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Dear Parents and Staff,

My last communication to you has brought forth an increased awareness of H1N1. Since last Friday, several parents have reported flu-like symptoms with their children. Most of these students have been tested and diagnosed with Type A Influenza. We do have a handful of families being treated with Tamiflu.

We have had 3 communications where it has been reported that a child has tested positive for H1N1 (Central, HMS, WJH). Similarly, isolated cases of H1N1 are seen now within Niles and New Trier Townships. Luckily all cases of the flu have been mild with fevers lasting from 1-2 days and the children's energy levels quickly rebounding. In all situations, where there is a fever with flu-like symptoms, students have remained home for 5 school days.

On Friday, the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) reported that official testing for H1N1 is not being done at IDPH because of the length of time it takes to receive the results; that the H1N1 currently appears to have mild effect; and some doctors are prescribing tamiflu as a precaution when there is a positive test for Influenza Type A. Influenza Type A can be diagnosed within the doctor's office, and some doctors then treat Type A Influenza as if it is H1N1.

A few points to consider: if your child does test positive for Influenza Type A, this does not mean that they necessarily have H1N1. If your child is being treated with Tamiflu, that does not necessarily mean H1N1. More and more H1N1 is being seen like a typical flu. However, we continue to need and appreciate open communication to any flu-like cases.

The recommended IDPH protocol for dealing with H1N1 in schools is to keep schools open, which is exactly what we will do in District 39. We will continue to closely monitor attendance rates, which remain normal at this time. We will also continue our aggressive new cleaning procedures for the schools and hygiene practices with the students.

Fortunately, the initial fear and concern about H1N1 has declined considerably. However, we will continue to take great care and caution. Moving forward we will be asking for families to supply verification from a Doctor's office of positive H1N1 test results. Students will be asked to remain home for 5 school days. School nurses will continue to call and inquire about student illness. Attendance will continue to be closely monitored. IDPH indicates that when flu-related absence rates approach 10%, then we should consider school closing.

Luckily we continue to experience typical absence rates, and luckily the end of school is insight! As we approach the end of the school year, thank you very much for continued support with keeping sick children at home.

Thanks!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Ray' in a cursive, slightly slanted font.