



# Prince George's County Public Schools

14201 School Lane • Upper Marlboro, Maryland 20772 • www.pgcps.org

**William R. Hite, Ed.D.**

Superintendent of Schools

October 23, 2009

## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** Prince George's County Public Schools Parents/Guardians, Students and Staff

**FROM:** William R. Hite, Jr. *WRHite*

**RE:** Update on H1N1 in our Schools

Currently, there is an increase in the number of student absences due to Influenza Like Illnesses (ILI) in Prince George's County Public Schools. Our Office of Health Services and the Prince George's County Health Department are working together to track cases of flu-like illness in the county. On Friday, October 23, 2009, the Prince George's County Health Department will begin administering H1N1 Flu Mist to elementary school students and staff. The schedule for middle and high schools is being developed.

We are working closely with the Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene and the local health department to monitor flu conditions and make decisions about the best steps to take concerning schools. Please understand that we are doing everything we can to keep our schools functioning as usual.

In addition, the following steps have been taken to decrease the potential spread of the Influenza Virus. Prince George's County Public Schools has placed hand sanitizer dispensers in strategic places in each school building. The Office of Plant Operations has increased the schedule for cleaning with a disinfectant approved by the Center for Disease Control (CDC).

Here are a few things you can do to help:

- **Teach your children to wash their hands** often with soap and water or an alcohol-based hand rub. You can set a good example by doing this yourself.
- **Teach your children not to share personal items** like drinks, food or unwashed utensils.
- **Reinforce the need for your children to cover their coughs and sneezes with tissues.** Using the elbow, arm or sleeve instead of the hand, when a tissue is unavailable, is also a method of covering their coughs or sneezes.
- **Know the signs and symptoms of the flu.** Symptoms of the flu include fever (100 degrees Fahrenheit, 37.8 degrees Celsius, or greater), cough, sore throat, a runny or stuffy nose, body aches, headache, and feeling very tired. Some people may also vomit or experience diarrhea.
- **Do not send children to school if they are sick.** Any children who are determined to be sick while at school *will be sent home.*

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- **Keep sick children at home** for at least 24 hours *after* they no longer have fever or do not have signs of fever, without having used fever-reducing drugs. Keeping children with a fever at home will reduce the number of people who may get infected.

If your child exhibits symptoms associated with influenza, such as a fever (100°F or higher), please consult your primary care provider for evaluation. Infants, toddlers, seniors, pregnant women, and people with certain underlying health conditions are at increased risk of severe illness or complications from influenza, and should consult with their primary care physician if they develop symptoms.

Please continue to check our website for updated information and additional tips on good hygiene practices.

WRH:mag

c: Members, Board of Education

Dr. Bonita Coleman-Potter

Ms. KarynLynch

Area Executive Directors

Dr. Diane Powell

Ms. Karen Bates