

October 28, 2009

To All Parents/Guardians:

Now that we have entered the flu season, it is important for all of us to help curb the spread of illness. Prior to sending your children to school, please check them for symptoms of influenza-like illness. Symptoms include:

- **Almost always:** sudden onset of cough and fever
- **Common:** muscle aches, sore throat, headache, decreased appetite, runny nose
- **Sometimes:** nausea, vomiting, diarrhea.

If your child is ill, please **keep your child at home** until s/he feels better and is no longer exhibiting flu-like symptoms. For information on how to care for your child and what indicators of severe illness might cause you to seek medical attention, go to www.york.ca or www.fightflu.ca.

When you call your child's school to report his/her absence, it would be helpful to indicate in your message if your child:

- ✓ **has a fever;**
- ✓ **is experiencing stomach and intestinal symptoms (such as vomiting or diarrhea); and/or**
- ✓ **is showing mostly breathing symptoms (such as persistent coughing, sneezing, and congestion).**

This information assists us in monitoring the overall health of our school communities. The number of students who are ill is provided to York Region Community and Health Services on a daily basis in order to identify illness trends across York Region. This surveillance and monitoring system has been in place with the York Region District School Board since 2006, and is not limited to the current H1N1 influenza situation.

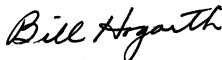
Please note that students who become ill at school will be isolated and will need to be picked up at school. As per standard school practice, school staff is vigilant for ill students and will report any concerns to the principal. School staff continues to stress the usual infection control precautions to reduce the risk of illness. You can help by reinforcing good hygiene practices at home with your child.

Beginning October 28, the H1N1 flu vaccine will be available at community immunization clinics in York Region and neighbouring communities. The H1N1 vaccine is available to everyone, BUT first to those who most need it. Clinic dates and locations are being advertised in the local newspapers and posted on York Region's website (www.york.ca) and will be updated on a regular basis.

Our organizations will continue to work closely with one another. Schools will continue to operate as per their daily routines. Any decision to close or modify school operations due to illness will be made in consultation with York Region Community and Health Services.

If you have any concerns about your child's health, please contact your family physician or call Telehealth Ontario at 1-866-797-0000 (24 hours day/7 days a week). Additional information and resources are posted both on www.york.ca and www.yrdsb.edu.on.ca

Sincerely,


Bill Hogarth
Director of Education
York Region District School Board


Karim Kuji
Medical Officer of Health
The Regional Municipality of York