

Gibraltar School District



Mr. Bruce S. Burger, Superintendent
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Visit our website at: www.gibdist.net

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Dear Parent/Guardian,

The Gibraltar School District is writing this letter for all of our parents due to concern about how schools are going to report confirmed H1N1 flu cases. We hope that the following information will help to clarify our position and guide you in your individual decision making.

Novel 2009 H1N1 Influenza A (Swine flu) was declared a pandemic (meaning it is present all over the world and spreads rapidly) by the World Health Organization in June of this year. Cases in this country were first reported in the spring of 2009 and have continued all summer with some areas of the country experiencing a heavier incidence of disease than others. Since late summer and early fall the rate of spread has increased. As of 10-16-09 the map of the United States on the Center for Disease Control (CDC) website shows 41 states that are classified as having widespread H1N1 flu. Michigan is still classified as "regional," but it is surrounded by states labeled "widespread." More cases of H1N1 are being reported in Michigan every day and it is just a matter of time before our state will be classified as "widespread" by the CDC.

So what does this imply for our district? It means that we are not an exception. We have had documented cases of H1N1 in our school community and these cases are only going to increase in number. At this point it serves no purpose to send home new letters every day. The flu is here! To protect our children and community members the best way possible, please follow these guidelines:

- ✓ **Get immunized!** This is the most important thing you can do for protection. **Free** walk-in clinics will be provided by the Wayne County Public Health Department (WCPHD) for mass delivery of H1N1 immunization (see our www.gibdist.net for locations). In addition all of the regular WCPHD immunization clinics will be offering H1N1 vaccine. Private care providers will have vaccine soon, so you can stay in touch with those offices for their times. Priority "high risk" groups need to receive their vaccine first, but everyone will be able to get immunized as more supplies of vaccine are made available. High risk groups are as follows:
 - Pregnant women
 - Anyone 6 months to 24 years of age
 - Anyone in close contact with children under 6 months
 - Anyone 24 to 64 with underlying health conditions, such as asthma, diabetes, and immune suppression (talk with your primary care provider if you are not sure)
 - Emergency medical personal and health care workers

It is the policy of the Gibraltar School District not to discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, gender/sex, age, disability, height, weight or marital status in its programs, services or activities. The following people have been designated to handle inquiries regarding the discrimination policies: Inquiries related to discrimination on the basis of disability should be directed to: Belinda Livingston, Parsons Elementary School, 14473 M. Gibraltar Rd, Gibraltar, MI 48173. Direct all other inquiries related to discrimination to: Kathy Wayda, Finance Manager, 19370 Vreeland Rd, Woodhaven, MI 48183

- ✓ **Be alert to signs of flu-like-illness:**
 - Temperature **over** 100° F or 37.8° C
 - Sore throat, headache, runny nose, dry cough, aches, tired, vomiting/diarrhea
- ✓ Do not send sick children to school.
- ✓ Keep all children home for 24 hours after any fever is gone (without the use of medication to lower it).
- ✓ Wash your hands frequently and teach children to do the same.
- ✓ Cover coughs.
- ✓ **Try to distance yourself from people with flu-like-illness.**
 - Schools will be sending home all children with flu-like-illness.
 - Children will be isolated as much as possible while waiting to go home.
 - Stay home if you are sick, except to get medical care.
- ✓ **Seek treatment** (antiviral medication needs to be given within the first 48 hours of H1N1 flu to be the most effective) or medical advice for anyone sick with flu-like-illness who falls into a high risk group for complications (pregnant, under 6 months of age, 6 months to 4 years old, over 4 with an underlying health condition).
- ✓ **Seek Immediate Help** if any flu-like-illness seems to get better and then becomes worse again or any time there is difficulty with breathing or staying hydrated. If in doubt, call your medical provider!

Gibraltar will continue to do our part during the school day to keep children healthy by following the CDC and WCPHD guidelines for our current rates of infection and severity of cases. Additionally, we are:

- Cleaning surfaces that are touched frequently by many people
- Allowing time to wash hands with soap & water.
- Teaching cough etiquette.
- Providing hand sanitizer when soap & water are not available.
- Sending sick children home.

If further action is required, you will be notified. Until that time, please view this letter as an up-date. We will not send more letters based solely on new cases in our district.

Sincerely,

Bruce S. Burger
Superintendent