



Kenora Catholic District School Board

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Chair of the Board: Darryl Michaluk

Director of Education: Phyllis Eikre

May 4, 2009

Dear Parents and Guardians,

Communication regarding: H1N1 Virus

As you are already aware there have been many cases of the H1N1 virus within Canada and around the world. While there have been no reported cases in our region we are taking this alert very seriously and monitoring the spread of the H1N1 virus closely.

As a result of the H1N1 virus alert, we have increased our focus on hygiene in the following areas:

- Sanitization stations are set up at the entrance of each of our schools, Catholic Education Center and our Maintenance Shop. All visitors, students and staff are required to sanitize their hands upon entrance
- An increased focus on daily hygiene practices is underway with our students and staff i.e., sneezing into the crook of the elbow in order not to spread flu germs into a large surrounding area as well as a focus on increased hand washing
- Custodians and Maintenance staff are increasing sanitization practices of contact areas such as door handles and light switches

The safety of our students and staff is of the utmost importance to us. As we continue to monitor this alert closely we will be keeping in contact with the Northwestern Health Unit to ensure that we are receiving updated information. Please see the attached Influenza Update letter from Dr. James R. Arthur which is attached to this letter.

We appreciate your support at home during this alert. Please visit the Northwestern Healthy Unit website at www.nwhu.on.ca for updates on the H1N1 flu virus. There are also useful guides for staff and parents such as: Is it a Cold or the Flu, Flu a Guide for Parents, Hand Washing Techniques, Hand Washing for Parents and Kids.

Although this is not a pandemic alert, we will be following the Kenora Catholic District School Board Pandemic Plan closely through this increased time of vigilance. If you would like to review our Pandemic Plan please visit our website at www.kcdsb.on.ca

If you have any questions please do not hesitate to call your school Principal. Thank you for the important role you play in supporting our Catholic Schools.

Sincerely,

Phyllis Eikre,
Director of Education

C: System Wide

**Influenza Update**

May 1, 2009

4:30 PM CST

**Dr. James R. Arthurs
Medical Officer of Health (A)**

Again as we have anticipated, the numbers of confirmed cases of H1N1 influenza virus (human swine flu) continue to rise in Ontario, across Canada, and globally. However, it is very important to keep in mind that the increase to date is less than what may have been expected in a worst case scenario.

Four new cases are confirmed in Ontario, for a total of 12 confirmed cases (4 male and 8 female). The age range is 21-40 years with an average of 25 years. Other cases that fit the category of: 1) a person who is ill with flu-like symptoms of cough, fever and myalgias, and 2) is a traveler returned from Mexico within 7 days of onset of symptoms; or 3) has had contact with a confirmed case, are under investigation. This number will constantly change.

We continue to expect more cases in Ontario as results come in as a natural spread, but also due to increased capacity for testing is available.

Several issues were discussed at the daily MOH teleconference with Dr. Williams, Chief Medical Officer of Health, and his subsequent News Conference this afternoon:

- Schools - School closures are not being recommended at this time. A student should stay home if ill. It is recommended that asymptomatic students who have not been ill regardless of travel history should be allowed to attend school.
- Severity - There is no evidence to date of high severity or high infectability any different from seasonal flu.
- Schools, municipalities and businesses with concerns regarding closure or isolation of asymptomatic travelers should consult their local Public Health Unit.
- Anti-virals - Be assured that in the face of much greater numbers of cases, or specific localized outbreaks, that access to anti-virals is available.
- It is not recommended to use anti-virals for prophylaxis or treatment of mildly ill but not confirmed cases.
- Let me remind you that seasonal flu is still around and it can cause serious illness and fatalities: an average 4000-6000 in Canada annually.
- Let me also remind you again that the best personal prevention is hand washing, covering coughs and sneezes, and prudent social distancing.

From the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care News Release, May 1, 2009:

FOUR NEW CONFIRMED CASES OF H1N1 FLU VIRUS (HUMAN SWINE FLU) IN ONTARIO

All Cases Are Mild And Recovering At Home

Dr. David Williams, Ontario's Acting Chief Medical Officer of Health, says there are four new confirmed cases of H1N1 flu virus (human swine flu), bringing to 12 the total number of cases in Ontario.

All cases involved travel to Mexico. Laboratory testing has confirmed that this H1N1 flu virus is the same as the one in Mexico and the United States.

The new cases include two in Toronto and two in Durham Region.

All of the new cases are considered mild and the individuals are recovering at home.

QUOTES

"We expect that there will be more cases of the H1N1 flu being confirmed over the next few days. This will be due to the increased laboratory testing capacity now available in Ontario. As during any flu season, the best way for Ontarians to protect themselves and those around them is to wash hands frequently, cough or sneeze into your sleeve, and stay at home if you're sick." – Dr. David Williams, Ontario's Acting Chief Medical Officer of Health.

If you have further questions or need more information, please contact the Northwestern Health Unit, review our website (www.nwhu.on.ca) or that of the Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care (<http://www.health.gov.on.ca>). An Ontario Service line is available 8 am to 8 pm for additional help: 1-800-476-9708.