

HAMILTON TOWNSHIP SCHOOL DISTRICT
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Did you know? Every year there are at least 8.8 billion bus trips taking students from home to school in the United States. There are more than 440,000 school buses on the road, transporting over 24 million students to school and home and other related activities. In the course of any given day, there are bound to be accidents involving school buses.

On December 2, 2010, the Hamilton Township School District experienced one of those unexpected and very unfortunate accidents with a group of William Davies School students while on their way home. We were immediately contacted by the First Student bus company and the Hamilton Township Police Department. The Emergency Management Plan for the district was immediately implemented. All of the students were examined by the paramedics (either at the scene or at the school) and were then released to their parents. I am pleased to report that although this was a serious accident, only a few injuries were sustained by the students. As you can all imagine, the parental and student stress associated with being in a serious accident was quite high.

On a day to day basis, the health, safety and welfare of our students remains our highest priority. Please note that when our students leave the building to go home each day that they are required to wear their seatbelts. As parents, please join us as partners in reminding your children to wear their seatbelt each and every day! In order to further promote their personal bus safety, please review these recommendations with your child.

Please follow these recommendations:

1. Wait until the bus comes to a complete stop and the driver advises it is safe to board. The driver is the only one who can fully view all traffic on the road.
2. Once aboard, listen to the driver; don't rush or push others out of the way.
3. You can assist the district by following these simple directions:
 - Please buckle your seat belt immediately!
 - Stay in your assigned seat at all times. Do not move out of your seat once the bus is in motion.
 - Keep the noise level down and keep head, hands, and feet inside the bus.
 - Do not ever throw anything inside the bus or out the windows.
 - Cooperate with the driver; always follow his or her instructions.
 - If you experience problems on the bus, please contact the school administration.

The winter influenza season is upon us again.... what should I do to prepare for this influenza season?

Many students and parents are concerned about the winter flu and wonder what sort of influenza season is expected this year? Influenza seasons are unpredictable in a number of ways. Although epidemics of influenza happen every year, the timing, severity, and length of the epidemic depends on many factors, including what influenza viruses are spreading and whether they match the viruses in the vaccine. Last influenza season (2009-2010) saw the emergence of the 2009 H1N1 influenza virus (previously called "novel H1N1" or "swine influenza"). This virus caused the first influenza pandemic (global outbreak of disease caused by a new influenza virus) in more than 40 years. While not certain, it is likely that 2009 H1N1 viruses will continue to spread along with seasonal viruses in the United States during the 2010-2011 influenza season.

The Center for Disease Control (CDC) recommends a yearly influenza vaccine for everyone as the first and most important step in protecting against this serious disease. While there are many different influenza viruses, the influenza vaccine is designed to protect against the three main influenza strains that research indicates will cause the most illness during the influenza season. The 2010-2011 influenza vaccine will protect against three different influenza viruses: an H3N2 virus, an influenza B virus and the H1N1 virus that caused so much illness last season. Getting the influenza vaccine soon after it becomes available each year is always a good idea, and the protection you get from vaccination will last throughout the influenza season. Please contact your health care provider if you should have medical questions related to the vaccine or influenza.

In addition, you can take everyday preventive steps like staying away from sick people whenever possible and washing your hands to reduce the spread of germs. Hand sanitizers have been strategically placed in all of our buildings for your convenience. Lastly, if you are sick with influenza, stay home from work or school to prevent spreading this seasonal illness to others.

We hope that you have found this newsletter informative. If you should have additional questions or concerns please feel free to contact us at the numbers listed above.

On behalf of the Hamilton Township School District, we would like to take this opportunity to wish you and your families a safe, happy and healthy holiday season!