

Madrid-Waddington Central School

M. Roy, Superintendent

P O Box 67
Madrid, NY 13660

<http://Www.mwcsk12.org>

Tel. 315 322-5746
Fax 315 322-4462

May 4, 2009

Dear Parents/Guardians:

Commissioner Richard Mills from the NYS Education Department has requested that school districts inform parents that the State of New York has entered a heightened surveillance stage resulting from the presence of an H IN 1 (swine flu) virus that is making people sick in several states, including New York State, and also in Mexico. It is important to note that, to date, primarily mild illness resulting from the flu has occurred in the United States. Despite confirmed cases of H IN I flu in a few New York State schools, we believe students can safely attend classes. Madrid-Waddington Central School will remain open at this time.

Since flu spreads easily there are precautions you should consider taking to reduce the risk of becoming ill. Flu-like symptoms include: fever (over 100 degrees F), feverishness, cough, sore throat, runny nose, or stuffy nose. Additional symptoms may be experienced with H IN I flu, including muscle pain, fatigue, and sometimes vomiting or diarrhea. If you suspect your child is getting the flu, it is important that he/she does not attend school or go anywhere else—such as group childcare, shopping, or sporting events—where other people would be exposed to flu germs. It is also important to teach your children how to reduce their risk of getting the flu and protect others from infection.

Teach your children to wash their hands often. Washing with soap and hot water for at least 20 seconds is ideal (that's about as long as it takes to sing the "Happy Birthday" song twice).

Teach your children the proper use of hand sanitizer. 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. (Parents of young children please note: **Hand sanitizers can be** very dangerous if ingested.)

- Teach your children to keep their hands away from their face and avoid touching their mouth, nose, or eyes.

Teach your children to cover coughs and sneezes with tissues or by coughing into the inside of their elbow. Cough or sneeze into your sleeve—not your hands!

- Help your children to learn these healthy habits by setting a good example and always doing them yourself.

If we all practice good hygiene, health officials believe we can limit the spread of flu.

While the current situation does not warrant school closure, if the H IN I flu continues to spread and more students become ill, it may become necessary to close schools for a period of time. District administrators are working with our School Medical Team and County Health Officials to monitor the situation here and will make all decisions in consultation with them and State officials. We will inform parents immediately if the situation changes.

Contingency plans are being developed should the need arise to close school. Please make similar arrangements in the event school closings occur. Gatherings of children that are comparable to family-sized units may be acceptable. Group sizes should be held to a minimum (5 or fewer children) and mixing between groups should be minimized. Having a family discussion now to consider options in advance of a school closing represents good judgment and planning.

Community members and parents may stay informed by accessing information on the internet at www.cdc.gov, www.nyhealth.gov, www.schoolhealthservicesny.com, or the 24 hour toll free hotline that New York State provides to answer questions. The hotline number is 1-800-808-1987.

As always, information can be obtained on the district website, www.mwcsk12.org or by calling district administrators at 322-5746. Enclosed for your assistance is a parent's resource for talking to children about the H IN I flu virus. Frequently Asked Questions and answers are also posted on our website or available in district offices.

Thank you for your cooperation in keeping our children and our schools healthy.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Lynn M. Roy", is written over a light blue rectangular background.

Lynn M. Roy