



Zion's Hill Preschool H1N1 Flu Update

Dear Parent/Guardian,

As part of our preparations for the upcoming school year this letter is being sent to you to communicate how we intend to respond in the event of a return of the H1N1 Flu this fall. In this letter you will find the following information:

- How and when we will communicate with you
- What you should do if your child displays flu-like symptoms
- What we can all do to mitigate the effects of a flu outbreak
- How a decision to close school will be made
- How parents can help to reduce the impact of H1N1 virus

How and when we will communicate with you:

The most current information will be posted on the Zion's Hill Preschool website www.zhpp.org. We will send a letter home with your child to inform you of the first confirmed case at our school.

We will also send a letter home if the following should happen:

- A significant change in our situation, such as the need to close school
- A significant change in Centers for Disease Control (CDC) or Connecticut Department of Public Health (DPH) protocols

All other information regarding H1N1 Flu will be posted on our website, so please check it frequently for updates.

What you should do if your child displays flu-like symptoms:

The exclusion criterion recommended by the CDC and DPH as of the date of this letter states that if your child displays flu-like symptoms (a fever of 100°F **and** a cough **or** a sore throat) they should be kept home until they are symptom-free for 24 hours. The criterion is subject to change, so please check our website for up-to-date information. If you contact Zion's Hill to report the absence, it would be helpful if you report that he or she is displaying "flu-like" symptoms. Consult with your child's pediatrician regarding treatment.

According to the CDC and DPH, the most effective way to slow or prevent the spread of the flu is "social distancing." This means that when your child has presented flu-like symptoms and is out of school you should make every effort to avoid having him or her in contact with other children. We realize that this could be an inconvenience, but it is very important if we are to restrict the spread of H1N1 Flu.

What we can all do to mitigate the effects of a flu outbreak:

According to the CDC and DPH, proper hand washing or sanitizing, and social distancing are two of the most effective ways to restrict the spread of influenza. These steps should be reinforced at school and at home. We will remain in active contact with the Town Department of Health and the Town's Flu Response Team.

If you or your child has a compromised immune system or other condition that would classify you as "high risk," you should consult with your physician to see if you or your child should take additional precautionary measures.

At this time the Federal Government is planning to provide H1N1 vaccine for school-aged children. We do not know how this will be distributed at this time.

Information about the availability of H1N1 vaccine will be posted on the Town of Wilton Flu Response Team website- www.wilton.ct.org.

How a decision to close school will be made:

The research on the effect of school closing on the spread of the flu is inconclusive and we will likely not close school unless the level of student/faculty absenteeism interferes with our ability to function.

Although there are many uncertainties associated with the H1N1 Flu, we will continue to follow the guidance of the Centers for Disease Control and the State Department of Public Health. We thank you for your patience, understanding, and cooperation.

How parents can help to reduce the impact of H1N1 virus:

If you or your child is sick with a fever and sore throat and/or cough, stay at home until fever-free for at least 24 hours *without* using fever-reducing medication. Wash hands frequently or use alcohol based hand sanitizer. Cover your cough and sneeze into a tissue or your elbow. Get vaccinated for seasonal influenza in October or November. Contact your primary physician for further instructions about H1N1 vaccination this fall.

Answer these questions every morning before sending your child to school:

1. Does your child have a **fever** (100° F or 37. 7°C)?
2. Does your child have a **sore throat** or **cough**?

If you answered yes to both of these questions, see above and contact your primary care physician.

For more information and on-going updates:

- Connecticut Department of Public Health H1N1 Flu (Swine Flu) web site:
<http://www.ct.gov/ctfluwatch> and Town of Wilton Flu Response Team at
<http://www.wiltonct.org/fluresponseteam>
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) web site:
<http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu>