THE BROOKLYN SCHOOL
Superintendent's Office
Phone: (860) 774-9153
Fax: (860) 774-6938
119 GORMAN ROAD, BROOKLYN, CONNECTICUT 06234

October 20, 2009

Dear Parent,

We are notifying you that the Brooklyn School system is seeing an increase in influenza-like illness (ILI) among our students and staff. We believe that some of these individuals may be ill with the new 2009 H1N1 flu (also known as "swine flu"). Most cases being reported throughout the United States have been similar in severity to seasonal flu which circulates in our communities every year.

Ill students and staff have been asked to remain at home until at least 24 hours after their fever is gone without the use of fever-reducing medications and parents are advised to contact their medical providers with any questions or concerns.

The school district is following the recommendations of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and state and local health officials to protect our students and staff.

The best way to protect people from the flu and other illnesses is to keep sick people away from healthy people. **The most important thing you can do at this time to help us minimize the spread of illness is to keep your child or children home <u>if they are sick.</u>** Please check your child every morning before sending him or her to school or child care:

If your child has:	**Then:**
Fever (100 F or 37.8 C) **<u>AND</u>** either sore throat or cough. These symptoms may suggest influenza-like illness. Your child may have the flu. Other symptoms can include runny nose, body aches, vomiting and diarrhea.	Keep your child home from school and child care until at least 24 hours after their fever is gone (once they have stopped taking fever-reducing medicine.) Medicines that contain acetaminophen (Tylenol) or ibuprofen (Motrin) can reduce fever and relieve pain. As the sick person begins to feel better you may decide to stop giving them fever-reducing medicines. Continue to monitor their temperature until it has been normal (98.7 F or 37 C) for 24 hours. Aspirin should NOT be given to children or teenagers with the flu as this can cause a rare but serious illness called Reye's syndrome.

If your child has other symptoms:	**Then:**
• Fever alone, OR • Vomiting or diarrhea, OR • Sore throat or new cough with no fever	Keep your child home from school and child care until fever and non-fever symptoms are gone for 24 hours. If fever is present, follow guidance in box above.

When you call in your child's absence, please inform a school nurse of your child's symptoms and when the symptoms started.

Children who are well and do not have flu-like illness do not need to stay home from school (even if they have a parent or sibling sick with the flu.) However, if they start to develop symptoms, they should not attend school.

The health and safety of your child is our number one priority, so we will be monitoring for influenza-like illness in our schools. If your child comes to school with the symptoms of flu or if your child develops these symptoms once in school, your child will be sent home until their symptoms are gone for 24 hours.

When should a child go to the doctor?

Most children recover from influenza quickly without treatment. However, you may want to contact your medical provider for advice, especially if your child has any underlying health conditions that may put him/her at higher risk of complications from influenza. Those at higher risk include:

- People under 5 years of age or over 65
- People with chronic lung disorders such as asthma or emphysema
- People with chronic heart, kidney, liver or blood disorders
- People with diabetes
- People whose immune systems are compromised by illness or medication
- Pregnant women
- People on long-term aspirin therapy

As a rule of thumb, call your health care provider if your child is ill enough that you would normally seek medical treatment. Use the same judgment that you would use during a normal flu season.

At this time, following CDC, state and local guidance, Brooklyn Schools will remain open.

Please know that we are providing notification as soon as is reasonably possible. There are many factors involved with illness being reported including:

- In most cases, people thought to be sick with H1N1 are not being tested unless hospitalization is required, so it is difficult to get an accurate measure of confirmed cases.
- There are students and staff who may be absent with illness NOT related to H1N1.
- There are parents who may be keeping their well children home. This is ***not*** recommended as well-child absenteeism may cause unnecessary disruptions to the educational environment.

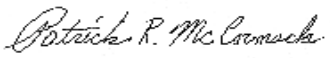
Guidance may change depending on the severity and amount of flu cases that develop. We will keep you informed as new information becomes available.

Information is also available online:

- Connecticut Flu Watch Novel H1N1 Flu (Swine Flu) web site: http://www.ct.gov/ctfluwatch
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) web site: http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu
- United States Health and Human Services website: www.flu.gov
- Northeast District Department of Health website: www.nddh.org or call 860-774-7350

Thank you for your attention to this serious matter and for helping us to keep our schools as healthy as possible for all students and staff.

Sincerely,



Dr. Louise Berry
Superintendent of Schools

Patrick McCormack, MPH
Interim Director of Health