

May 5, 2009

A message to parents/guardians, students and staff

Human Influenza A - H1N1 (Swine Flu)

As you are aware, various international health organizations have identified a new strain of influenza, Human Influenza A - H1N1 (Swine Flu), which has been reported in several countries around the world, including Canada. The *World Health Organization (WHO)* and health officials are still learning more about this disease and its spread.

Our regional health authorities, from whom school boards, including Dufferin-Peel Catholic District School Board take direction on matters concerning public health, are working with the *Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care* and the *Public Health Agency of Canada* to monitor and investigate the impact of this disease in our communities. We are in daily contact with both *Peel Health* and the *Wellington/Dufferin/Guelph Health Unit*. We have been advised that there are no special precautions or actions that need to be taken by schools or by the board at this time.

Our board is ready to respond and will take whatever advice or action that our regional health authorities recommend to reduce the risk to our school and system communities.

We remind students and staff to continue to reinforce the use of prevention strategies to reduce the spread of influenza. These strategies include:

- ▶ Washing hands well and often with soap and warm water;
- ▶ Covering your mouth and nose with a tissue when you sneeze and cough;
- ▶ Coughing and sneezing into your sleeve or arm;
- ▶ Avoiding contact with sick people;
- ▶ Avoiding touching your eyes, nose and mouth;
- ▶ If you are experiencing flu-like symptoms, contact your family doctor and stay at home if you are ill.

School administrators and school staff continue to monitor the general health condition of students. As is our standard practice, if students exhibit symptoms of illness, parents/guardians are called and advised to have students stay home until they are well. As always, the safety and well-being of our students and staff, and the safe operation of our schools are our priority.

For health-related information and updates, please visit the *Peel Health* website at <http://www.peelregion.ca/health/index.htm>, or the *Wellington/Dufferin/Guelph Health Unit* website at <http://www.wdghu.org/>. You can also call *Telehealth Ontario* at 1-866-797-0000.

For school-related inquiries, please contact your school principal. Please keep apprised of school board information on our website at www.dpdsb.org.

Sincerely,



John B. Kostoff
Director of Education

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