

September 14, 2009

Dear Parents and Guardians,

The beginning of the school year has brought increased national and local attention to the H1N1 flu virus, sometimes called swine flu. We at the Capital Region BOCES Career & Technical School are aware of these concerns and are working together to promote a healthy and safe learning environment for your child.

As with any illness, our first goal is prevention. School faculty, administration, staff, students, parents and guardians all play critical roles in preventing the spread of the flu and protecting our health and well-being. The federal Centers for Disease Control, the New York State Department of Health and the Capital Region BOCES all have provided a wealth of information regarding H1N1 (swine) flu.

As you may know, flu can be easily spread from person to person. Therefore, we are taking steps to reduce the spread of flu in our school. We want to keep the school open to students and functioning in a normal manner during this flu season. But, we need your help to do this.

Here are four key guidelines for us all:

1. Stay home if you are sick.
2. Wash your hands often and thoroughly: Wash 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).
3. Cover your coughs and sneezes with tissues or with the inside of your elbow. Don't cough into your hands!
4. It's recommended that individuals may return to school after a minimum of 24 hours free of fever, without fever-reducing medications.

Some other useful info to share with your child and practice yourself:

- Hand sanitizer gels, rubs, and hand wipes containing at least 60% alcohol work well when used according to label directions.
- Keep your hands away from your face and avoid touching your mouth, nose, or eyes.
- Besides staying home from school or work, individuals suspected of getting the flu should not go anywhere else – sporting events, shopping, social gatherings, etc.
- Distance yourself from ill individuals.

Flu-like symptoms include: fever (over 100 degrees F.), feverishness, cough, sore throat, runny nose, or stuffy nose. Additional symptoms may include muscle pain, fatigue, and vomiting or diarrhea. Contact your physician or family health care professional if your child becomes ill.

Our school nurses will be reaching out to educate our campuses about the flu and as always, are available to students and staff who have questions or concerns. The New York State Department of Health also operates a 24-hour, toll-free hotline: 1-800-808-1987. Information is also available at www.cdc.gov and www.nyhealth.gov.

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

Sincerely,

Terry Swett
Albany campus principal

Denise Capece
Schoharie campus interim principal