

STONINGTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

49 NORTH STONINGTON ROAD • P.O. BOX 479 • OLD MYSTIC, CONNECTICUT 06372 (860) 572-0506
(860) 572-1470 (Fax)

BOARD OF EDUCATION Gall MacDonald, Chairperson; April Smith, Secretary



INTERIM SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS
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ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT
Leanne Masterjoseph

DIRECTOR OF SPECIAL SERVICES
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William King

October 26, 2009

Dear Parent/Guardian:

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 Stonington Public Schools. We want to keep the schools open to students and functioning in a normal manner during this flu season, **but we need your help to do this.**

We are working closely with the State of Connecticut Public Health Department to monitor flu conditions and to make decisions about the best steps to take concerning schools. We will keep you updated with new information as it becomes available.

We are doing everything we can to keep our schools functioning as usual. Here are a few things you can do to help:

- **Teach your children to wash their hands** often with soap and water or an alcohol-based hand rub.
- **Teach your children not to share personal items** like drinks, food or unwashed utensils, and to cover their coughs and sneezes with tissues. Covering up their coughs or sneezes using the elbow, arm or sleeve instead of the hand is a good idea when a tissue is unavailable.
- **Know the signs and symptoms of the flu.** Symptoms of the flu include fever (100 degrees Fahrenheit, 37.8 degrees Celsius or greater), cough, sore throat, a runny or stuffy nose, body aches, headache, and feeling very tired. Some people may also vomit or have diarrhea.
- **Keep sick children at home** for at least 24 hours after they no longer have fever or do not have signs of fever, without using fever-reducing drugs. Keeping children with a fever at home will reduce the number of people who may become infected.
- **Don't send children to school if they are sick.** Any children who are sick at school will be sent home. Staying home when sick will allow your child to rest and allows you to monitor their health closely. Keeping your sick child home **VERY IMPORTANT.** It also protects fellow students and school staff, especially those who are at higher risk of severe illness from the flu.

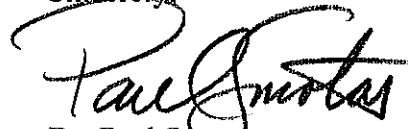
If the flu becomes more severe, we may take additional steps to prevent the spread such as:

- conducting active fever and flu symptom screening of students and staff as they arrive at school,
- making changes to increase the space between people such as moving desks farther apart and postponing class trips, and
- dismissing students from school for at least 7 days if they become sick.

At this time; there are no plans to distribute vaccines in the Stonington Schools. Please watch for announcements in the newspapers for dates, time and locations of vaccination clinics.

For more information visit www.flu.gov, or call 1-800-CDC-INFO for the most current information about the flu. We will notify you of any additional changes to our school's strategy to prevent the spread of the flu.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Paul Smotas". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping initial "P".

Dr. Paul Smotas

Interim Superintendent of Schools

PS/mm

cc: L. Masterjoseph, Assistant Superintendent
G. MacDonald, Board of Education Chairwoman