

Berkeley Heights Public Schools
Berkeley Heights, Union County, New Jersey 07922
Clausen Administration Complex
345 Plainfield Avenue

(908) 464-1718 ~ Fax (908) 464-1728

Judith A. Rattner
Superintendent of Schools

Patricia Qualshie
Assistant Superintendent

September, 2009

Dear Berkeley Heights Parents & Guardians,

As we begin the new school year, I wanted to assure you that, as a school district, Berkeley Heights has begun working with the Union County Health Department, the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and other school districts to prepare for the possible increase in the H1N1 influenza that is anticipated this fall.

One of our top priorities in the Berkeley Heights Public School District is to keep our staff and students safe and healthy. We continue to receive health updates from the New Jersey Department of Education and the New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services regarding changes in protocols and procedures. We will post pertinent information on our district website (www.bhpsnj.org).

Important recommendations from the CDC, issued on August 5, 2009, about the amount of time persons with flu-like illnesses should be away from others, stipulates that those with symptoms and illnesses should remain home at least 24 hours after they are free of fever and without the use of fever reducing medications. Subsequently, we cannot emphasize enough the importance of keeping your child home if he or she is not feeling well and until recovery is complete. Students should not be sent back to school unless all symptoms of their illness have disappeared. An extra day of rest is very beneficial as it speeds up recovery and prevents the spread of influenza or other respiratory illnesses to others.

As a school district, our classrooms and common areas will be cleaned on a daily basis with a disinfectant cleaner that is effective in killing the H1N1 germs. Age appropriate hand-washing posters are being hung in all of our school bathrooms, hallways and classrooms. The CDC no longer recommends closing a school with confirmed cases. Instead it advises that classrooms and common areas be disinfected regularly, as we had done last spring.

In one final effort to keep our students as healthy as possible, we ask that you assist the district in promoting good hygiene by talking with your children, regardless of their ages, about hand-washing and basic hygiene. If you would like to send some tissues, liquid hand sanitizer, or a package of disposable antimicrobial wipes to school with your child, please feel free to do so. Regular hand washing is the number one recommendation of all health organizations and medical professionals when asked how best to prevent influenza and other contagious illnesses from spreading. According to the CDC, up to 80% of infections are transmitted by our hands.

We will do our very best to share important health updates with you and we ask that you do the same. Please notify your child's school health office in the event your child becomes ill so that we may monitor the number of flu-like cases in our schools.

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Thank you for your patience and understanding as we continue to try to do what is best for our students, staff, parents, and community members.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Judith Rattner".

Judith Rattner
Superintendent of Schools