



1 September 2009

Dear Parent/Guardian:

The Ottawa-Carleton District School Board has been working closely with Ottawa Public Health and other provincial agencies since the onset of the H1N1 virus in North America, and more specifically, in Ottawa. This collaboration has given the district with the ability to provide the most up-to-date information for schools and their communities in terms of the local situation and also the latest advice for managing the potential infection risk in schools. During the summer, as you have no doubt noticed, the worry about a wider resurgence of the H1N1 flu strain in the fall has gained significant momentum.

The Board's priority during any type of increased severity will be to keep schools open and to provide a healthy learning and working environment for all. Depending on circumstances, it may be necessary to make adjustments to non-essential services to allow us to focus on providing the most necessary services to our students and communities.

Facilities staff has modified its cleaning and disinfecting routines to adhere to the cleaning procedures recommended by Ottawa Public Health and the Public Health Agency of Canada. As an integral part of the proactive measures adopted in all schools, each school will be instituting a full hand cleaning program. Absenteeism will be monitored closely and reported to both Ottawa Public Health and the central office where there is a perceived increase due to influenza.

We need your help in minimizing the potential of influenza spread. Stress with your child the importance of practicing hand hygiene and coughing and sneezing into their sleeve. Students who display flu symptoms must remain at home until they are symptom free for 24 hours. Please make sure that you have arrangements in place to be able to pick up your child if the school calls with a message that he/she is displaying flu symptoms.

A Pandemic Preparedness and Response Plan has been posted on the OCDSB website. <http://www.ocdsb.ca/Documents/misc/H1N1/OCDSB-Pandemic-Plan.pdf> I would encourage you to take a moment to review the plan. It should be noted that the plan is in its initial stages and may evolve and be modified based on our experiences in the field during the next few months.

The Board is committed to ensuring that all employees, students, parents and members of the community are kept up-to-date on its plans. Information will be made available to you as we receive it from Ottawa Public Health and provincial agencies. The website will also be kept up-to-date.

Yours truly,

Lyall M. Thomson
Director of Education/
Secretary of the Board

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