbrushed areas. This new product does the same for hand washing. I am asking that the building principals (at all grade levels) work with their health and physical education staff on hand washing using this product as a demo lesson. This will become part of our regular instructional practice each year although we will implement this as soon as the product can be obtained.

District Practices:

1. All H1N1 flu cases are confirmed as such through the regional and state health departments. The "rumor mill" or the appearance of flu like symptoms does not constitute confirmation of H1N1 presence.

2. The district will be advised should there be a confirmed case of this virus. At that time, we will adhere to the advice and precautions determined by the health department to be appropriate. Currently, the CDC is recommending that if there is one confirmed case within the school that the school be closed for a period of 14 days. Clearly, that has greater implications for out of district students (TechValley, Questar, etc.) and multigrade level students who share the same transport bus. Those issues have yet to be resolved and will continue to be discussed with CDC, SED, and all of the NYS health agencies.
3. At this time, all planned field trips will occur. CDC and the health department have not issued any precautions other than those which a normally prudent individual would follow, i.e., good hygiene. Should this change, you will be advised immediately.

Please do not hesitate to contact your building administrator or my office should you have additional questions or concerns. While a school district's primary mission is to provide solid academic instruction, health and safety are always the first and foremost concern in the Catskill Central Schools.

Sincerely,

Kathleen Farrell, Ph.D.
Superintendent

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c: James Garafalo, President, CCSD Board of Education