

Dear Parent/Guardian:

The MA Department of Public Health has notified the public that a Golden Hill School student died from influenza. We have posted this announcement (<https://www.mass.gov/node/270126>) on our website.

Like all of you, Pentucket Lake School was deeply saddened to learn of the student's death. The Haverhill School community would like to share an important health message during this dangerous flu season. Below is a message from Dr. John Maddox, our school district physician.

The peak of flu season is often scary. So far there have been 64 pediatric deaths nationwide. This compares to 110 last year. Flu vaccines make a difference. 80% of the children who have died so far this year did not receive a flu vaccine. Children almost always give you some warning that they are becoming sick, usually starting with a fever of at least 100 degrees. Most children with the flu will have a mild illness, do not require a visit to the doctor and will recover within a few days. However, even healthy children can get very sick.

Here's what we, as a school district, can do to minimize the flu's impact:

1. *Make sure sick children and staff stay home until they are no longer contagious*
2. *Take everyday precautions to prevent the spread of germs:*
 - *Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand rub.*
 - *Clean and disinfect surfaces and objects that may be contaminated with germs.*
 - *Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth because germs spread this way. Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze.*
3. *Encourage people to get a flu vaccine — it's not too late!*

The Flu Guide for Parents from the CDC gives important information and can be found on Pentucket Lake School's website.

<https://www.cdc.gov/flu/pdf/freeresources/family/flu-guide-for-parents-2017.pdf>
https://www.cdc.gov/flu/pdf/freeresources/spanish/flu_guide_parents_sp.pdf

If you have questions about your child, please call your child's primary care provider or the state department of public health at (617) 624-6000 or (617) 983-6800. Our Haverhill public health nurse, Mary Connolly, would also like us to relay that it is not too late to get the flu vaccine. She has free flu vaccines for children. Parents may contact her by calling (978) 374-2390 Ext. 15 or by email at mconnolly@cityofhaverhil.com.

We believe we are taking all necessary steps to make sure each school is "well scrubbed" and has been cleaned in a more aggressive manner these past few weeks. We will continue to keep families informed as information becomes available. Please do not

hesitate to contact myself or the school nurse if you have any questions or concerns. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Dianne Connolly

IMPORTANT LINKS TO THIS MESSAGE

Department of Public Health Notice:

<https://www.mass.gov/node/270126>

CDC Family Flu Guide (English):

<https://www.cdc.gov/flu/pdf/freeresources/family/flu-guide-for-parents-2017.pdf>

CDC Family Flu Guide

(Spanish): https://www.cdc.gov/flu/pdf/freeresources/spanish/flu_guide_parents_sp.pdf

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