

September, 2009

Dear Parents,

With the start of the new school year, we would like to share with you the status of the H1N1 flu virus and how we can continue to work together to provide your child with a healthy and safe learning environment. This new flu began infecting children and adults in the spring and has continued to be detected in school-age children throughout the summer. Health officials do not yet know whether this outbreak will cease to be an issue or become a greater concern. We are committed to sharing with you new information and instructions concerning safe procedures in our schools as they become available.

All of the NSSEO schools work closely with the local health agencies, the Cook County Health Department and the Illinois Department of Public Health and will continue to do so to monitor the most current information on this virus. We have included on our web site ([www.nsseo.org](http://www.nsseo.org)) the links to several informative documents published by the CDC (Center for Disease Control) about prevention of H1N1, as well as Action Steps in the event someone in your household becomes ill.

The main purpose of this letter is to summarize key pieces of information that address what you can do and what we will do to help minimize the effects of this virus. It's important to know what the flu symptoms include. The H1N1 flu virus symptoms are similar to the seasonal flu symptoms. **These symptoms are rapid onset of high fever, aches and pains. Chills, headache and dry cough may also be present.**

The following page lists what we ask parents to do and what we as your child's school personnel will do. Please keep this as a reference guide in the event your child becomes ill.

We ask that parents continue to partner with us to minimize the spread of illness in our schools and community. Thank you for all you are doing and will do to make this a healthy school year for all of our students.

Sincerely,



Judith A. Hackett Ed. D., Superintendent

### **We ask parents to do the following:**

- Keep sick children home.
- If you see flu symptoms (**rapid onset of fever, aches, dry cough**) contact your medical provider.
- Notify the school nurse if your child has the flu. (Monitoring flu incidence at school will help to keep students and staff healthy).
- Have a plan in case your child gets sick during the school day.
- Have a plan if your child needs to stay home. A sick child should stay home from school until fever free for 24 hours without the use of fever reducing medications.
- Encourage and use good hand washing and cough hygiene.
- Keep sick household members in a separate room in the house as much as possible.
- Teach your child not to share personal items such as drinks or food.
- Encourage your child to keep hands away from the nose, mouth, and eyes.
- Get your child vaccinated for the seasonal flu and the H1N1 flu vaccine.
- Prevent the spread of germs in your home by wiping down doorknobs, hard surfaces, phones and toys with disinfectants, soap and water.

### **School personnel will do the following:**

- Promote good hand washing and cough etiquette.
- Remind students, and assist students when necessary, to wash hands frequently and thoroughly.
- Maintain a clean learning environment with special attention given to all school surfaces that are more likely to have frequent hand contact such as desks, doorknobs, and keyboards.
- Remind teachers and staff to stay home for at least 24 hours after they no longer have a fever.
- Have personal protective equipment available such as masks.

Provide a separate room for students, teachers and staff who become ill until they are picked up from school or are able to go home.