



MOUNT EPHRAIM PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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Dear Parents:

This week Mt. Ephraim schools have had an absentee rate higher than normal. Many students are experiencing flu-like symptoms. We have advised the Camden County Board of Health of our absentee rate and we are following the guidelines set forth by them and the State of New Jersey Health Department. We will continue to work in conjunction with these agencies as the flu season progresses.

Due to the H1N1 situation we no longer have perfect attendance awards, so parents and students alike should not feel pressured to attend school while ill or symptomatic with flu-like conditions. We cannot stress enough how important prevention is in our effort to keep the number of cases down in our learning community.

Since the beginning of the school year our custodial department has been wiping down desktops and our lunch tables are cleaned between each lunch. We have increased our efforts to keep our buildings clean by wiping down doorknobs and railings throughout. There are hand sanitizers in all common areas and they are checked daily to ensure that they remain full. The school nurses and staff have spoken to your children about washing their hands often and covering their mouths with their sleeves if they cough or sneeze, in addition to other preventive measures.

If your child complains of flu-like symptoms please keep your child home until he/she is fever free for 24 hours without fever reducing medication. Keeping sick students at home means that they keep their viruses to themselves rather than sharing them with others.

H1N1 symptoms, like other flu symptoms, usually last about 3-5 days. Check for fever of 100° F or greater, cough, sore throat, headache, body ache, possible vomiting and diarrhea. If you are unable to measure a temperature, the sick child might have a fever if he/she feels warm, has a flushed appearance, or is sweating or shivering. Also, consider keeping sick household members in a separate room in the house as much as possible to limit contact with household members who are well.

Normally the flu will run its course without complications; however, there are some emergency warning signs that need urgent medical attention. Some of these signs include:

- Fast breathing or trouble breathing
- Bluish or gray skin color
- Not drinking enough fluids
- Not urinating or no tears when crying
- Severe or persistent vomiting
- Increased irritability
- Pain or pressure in the chest or abdomen
- Sudden dizziness or confusion
- Flu-like symptoms improve but then return with fever and worse cough
- Fever remains after five days

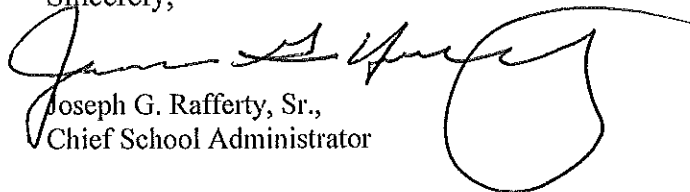
New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services opened an H1N1 Information Hotline: 1-866-321-9571. This toll-free public hotline is accessible seven days a week from 9 am to 5 pm. Call center operators will be able to provide general information about H1N1, vaccine safety and availability information, symptoms of H1N1 and flu preventive measures.

We will continue to update the community as the situation evolves. Please check the Mt. Ephraim School District website (www.metphraimschools.org) for updates.

The Mt. Ephraim School District will serve as an inoculation site in cooperation with Audubon School District and the Camden County Board of Health on December 8, 2009, which will be located at Audubon High School Gymnasium from 1 pm to 7 pm. As more specific information becomes available, we will share it with you and our community.

Thank you for your cooperation, patience, and support of Mt. Ephraim Public Schools.

Sincerely,


Joseph G. Rafferty, Sr.,
Chief School Administrator

JGR/pac