



## **DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD ONTARIO NORTH EAST**

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October 2009

To All Parents/Guardians:

As we begin another school year, we would like to share important information with you regarding your family's health and this year's influenza season.

This fall and winter, there will be two types of flu viruses circulating in our communities – the seasonal flu viruses and the new H1N1 flu virus.

The flu-like illnesses spread very easily. We encourage everyone to follow the usual infection control precautions to stay healthy and reduce the risk of illness. These precautions include: washing your hands well and often, coughing and sneezing into your sleeve, staying home when you are ill and cleaning and disinfecting shared surfaces. You can help reduce the impact of illness in our community by teaching and encouraging your children to do the same.

### **Practice Good Hygiene:**

District School Board Ontario North East will continue to stress the importance of these above mentioned overall good hygiene practices with your children in order to curb the spread of illness in our school environments. Information and instruction on proper hand washing technique is already in place in our schools and is being re-emphasized, along with the advice to avoid sharing food, beverages and other personal items.

### **Monitor Your Child's Health:**

You are encouraged to check your child for symptoms of influenza-like illness daily before sending him/her to school. Symptoms of influenza-like illness are the acute onset of respiratory symptoms with fever (over 100 degrees Fahrenheit/38 degrees Celsius) and cough plus one or more of the following: sore throat, muscle aches, joint pain or weakness. In children under five years of age, vomiting or diarrhea may also be present and no fever prominent.

If your child is ill or exhibiting flu-like symptoms, please keep your child at home until s/he feels better and is no longer exhibiting flu-like symptoms. Students who become ill at school will be isolated and will need to be picked up at school. As per standard school practice, all school staff are vigilant for ill students and will report any concerns to their principal. Our school caretakers continue to provide very thorough and effective cleaning and disinfection as part of their daily routines.

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The Temiskaming and Porcupine Health Units have been monitoring the local H1N1 situation and are working closely with other levels of government and various stakeholders, including District School Board Ontario North East. Two flu vaccines are being developed against these viruses. The seasonal flu vaccine will be available as usual in the fall, while the H1N1 flu vaccine will also be made available. Further information will be provided to you by the Temiskaming and Porcupine Health Units when it becomes available.

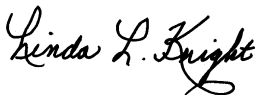
Our organizations will continue to work closely with one another. Schools will continue to operate as per their daily routines. Any decision to close or modify school operations due to illness will be made in consultation with the Temiskaming and Porcupine Health Units.

In preparation for the upcoming flu season, we encourage you to review your own plans for what to do if your child is sick.

If you have any concerns about your child's health, please contact your family physician.

Additional information and resources are posted on [www.dsb1.edu.on.ca](http://www.dsb1.edu.on.ca)

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Linda L. Knight". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, decorative initial 'L'.

Linda L. Knight  
Director of Education