

COUNTY OF MORRIS
DEPARTMENT OF LAW & PUBLIC SAFETY
OFFICE OF HEALTH MANAGEMENT

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P.O. Box 900

Morristown, New Jersey 07963-0900



County Administrator

John Bonanni

Director of Law & Public Safety

Thomas J. Zellman

Health Officer

Pete Summers

973-631-5484

FAX 973-631-5490

May 21, 2009

Dear Parent/Guardian,

On May 21, 2009, the Morris County Office of Health Management was notified by the New Jersey Public Health Laboratory that 4 students at Morris Hills High School have tested "probable" for Novel H1N1 Influenza A. Confirmation of these cases is not expected until Friday May 22, 2009 at the earliest.

These students have been recovering at home since May 15, 2009 with relatively mild influenza symptoms and are being cared for by their physicians. Morris County and local health officials are **not** recommending that the Morris Hills High School close. The school was already scheduled to be closed on May 22, 2009 for a long Memorial Day weekend. The school will open as planned on Tuesday, May 26, 2009.

Please note that there are currently no suspect, probable or confirmed cases in any other school district. Your school administration continues to work closely with your local health department to monitor for new cases. As a precaution schools will be implementing infection control procedures recommended by my office and your local health officials.

Students and staff with influenza-like symptoms (fever with cough and/or sore throat) must stay home and not report to school. Parents/staff should report any of these symptoms when reporting absence. Your local health department will be contacting staff and/or parents of students with influenza like symptoms to collect additional information and to arrange for specimen collection as needed. Student/staff with influenza-like illness should **remain home for at least 7 days** after illness onset, or 24 hours after all symptoms disappear, **whichever is longer.**

The school's custodial staff will conduct daily cleaning of high touch surfaces such as desktops, banisters and door handles.

Good hygiene practices both at home and school will help reduce the risk of infection:

- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze; put the used tissue in a waste basket and wash your hands.
- Wash your hands after coughing, sneezing, or blowing your nose.
- Use soap and water and wash your hands for 20 seconds; or
- Use an alcohol-based gel hand sanitizer (at least 60% alcohol) or alcohol-based hand wipes; rub these on the hands until the liquid or gel dries.

Your cooperation is important to the success of these measures. Please keep your children **at home** if they are ill and report all symptoms of illness when reporting an absence.

The Morris County Office of Health Management along with our municipal health officers are advising that schools will not need to close if a case of H1N1 Influenza A is identified in a school. The CDC has advised that in general, closing schools for cases of H1N1 Influenza A is no longer effective as the virus spreads through the U.S. The mild nature of the disease suggests it should be treated as we would treat any other influenza.

Any future decision that may lead to school closure will be made jointly by your local health department and your School Superintendent after consulting with County and State Public Health Officials

For the most current information visit the Morris County Office of Health Management website at www.morrishealth.org or the Centers for Disease Control website at www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu. Should you have any additional questions we encourage you to contact your local Municipal Health Officer.

Your School Administration is working with your local and county public health officials to minimize the risk to you and your children.

Sincerely,
Pete Summers
Peter Summers
Morris County Health Officer