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Dear Parents and Guardians,

As you know, flu can easily be spread from person to person. Therefore, we are taking steps to reduce the spread of flu in the South Orange-Maplewood School District. We want to keep our schools 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 Centers for Disease Control (CDC), the New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services, the New Jersey Department of Education and the local health departments to monitor flu conditions and make decisions about the best steps to take concerning our schools. We will keep you updated with new information as it becomes available.

If the flu becomes more severe, we may take additional steps to prevent its circulation. For now we are doing everything we can to keep our schools functioning as usual. Here are a few things you can do to help:

- **Teach your children to wash their hands** often with soap and water or to use an alcohol-based hand rub. You can set a good example by doing this yourself.
- **Teach your children not to share personal items** such as drinks, food or unwashed utensils.
- **Teach your children to cover their coughs and sneezes** with tissues, or to cover 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 and/or sore throat. Symptoms may also include runny or stuffy nose, body aches or headache. 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 the use of fever-reducing medicine). Keeping children at home when they have a fever will reduce the number of people who may get infected. The CDC is not currently recommending the seven-day exclusion from school for children with influenza-like illness (ILI) as it did this past spring.
- **Do not send children to school if they are sick.** Any child who is determined to be sick while at school will be sent home.

For more information, visit 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 district is doing, visit the district website at www.southorangemaplewood.org. We will notify you of any additional changes to our district's strategy to prevent the circulation of flu.

Sincerely,

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