

☞ **Washington Township School District** ☞  
“*Making a Difference*”

Brass Castle School  
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Valerie Mattes, *Principal*

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Roger A. Jinks, Superintendent

Port Colden School  
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Marjorie Levine, *Principal*

April 30, 2009

Dear Parents:

I am writing to update you on the Swine Influenza (flu) situation with respect to our school and to share the attached Center for Disease Control and Prevention's Fact Sheet.

At this time we have not received word from the state and local health departments advising us to close school. We suggest that you continue to send your children to school, as long as they are not sick and/or experiencing flu-like symptoms. Flu-like symptoms include fever, cough, sore throat, runny nose or stuffy nose. Additional symptoms that may be experienced with swine flu include muscle pain, fatigue, and sometimes vomiting or diarrhea. If your child is experiencing any flu-like symptoms, it is important that you contact your physician immediately. Please see attached CDC fact sheet.

In the evenings our custodians are taking special precautions to keep our classrooms as germ free as possible. All telephones, door knobs, water fountains, desks (on a rotating basis), light switches, backs of chairs, and other commonly touched areas are being cleaned and disinfected nightly. We are encouraging all students and staff to wash their hands as often as possible, especially after a cough or a sneeze.

It is suggested that parents avoid taking their children to closed-in public gathering places such as the mall. It is also important to teach your children how to reduce the risk of getting the flu and how to protect others from infection. Some general tips for decreasing the spread of germs include:

- Covering your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze (if a tissue is not available, the crook of the arm). Carefully dispose of the tissues in a wastebasket, and then wash your hands.
- Teach your children to keep their hands away from their face and avoid touching their mouth, nose or eyes.
- Wash your hands as often as possible. If water is not available, an alcohol-based hand sanitizer can be used. Products such as hand gels, rubs and hand wipes all work well, providing they contain at least 60% alcohol. Once used the hand wipes need to be disposed of properly.
- Do not share drinking cups or food.

While the current circumstances do not warrant school closure, information about the spread of swine flu changes by the minute and is being monitored by the Warren County Department of Health, New Jersey Department of Education and our Central Office. If a confirmed case of swine flu is reported in a school within our region, we may be required to close school for several days. We will communicate with you immediately in the event of a school closure via our automated phone system. With respect to class trips, we have not canceled any trips at this time but are prepared to do so in order to keep our children and staff healthy and safe.

If schools are closed, students should be kept home. Avoid visiting public gatherings or making arrangements for your children to visit a friend's home, group childcare, or another setting that will put them in close contact with other children. We understand that this may be a challenge for your family and recommend you plan ahead in case of a school closing.

If you would like to know more about the Swine Flu, we recommend you check the following:

Center for Disease Control: <http://www.cdc.gov/swineflu/htm>

Swine Flu Information for Concerned Caregivers and Parents: <http://www.cdc.gov/swineflu/parents.htm>

Warren County Board of Health: 908-475-7960

Roger A. Jinks  
Superintendent of Schools