



STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Union County Office

300 North Avenue East

Westfield, N.J. 07090

Tel: (908) 654-9860 • Fax: (908) 654-9869

Jon S. Corzine, Governor

Lucille E. Davy, Commissioner

Carmen M. Centuolo, Ed.D., County Superintendent

September 3, 2009

Dear Parent,

As you may know, flu can be easily spread from person to person. Therefore, we are taking steps to reduce the spread of flu in our schools. We want to keep the school open to students and functioning in a normal manner during this flu season. **But, we need your help to do this.**

We are working closely with the New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services and Local Health Departments to monitor flu conditions and make decisions about the best steps to take concerning schools. We will keep you updated with new information as it becomes available.

If the flu becomes more severe, schools may take additional steps to prevent the spread such as:

- conducting active fever and flu symptom screening of students and staff as they arrive at school,
- making changes to increase the space between people such as moving desks farther apart and postponing class trips, and
- dismissing sick students from school.

For now we are doing everything we can to keep our school functioning as usual. Here are a few things you can do to help.

- **Teach your children to wash their hands** often with soap and water or an alcohol-based hand rub. You can set a good example by doing this yourself.

- **Teach your children not to share personal items** like drinks, food or unwashed utensils, and to cover their coughs and sneezes with tissues. Covering up their coughs or sneezes using the elbow, arm or sleeve instead of the hand when a tissue is unavailable.
- **Know the signs and symptoms of the flu.** Symptoms of the flu include fever (100 degrees Fahrenheit, 37.8 degrees Celsius or greater), cough, sore throat, a runny or stuffy nose, body aches, headache, and feeling very tired. Some people may also vomit or have diarrhea.
- **Keep sick children at home** for at least 24 hours *after* they no longer have fever or do not have signs of fever, without using fever-reducing drugs. Keeping children with a fever at home will reduce the number of people who may get infected.
- **Do not send children to school if they are sick.** Any children who are determined to be sick while at school *will be sent home*.

Each of our school districts and health departments in the county are collaborating on influenza prevention measures and guidelines regarding vaccine administration. For more information, visit www.flu.gov, or call 1-800-CDC-INFO for the most current information about the flu. For more information about flu in your community and what your school is doing, visit your school district website or call your local health department. We will notify you of any additional changes to our schools' strategies to prevent the spread of flu.

Sincerely,



Lester Jones
Director, Union County Office of Health Management

Carmen M. Centuolo, Ed.D.

Carmen M. Centuolo, Ed D.
Executive County Superintendent of Union County Schools