

Stuart M. Beville Middle School

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Karen S. Giacometti, Ed.D., Principal

October 27, 2009

Dear Beville Parents:

I am writing to inform you that we are experiencing a significant number of students with symptoms of Influenza-Like Illness (ILI) at Beville Middle School and of steps taken to address this issue. In accordance with the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) guidance, the Prince William Health District (PWHD) has informed us that not all students with ILI symptoms will be tested for the H1N1 virus. Therefore, it is impossible to know if these cases are caused by the H1N1 virus. However, since we know the virus is circulating in the community, and due to the number of students who are ill, we are informing you as part of our ongoing efforts to keep parents fully informed of important school-related news.

Our School Division has been in frequent contact with local and state health officials in accordance with established PWCS guidelines. We are closely monitoring this situation and are following the guidance of the Virginia Department of Education, PWHD, the Virginia Department of Health (VDH), and the CDC. All appropriate measures are being taken to ensure the health of all of our students and staff, including the use of approved disinfectant detergents that kill viruses such as H1N1. As we receive important information from the PWHD regarding our schools, it will be posted to our School Division Web site (www.pwcs.edu).

While the spread of the virus from person-to-person continues throughout the United States, at this point, *the severity of the virus does not appear to be any more severe than seasonal flu*. Please continue to send your well child to school. The latest guidance from the CDC does not recommend closing a school unless there are extenuating circumstances. School Division officials will work closely with local and state health officials to monitor the situation and determine if our response should change.

Please also continue to monitor your children for any of the symptoms of influenza, which include: fever, cough, sore throat, body aches, headache, chills and fatigue, and occasionally vomiting and diarrhea. If your child is experiencing flu symptoms, particularly fever, please keep him or her at home and contact your family's healthcare provider.

This is also a good opportunity to remind everyone of a few simple steps you can take to keep your family healthy. These include:

- Wash your hands frequently with soap and water. Clean hands with an alcohol-based hand cleaner if soap and water are not available.
- Cover your nose and mouth with your sleeve or a tissue when you cough or sneeze.
- Stay home when you are sick, until you are fever-free for 24 hours – without the use of fever-reducing medication.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth to prevent the spread of germs.
- Avoid close contact with those who have symptoms of flu.
- Seek care for you or your child; please call ahead to your health care provider's office and tell them what symptoms you have, so they can see you quickly and prevent exposing other people in the waiting room.

The health and safety of our students and staff is always of the utmost importance. Please refer to the PWCS Web site at www.pwcs.edu or the VDH Web site at www.vdh.virginia.gov for more information and helpful resources regarding the H1N1 virus.

Sincerely,



Karen S. Giacometti
Principal



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