

GREENWICH PUBLIC SCHOOLS UPDATE

GREENWICH PUBLIC SCHOOLS HEALTH UPDATE – MAY 25, 2009

*Please check the Greenwich Public Schools Web Site regularly
for the most up to date and accurate information:
<http://www.greenwichschools.org/page.cfm?p=6651>*

School Opening Status - Western Middle School and Glenville classes at Western Middle School will remain open and on schedule, tomorrow, Tuesday, May 26, 2009.

H1N1 Cases - There have been no additional confirmed cases of the H1N1 flu virus since the last update. However, we do expect to hear from the State Department of Health on additional testing by the end of the day, on Tuesday, May 26, 2009. To date, there have been 11 confirmed cases of the H1N1 flu virus.

Activities/Sports - Regarding interschool activities and sports: Generally, if students and staff are not exhibiting symptoms and are in school – then activities and sports will continue as scheduled. There may be exceptions made on a case-by-case basis. The following are exceptions that have been made primarily due to the fact that either the teacher running the program and/or a number of students participating are ill and are at home:

- 5th grade Orientation at Western Middle School for Glenville School, Parkway School and Hamilton Avenue School students has been postponed
- Glenville's Spring Concert at Western Middle School has been postponed.
- Adventure Racing for Western Middle School and Eastern Middle School students scheduled for 5/27/09 has been canceled.

GDoH Attendance Guidance - The Greenwich Department of Health has issued an important notice with School Attendance Guidance for **ALL** schools. It has been posted to the web site – all parents and staff are urged to read the memo and to adhere to the guidelines. In summary, the guidance states that anyone exhibiting flu-like symptoms should remain at home *for a minimum of seven days*.

Meeting with Health Professionals – The Greenwich Department of Health is setting up a meeting with area health professionals for parents and staff, to provide information and to answer questions – Please check the web site regularly for notice of the meeting.

WMS Washington D.C. Trip - District and school professionals are working with WorldStrides, the company organizing the Washington, D.C. trip, to reschedule the trip for some time in June, if possible. There are no guarantees that this will be possible.

The District is aware that the cancellation and/or postponement of this trip will result in a negative financial impact on families that did not elect to take out insurance for the trip. We will make every effort to explore options for these families.

RECAP OF EVENTS/DECISIONS:

* On May 23, 2009, after consultation with and as recommended by State and Local Departments of Health and physicians, Superintendent of Schools, Dr. Betty J. Sternberg, canceled the Western Middle School 8th Grade trip to Washington, D.C planned for May 26-29, 2009. Dr. Sternberg said, “While this was a very difficult decision, after a thorough review of all of the facts, consultation with several health professionals at the State and local level, and two meetings with Western Middle School parents, we have decided that it is in the best interest of our students to cancel the trip.”

* Given the information available by May 23, 2009, regarding the rate and severity of student illnesses, the school medical advisor and Greenwich Hospital infectious disease physician recommended that the district cancel or postpone the Washington trip.

* By May 23, 2009, Nineteen (19), 6th grade, WMS students had experienced flu-like symptoms, were tested by a healthcare provider using the quick flu test and received negative results – these students are sick but not with a flu.

* By May 23, 2009, Fourteen (14), 6th grade, WMS students have experienced flu-like symptoms, were tested by a healthcare provider using the quick flu test and received positive results – these students are sick with a flu but at this time we do not know if it is H1N1 – the State Department of Health is conducting additional tests to determine if their flu is the H1N1 flu virus.

* On By May 23, 2009, The District did not expect to have the results of these H1N1 tests until mid to late week the following week.

* By May 23, 2009, additional cases of students with flu like symptoms at WMS have not been reported to the school or Town Dept of Health.

* On May 22, 2009, there were an uncommonly high number of absences at WMS, however, most did not appear to be due to student illnesses.

* By Wednesday, May 20, 2009, approximately 55 students had been to the infirmary at Nature’s Classroom and 19 were sick enough (multiple symptoms, fever) to send home, the other students were experiencing a range of symptoms but were not sick enough to have parents called to pick them up.

* On Monday, May 18, 2009, 130, WMS 6th graders went to Nature’s Classroom – Although it was unknown to the school at the time, one of the students had been diagnosed (using the quick test) with a “flu” and was placed on a short course of anti-viral medication. The student then reported to the school on Monday, not exhibiting any symptoms and boarded the bus for the trip. The District was unaware of any of the student’s status until Thursday, May 21, 2009.

* The decision to cancel the remainder of the Nature’s Classroom trip was made using the following considerations:

- distance from home if more students became ill
- the severity of illness in some of the sick students
- the higher probability of infection given the living situations (multiple students in bed/bunk rooms)
- amount of activity required of students
- ability to dedicate staff to students who were ill
- national attention about the spread of H1N1

For more information contact:

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State of Connecticut at Tel [860] 509-7729

For more information on H1N1 flu:

- * Greenwich Department of Health: www.greenwichct.org
- * Connecticut Flu Watch: www.ct.gov/ctfluwatch/swineflu
- * Connecticut Department of Public Health: www.ct.gov/health
- * Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: www.cdc.gov
- * Centers for Disease Control and Prevention School Guidance:
www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/k12_dismissal.htm

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