

# WEST OTTAWA PUBLIC SCHOOLS

## *"PREPARING FUTURE THINKERS"*

October 20, 2009

Dear Parents and Guardians:

I hope this letter finds you all healthy. I am writing to give you an update on the H1N1 influenza and to inform you of how we will proceed with flu outbreaks within the district.

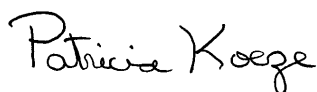
We are working very closely with the Ottawa County Health Department (OCHD) to monitor the health and safety of our students. Our website and District News contain information on how to protect you and your children from getting sick during this flu season as well as a link to the Health Department web page. If you suspect your child has the flu, please see your health care provider. Symptoms of H1N1 influenza include fever, cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, body aches, headache, chill, and fatigue. If your child is sick with these symptoms, please keep them home from school for at least 24 hours after their fever is gone. (The fever should be gone without the use of a fever-reducing medicine.) This will help prevent the spread of this illness to others.

This school year, the protocol coming from the Center for Disease Control and the Health Department is a bit different from last year. Schools will not be closed due to a single confirmed case of H1N1. We know that we already have cases of H1N1 in West Ottawa and throughout Ottawa County, therefore the decision to close a school will be based on the number and severity of cases. We continue to monitor the attendance at each building carefully. So far, cases have been mild and our attendance has been above 90 percent in all of our buildings. If a building attendance drops below 75 percent, we may need to close the school but will make this decision in conjunction with the Health Department. Due to the number of cases the OCHD anticipates, we will not be able to send a letter home each time we receive notification of another confirmed case but will update you as needed.

We are hoping that the H1N1 influenza does not spread as expected, but we all need to follow the guidelines from the Health Department to keep our community safe. These guidelines include:

- get a seasonal flu vaccination and the novel H1N1 vaccine for your child when it becomes available
- advise children to cover their nose and mouth with a tissue when they cough or sneeze
- wash hands often
- have children avoid touching their eyes, nose, or mouth
- keep your child home when sick with flu like symptoms

Sincerely,



Dr. Patricia Koeze  
Superintendent