

REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT #19

EDWIN O. SMITH HIGH SCHOOL
Ashford, Mansfield and Willington, CT

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Bruce W. Silva
Superintendent

April 29, 2009

Dear Parents,

I wish to share with you the following information that has been sent to all school superintendents for distribution:

With the increasing publicity of the swine influenza (flu) situation E.O. Smith High School would like to assure you of our preparedness. "The school is in continual contact with Eastern Highlands Health District Director Rob Miller, the State of Connecticut Department of Public Health (DPH) and the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE). State of Connecticut is carefully tracking swine flu in response to the recently reported cases in the U.S. and other countries. To date, only mild cases of the illness have been experienced in the United States.

At this time, the state and local health departments have advised us that students can continue to attend school, as long as they are not sick and do not have flu-like symptoms. Flu-like symptoms include fever (over 100 degrees F.), cough, sore throat, runny nose or stuffy nose. Additional symptoms that may be experienced with swine flu, includes muscle pain, fatigue, and sometimes vomiting or diarrhea. If your child is experiencing any flu-like symptoms, it is important that he or she remain home until the child has gotten better and has been well for two days. In order to reduce the spread of germs, you should avoid taking your children to public gatherings such as the mall or sporting events while they are sick.

If your child has what appears to be a spring cold or virus with low fever, cough and sneezing, this may be treated in the usual fashion with rest and fluids. If the symptoms persist longer or are getting worse, such as shortness of breath, call your physician for advice. Only persons with more severe symptoms who have been in areas that already have swine flu will be tested and if indicated may be treated with antiviral medicines.

It is also important to teach your children how to reduce the risk of getting the flu and how to protect others from infection. A one-page fact sheet, ***Preventing the Flu: Good Health Habits Can Help Stop Germs*** is attached for your information.

General tips for decreasing the spread of germs include:

- Most important: washing your hands often with soap and water, especially after you cough or sneeze. If water is not available, alcohol-based hand sanitizers can be used. Gels, rubs and hand wipes all work well, as long as they contain at least 60% alcohol. Hand wipes must be disposed of

properly. Always read and follow label instructions when using hand sanitizer.

- Covering your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze (if a tissue is not available, the crook of the arm).
- Teach your children to keep their hands away from their face and avoid touching their mouth, nose or eyes.
- Carefully dispose of the tissues in a wastebasket, and then wash your hands.
- Do not share drinking cups or food.

We are consulting with local health officials regarding best cleaning practices for infection control in our buildings should a case of swine flu occur.

While the current situation does not warrant school closure, if a confirmed case of swine flu is reported in our building, it may be necessary for us to close for several days. We will communicate with you immediately in the event of a school closure.

Please stay informed. For information about swine flu, visit the DPH's web site at <http://www.ct.gov/ctfluwatch/swineflu> , the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) at www.cdc.gov/flu/swine , www.eosmith.org or by calling the E.O Smith High School Health Office (487-4519).

Be assured that we are monitoring this potential health threat closely, and will give you more advice as it becomes available.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Bruce W. Silva". The signature is stylized and cursive.

Bruce W. Silva
Superintendent

Preventing the Flu: Good Health Habits Can Help Stop Germs

Fact Sheet

1. Avoid close contact.

Avoid close contact with people who are sick. When you are sick, keep your distance from others to protect them from getting sick too.

2. Stay home when you are sick.

Stay home from work, school, and errands when you are sick. Keep sick children at home. You will help prevent others from catching the illness.

3. Cover your mouth and nose.

Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when coughing or sneezing. Throw the tissue in the trash after you use it.

4. Wash your hands often.

Washing your hands and the hands of your children often will help protect you from germs.

5. Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth.

Germs are often spread when a person touches something that is contaminated with germs and then touches his or her eyes, nose, or mouth.

6. Practice other good health habits.

Get plenty of sleep, be physically active, manage your stress, drink plenty of fluids, and eat nutritious food.