



**Health Services**  
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Dear Parents,

This letter is to inform you that the State of New York has entered a heightened surveillance stage resulting from the presence of a swine flu virus. Although, to date, only mild illness has occurred in the United States, we realize that many people are worried and we hope this letter will help address your concerns. We believe students can safely attend classes and schools will remain open at this time.

State and local health departments have advised us that students can continue to come to school, as long as they are not sick and do not have flu symptoms. Flu-like symptoms include: fever (over 100 degrees F.), cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose. Other symptoms may include muscle pain, fatigue, and vomiting or diarrhea. If your child experiences flu like symptoms, the school nurse will call you to pick up your child from school. Please have a plan in place on how to get your child home, should they exhibit these symptoms.

Flu spreads easily. If you suspect your child is getting the flu, it is important that he/she does not attend school or go anywhere else—such as group childcare, the mall, or sporting events—where other people would be exposed to flu germs. It is also important to teach your children how to reduce their risk of getting the flu and protect others from infection.

- Teach your children to wash their hands often. Washing 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).
- Teach your children the proper use of hand sanitizer. 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.
- Teach your children to keep their hands away from their face and avoid touching their mouth, nose, or eyes.
- Teach your children to cover coughs and sneezes with tissues or by coughing into the inside of their elbow. Cough or sneeze into your sleeve—not your hands!
- Teach your children these healthy habits by setting a good example and always doing them yourself.

If we all practice good hygiene, health officials believe we can limit the spread of infections. We are consulting with local health officials regarding best cleaning practices for infection control in our buildings.

While the current situation does not warrant school closure, if swine flu continues to spread and more students become ill, it may become necessary to close schools for a period of time. That decision will be made with County and State Health officials. We will inform parents immediately if the situation changes and it becomes necessary to close schools.

If schools are closed, please do not make arrangements—such as sending children to a friend's home or group childcare—that will put them in close contact with other children. It is important to plan ahead.

**Please stay informed by paying attention to media reports. You may also get information at [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov), [www.nyhealth.gov](http://www.nyhealth.gov), [www.schoolhealthservicesny.com](http://www.schoolhealthservicesny.com), or the 24 hour toll-free hotline that New Yorkers across the State can use to get answers to their questions. The hotline is 1-800-808-1987.**

**If you have any additional questions, please feel free to call your healthcare provider or me at 435-4145.**

Sincerely,

Dr. Richard P. Kulak, FAAFP  
Medical Director