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"Providing Quality Education Since 1829"

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Date: August 26, 2009

Subject: H1N1 Virus (Swine Flu) and Perfect Attendance Awards

Welcome to a new school year! Our first day of school went smoothly. We are so happy to have our students back with us. The school is a lonely place in the summer without them!

We are sure you have been reading information about the H1N1 virus (swine flu). We are working with the Health Department, the CDC, and our school nurse, Mrs. Bigley to balance the risks of illness among our students and staff with the benefits of keeping students in school. The CDC recommends that students and staff with flu-like illness stay home at least 24 hours after they no longer have a fever or signs of a fever. This should be determined without the use of fever-reducing medications (any medicine that contains ibuprofen or acetaminophen). This is recommended because students who are sick with the flu and come to school may act as a point of spread and can then easily spread the flu to other students and their families. So far, with the 2009 H1N1 flu, the largest number of cases has been in people between the ages of 5 and 24 years of age.

Therefore, to encourage students to remain home when they are ill with flu-like symptoms, we are **eliminating the Perfect Attendance Awards for the entire year.** All of our other awards will still be given out and our Honor Assemblies will continue as planned. We will also be encouraging everyone to practice good hand hygiene by washing their hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds (the time it takes to sing "Happy Birthday" twice), especially after coughing and sneezing. Hand sanitizer will also be available to our students and staff. The main way that the flu spreads is from person to person in the droplets produced by coughs and sneezes, so we will remind students to cover their mouth and nose with a tissue when coughing or sneezing. Please help us keep all everyone well by reminding your children of these important hygiene practices.

There will soon be information on our district website with more information about this virus and how to lessen your risk of contracting it. You can access this information at **www.leechburg.k12.pa.us**.

We all need to take personal responsibility for helping to slow the spread of this virus. Please do not send your child to school with a fever that is accompanied by a cough or sneezing. Please remind them to cover their mouth and nose when coughing or sneezing with a tissue and to throw all tissues in a trash can. Make sure your child stays home until they have been fever-free without a fever reducing medication for at least 24 hours. We appreciate your assistance and cooperation!

Sincerely,

Cynthia H. Portman, D. Ed.