



# Melrose Public Schools Administrative Offices

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Dear Parent and Guardians,

August 26, 2009

Last school year, some of our students and staff became ill with the H1N1 influenza virus. Indications are that this pandemic will continue into this school year. As you may know, flu can be easily spread from person to person. Therefore, we are taking steps to reduce the spread of flu in Melrose schools. We want to keep the school open to students and functioning in a normal manner during this flu season. **But, we need your help to do this.**

We are working closely with the Melrose Health Department to monitor flu conditions and make decisions about the best steps to take concerning schools. We will keep you updated with new information as it becomes available.

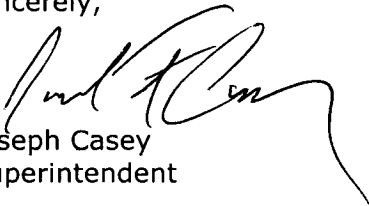
We are doing everything we can to keep our school functioning as usual. The schools will be cleaned and disinfected on a regular basis. Signs are posted at the entrance to each school reminding students and staff to stay home if they are sick. Signs are posted in every bathroom reviewing appropriate hand washing techniques. Students and staff will shown proper hand washing techniques as well as cough/sneeze etiquette. Sick children will stay in the nurses' office with a mask until they can be dismissed to a parent or guardian. We will be following the state's guidelines to keep sick students and staff home for at least 24 hours after they no longer have a fever.

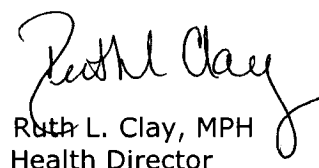
Here are a few things you can do to help:

- **Teach your children to wash their hands** often with soap and water or an alcohol-based hand rub. You can set a good example by doing this yourself.
- **Teach your children not to share personal items** like drinks, food or unwashed utensils, and to cover their coughs and sneezes with tissues. Covering up their coughs or sneezes using the elbow, arm or sleeve instead of the hand when a tissue is unavailable.
- **Know the signs and symptoms of the flu.** Symptoms of the flu include fever (100 degrees Fahrenheit, 37.8 degrees Celsius or greater), cough, sore throat, a runny or stuffy nose, body aches, headache, and feeling very tired. Some people may also vomit or have diarrhea.
- **Keep sick children at home** for at least 24 hours *after* they no longer have fever or do not have signs of fever, without using fever-reducing drugs. Keeping children with a fever at home will reduce the number of people who may get infected.
- **Do not send children to school if they are sick.** Any children who are determined to be sick while at school *will be sent home*.

For more information, visit [www.flu.gov](http://www.flu.gov), or call 1-800-CDC-INFO for the most current information about the flu. For more information about flu in our community and what our schools are doing, visit [www.melroseschools.com](http://www.melroseschools.com). We will notify you of any additional changes to our school's strategy to prevent the spread of flu.

Sincerely,

  
Joseph Casey  
Superintendent

  
Ruth L. Clay, MPH  
Health Director