

May 15, 2009

Dear Parents:

This letter will give you updated information about the new flu called H1N1 identified in the United States and how that might affect us at Coe Brown Northwood Academy.

Every year, some people get sick with the “seasonal” flu during the fall and winter months. However, there is a new strain of influenza called H1N1 that is making people sick with the same symptoms as the seasonal flu: fever, chills, sore throat, cough, headache and body aches (sometimes nausea, vomiting and diarrhea). There is still a lot we do not know about this new flu virus.

It is important that you stay well informed about what is happening. While officials are learning more about this new flu virus, they know it is contagious and it spreads from person to person much like seasonal flu. In New Hampshire, those people who have had the new flu have been mildly ill and are recovering well. Still, as with seasonal flu, there are some people who may be at higher risk for complications including those people 65 years and older, children younger than five years old, pregnant women and people of any age with chronic medical conditions. School closure is not advised at this point for a suspected or confirmed case of novel influenza A (H1N1) and, as with seasonal influenza, generally is not advised unless there is a magnitude of faculty or student absenteeism that interferes with the school’s ability to function.

The best advice is to use healthy habits to prevent getting ill and to contact your healthcare provider as you usually would if someone in your family is ill. Some actions you can take for you and your family are provided below. Accurate and updated information about this outbreak can be found on the CDC webpage, including information about cases in NH: <http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/> . The CDC also has dedicated pages to parents and caregivers that you may find helpful: <http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/parents/>. In addition, NH DHHS site continues to post valuable information including a Frequently Asked Questions fact sheet for NH Schools and Childcare programs: http://www.dhhs.state.nh.us/DHHS/DHHS_SITE/swineflu.htm .

Actions you can take —

- **If you or your child is sick, stay home from work or school until you are better.** Keep sick people away from people who are not sick.
- **Tell your school nurse** or administrator about your child’s symptoms so they can watch for other students with the same symptoms.

- **Wash your hands well and often.** Make sure your children do the same. Wash with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
- **If you can't wash with soap and water,** use a hand sanitizer. (Gels, rubs or hand wipes with at least 60% alcohol)
- **Remind children** to keep their hands away from their face – don't touch mouth, nose, or eyes.
- **Cover your cough.** Teach your children to do the same. Cough into the inside of your elbow, or into a tissue — not your hands!
- **Throw away used tissues** or hand sanitizer wipes. Teach your children to throw away tissues and then wash hands.
- **Don't share** water bottles, utensils, cups, food, etc. with others.
- **If people in your home are sick** with the flu and cannot see a healthcare provider, care for them at home — Give plenty of liquids (clear fluids with electrolytes). If you are unsure what over-the-counter medications can be safely used to reduce symptoms, if the ill person is having difficulty breathing, or if they are getting worse, call a healthcare provider.
- **You can disinfect hard surfaces** in your home with a solution made of one ounce bleach to one gallon of water.

If you have questions, call your healthcare provider. If any of our students or members of your family living in the same household are ill with influenza like symptoms, we would appreciate you contacting Laurie Foster, our school nurse, so we can provide assistance. Resources are also posted on our website at coebrownacademy.com

Sincerely,

David Smith
Headmaster