



April 28, 2009

A Regional Educational Service Center

Dear Parent/Guardian,

The purpose of this letter is to provide you with some information about what you have been hearing/reading in the media about the swine influenza (flu) situation and to share public health recommendations that have been made to address it. Although at this time, there has been no confirmed case of the swine flu to our knowledge in any of our programs, there have been questions prompted by the media reports.

In response to general concerns raised, the State of Connecticut Department of Public Health (DPH) and the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) sent all school districts some information that they would like us to share with you. The State of Connecticut is carefully tracking swine flu in response to the recently reported cases in the U.S. and other countries.

At this time, the state and local health departments have advised that students can continue to attend school, as long as they are not sick and do not have flu-like symptoms. Flu-like symptoms include fever (over 100°F), 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 he or she remain home until the child has gotten better and has been well for two days. In order to reduce the spread of germs, you should avoid taking your children to public gatherings such as the mall or sporting events while they are sick. It is also important to teach your children how to reduce the risk of getting the flu and how to protect others from infection. Please notify your child's program if your child has a case of the flu so we can be aware of it. A one-page fact sheet, *Preventing the Flu: Good Health Habits Can Help Stop Germs*, is attached for your information. Where appropriate, share this information with your child.

General tips for decreasing the spread of germs include:

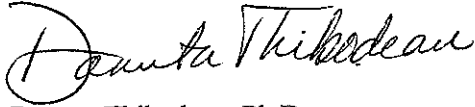
- Most important: washing your hands often with soap and water, especially after you cough or sneeze. If water is not available, alcohol-based hand sanitizers can be used. Gels, rubs and hand wipes all work well, as long as they contain at least 60% alcohol. Hand wipes must be disposed of properly. Always read and follow label instructions when using hand sanitizer.
- Covering your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze (if a tissue is not available, the crook of the arm).
- Teach your children to keep their hands away from their face and avoid touching their mouth, nose, or eyes.
- Carefully dispose of the tissues in a wastebasket, and then wash your hands.
- Do not share drinking cups or food.

While the current situation does not warrant a consideration of program closure, if a confirmed case of swine flu is reported in any EDUCATION CONNECTION program, we may have to consider closing that program for several days to limit spreading. If a closing of one of our programs is considered necessary, we will communicate with you immediately. We understand that this may be a challenge for your family, and recommend you plan ahead in case of a program closing.

For more information about swine flu, visit the DPH's website at <http://www.ct.gov/ctfluwatch/swineflu> or [www.educationconnection.org](http://www.educationconnection.org) (click on swine flu link).

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

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Danuta Thibodeau". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name and title.

Danuta Thibodeau, Ph.D.  
Executive Director