

GLOUCESTER PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Health Services

O'Maley 978-281-9847
Pre School 978-281-9848
Beeman 978-281-9825
E Glou 978-281-9830
Plum Cove 978-282-3030
Veteran's 978-281-9820
West Parish 978-281-9835
GHS 978-281-9868

October 1, 2017

Dear Parent/Guardian:

The Gloucester Schools will receive **preservative-free influenza vaccine** from the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (MDPH) to be used for students in our schools. We will be hosting school-based influenza vaccination clinics during school hours in the **week of October 16, 2017**.

The MDPH and the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) recommends an annual flu vaccine as the first and best way to protect against influenza. This fall, everyone 6 months of age or older should get vaccinated against the flu as soon as 2017-2018 influenza vaccine becomes available, even if they got vaccinated last season.

Only the injectable type of flu vaccine (the shot that goes in the arm) will be available this year. This is true whether your child gets vaccinated at school or at the doctor's office. The ACIP continues to recommend either the inactivated influenza vaccine (IIV) or the recombinant influenza vaccine (RIV).

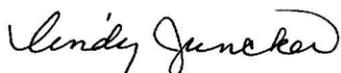
Seasonal flu is caused by influenza viruses that infect people every year. In New England, flu season usually begins in December and lasts until April. The most common flu symptoms are sudden onset of fever, fatigue or weakness, body aches, and dry cough. The flu is spread mostly through droplets from the mouth, nose, and throat. This happens when a person with the flu coughs or sneezes near another person. People who have the flu can spread it to others 1 day before they become sick and up to 3-5 days after they feel symptoms. Children with the flu can spread it to others for up to 7 days after they become sick. Always practice good hygiene/frequent hand washing.

Massachusetts has an electronic database called the Massachusetts Immunization Information System (MIIS), for all immunization records. Your child's flu vaccination will be entered into this database. There is more information about the MIIS on the back of this letter.

Attached is a permission form and vaccine information statement. Please read the vaccine information statement, and then carefully read and answer each question on the permission form (front and back). The completed form must be returned to the school by **Wednesday, October 11, 2017** in order for your child to participate in the vaccination clinic.

If you have any other questions or concerns speak with your child's doctor or feel free to call the school nurse at your child's school. If you wish to change consent status, please contact the school nurse at your child's school to complete the necessary documents.

Sincerely,



Cindy N. Juncker, MEd, RN, BSN, NCSN
Nurse Leader

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The Massachusetts Immunization Information System (MIIS) is a statewide, electronic record-keeping system (or registry) that keeps track of your immunizations (shots). This new system will help keep complete and accurate records of the shots that you or your children get from any doctor or healthcare provider in Massachusetts. It was developed by the Immunization Program at the Massachusetts Department of Public Health. The MIIS will keep all of your important immunization information together in one place for you and all of your health care providers so that they will know which shots you and your children are due for and when.

Immunization registries like the MIIS help healthcare providers make sure that everyone is up-to-date on their immunizations to keep us all healthy and prevent the spread of harmful disease. The system has been created according to state law, which requires that healthcare providers who give immunizations report them to the MIIS. All information in the MIIS is kept confidential. You may choose to limit the providers who may see your or your child's immunization records in the MIIS. If you prefer that your or your child's immunization history **not** be shared with other healthcare providers who use the MIIS, you must complete the MIIS Objection (or Withdrawal of Objection) Form. If you change your mind, you can fill out the same form to have your or your child's immunization information shared in the MIIS. The Objection form can be found here:
<http://www.mass.gov/eohhs/docs/dph/cdc/immunization/miis-objection-form.pdf>

For more information, visit the MIIS website or contact the Massachusetts Immunization Program directly at 617-983-6800 or 888-658-2850.

<http://www.mass.gov/eohhs/gov/departments/dph/programs/id/immunization/miis/public-health-cdc-miis-info-parents-and-patients.html>