

NEW MILFORD PUBLIC SCHOOLS
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Laura M. Olson
Director of Special Services and Pupil Personnel

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Dear Parents/Guardians:

This notice is to make you aware of a virus, Enterovirus D68 (EV-68), which may cause severe respiratory illness in some children and adolescents. The virus has recently been identified in New York with a confirmed case in Connecticut. In most children, the virus will cause mild symptoms which may include fever, runny nose, sneezing, cough and/or body and muscle aches. In some children the virus may cause difficulty breathing and wheezing. Children with a history of asthma or other respiratory disease are at higher risk for severe symptoms. The virus can be spread by an infected person's respiratory secretions, such as saliva, nasal mucus, or sputum. It may also be spread when someone touches a contaminated surface. If at any time your child experiences difficulty breathing, wheezing or a decrease in activity, seek medical attention.

In addition, as the fall and winter months approach so does the "flu season." Since it is not possible to predict what the rate of infection will be in the weeks ahead, we each need to take precautions to minimize the spread of both Enterovirus D68 and flu within our homes, schools and community. These same precautions also mitigate the spread of other communicable diseases.

Every member of the school community – staff members, students and parents – must consider potential harm to others when making decisions to come (or send a child) to school with early symptoms of an acute illness.

We need your cooperation to help minimize the prevalence and spread of flu and flu-like illness in our community. Please:

- Consult with your health care providers regarding flu vaccine for you and your children. The CDC recommends annual influenza vaccination for everyone 6 months and older. Pre-school students participating in the Excel program are required by the State of CT to receive a flu vaccine each year.
- Be knowledgeable regarding Enterovirus D68 and influenza. For current information, see [http://www.cdc.gov/non-polio-enterovirus/about EV-D68](http://www.cdc.gov/non-polio-enterovirus/about-EV-D68).
- Make plans for child care in the event that your child becomes ill.
- Teach your children preventive strategies, such as: avoiding close contact with others; covering their mouth and nose with a tissue when sneezing/coughing (or coughing/sneezing into an elbow rather than hand); disposing of used tissue into a wastebasket; frequently washing their hands (or using an alcohol-

based sanitizer if hand washing is not feasible); and not touching their eyes, nose or mouth.

- **Keep your children home when they have early symptoms** indicative of illness (e.g., fever, headache, runny nose, extreme fatigue, and cough, sore throat, muscle aches). Individuals may be contagious for at least one day before the onset of symptoms, and for up to seven days after getting sick.
- **Keep your children home until they are fully recovered** from the acute phase of illness (e.g., have had no fever, vomiting or diarrhea for *at least 24 hours*; are no longer significantly fatigued or in need of extra sleep; and have significantly reduced respiratory symptoms). A normal temperature in the morning does not indicate the end of fever or illness. It is not unusual for fever to be absent in the early morning hours but appear (or reappear) in the afternoon or evening hours. A minimum of a full 24 hours of normal temperature – without Acetaminophen or Ibuprofen – is essential before a child returns to school. **Recovery from the acute phase of the illness may require several days of rest and care at home.**
- Consult with your child's physician should you have questions regarding the prevention and treatment of flu and flu-like illness in your family.

If parents and staff members follow the above guidelines and collaborate in teaching children effective prevention strategies, we may succeed in decreasing the spread of flu and other illnesses within the school community. In turn, we may succeed in protecting some of our more vulnerable community members.

Thank you in advance for your collaboration in prevention efforts this year.

Sincerely,



Laura M. Olson
NMPS Director of Pupil Personnel



Dr. Evan Hack
NMPS Medical Advisor