



Jim Schultz
Superintendent
jschultz@bhbl.org

50 Cypress Drive
Glenville, NY 12302
www.bhbl.org

Voice: (518) 399-9141, ext. 5002
Fax: (518) 399-1882

Burnt Hills-Ballston Lake Central Schools

Ensuring
opportunities
for learning,
personal growth
and social
responsibility.

September 14, 2009

Dear parent or guardian of a BH-BL student:

The Centers for Disease Control expect that cases of H1N1 influenza, commonly called swine flu, will increase significantly this fall. The BH-BL school nurses and I have been doing a lot of homework over the summer to monitor flu developments, to meet with local health authorities, and to plan for various contingencies.

We are sending you an excellent, up-to-date brochure from the CDC, and also ask all BH-BL parents and staff to read and think about the following 10 points:


1. This flu spreads easily. There is a good chance a large number of people throughout New York will get H1N1 flu during the coming year. No one really knows what will happen because this is such a new virus, but some health authorities expect that up to one-third of the population or more may become infected at some point this fall and winter. So far, adults age 60 and older are becoming infected less often, while children ages 5 to 24 seem to be more vulnerable to infection.
2. The good news, however, is that the H1N1 flu is generally mild. Most people have recovered fairly quickly (3-5 days). Severe or serious side effects are possible for both children and adults who have other health issues. (If you have questions about health factors that may increase risk, please consult your physician.)
3. To reduce the spread of H1N1, it is very important that everyone knows what the flu symptoms are and STAYS HOME when they occur. This is true for both adults and children. Adults should not go to work if they are ill. Children should not go to school or a day care center if they are ill. Stay at home for at least 24 hours after the fever is gone (without the use of a fever-reducing medication).
4. Parents should also know that if children become ill during the school day with flu-like symptoms, we will SEND THEM HOME. We know this is a challenge for working parents, but it is our responsibility to remove ill children from school as quickly as possible. **Please discuss and make contingency child care plans NOW for how you will handle this possibility in your family.** To reduce the spread of disease, students who have flu-like symptoms at school will be segregated and may be given surgical masks to wear. We need you to pick them up within 30-45 minutes of notification.
5. The best ways to prevent the spread of flu are frequent hand washing plus covering your mouth and nose when you cough or sneeze with a tissue or the crook of your elbow. We will be stressing this in school and ask that you do the same at home. See the CDC's brochure for more details.
6. On all issues related to the flu, BH-BL will continue to monitor the advice from and consult with health authorities including the CDC, our state and county Health Departments, and our district physician, Dr. Sipperly. *(Over)*





7. We will not be closing school for a few cases of H1N1 flu this year, just as we have not closed school in the past for a few cases of seasonal flu. However, if infection levels among either staff or students become high, we may need to close. This is another reason why we need everyone's help to reduce the spread of this virus.
8. Vaccinations: The CDC expects to have an effective H1N1 vaccine available sometime in October. The demand for this vaccine could exceed the available supply, and we are told that vaccination of school-age children will be a priority. While we are hearing that there may be vaccination clinics at some schools (and will happily participate in this if asked to do so by our County Health Departments), we remind parents that your first line of defense on any health-related issue should always be your family physician. While we wait for details to be announced by health authorities, vaccination is a subject you may wish to discuss with your family physician.
9. The best ways for BH-BL parents to stay informed about H1N1 flu developments in our school district are to:
 - a. Check the BH-BL website at www.bhbl.org — we will be posting suggestions and new developments there, plus links to updated flu information available on the CDC's and other health department websites.
 - b. Sign up for the BH-BL "School News Notifier" (SNN) service by clicking on the large SNN logo on the district website. If there is a school closing or important flu-related news at any our schools, you will receive an SNN email informing you about that. (Even if you already have an SNN account from last year, be sure to look on the website for the new SNN features and school-specific news alerts that were just added in August.)
10. Especially if local H1N1 levels become high, it will be very important for parents to remain calm and to work in partnership with school staff and physicians on this issue. Rumors and misinformation can be harmful and frighten children. If someone tells you something alarming, please check the facts before you share it with others. Factual material is available via www.bhbl.org and in the enclosed CDC brochure. Your physician or school nurse can also answer questions.

Hopefully our community will get through the upcoming flu season with fewer cases than predicted. We thank you in advance for your cooperation with the school district on this important topic.

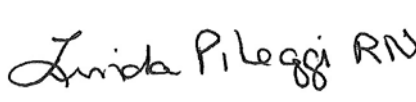
Sincerely,

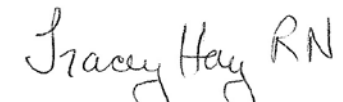

 Jim Schultz
 Superintendent of Schools


 Donna Fredericks
 BH-BL High School Nurse


 Colleen Ferlo
 O'Rourke Middle School Nurse


 Kathy Greco
 Charlton Heights School Nurse


 Linda Pileggi
 Pashley School Nurse


 Tracey Hay
 Stevens School Nurse