

**Andrew J. Spano**  
County Executive

Department of Health

Joshua Lipsman, M.D., J.D., M.P.H.  
Commissioner

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Dear School Administrator:

Media coverage has served to heighten public concern about the spread of avian flu worldwide. While avian flu is not a threat to us right now, now is the time to get the message out that handwashing and respiratory etiquette are among some of the best ways to prevent the spread of any kind of flu and many other diseases. We are writing today to enlist your assistance in getting the message out to school children and their families.

To help you do this, we have enclosed a variety of materials to educate students about these practices. You will find posters, flyers, backpack inserts, reward certificates and fact sheets that are suitable for various age groups. Please use these materials around your school(s) to educate students about these valuable practices. These materials are available to your school, free of charge, through the Health Department's website, [www.westchestergov.com/health](http://www.westchestergov.com/health).

I encourage each school to take a proactive approach in preventing the spread of germs by using these materials and getting the kids involved in the campaign. Incorporating such practices in the classrooms by creating fun, interactive lessons that focus on good health manners will be beneficial in reinforcing these important protection measures. Some things that you can do in your school(s) include:

- Hosting a poster contest and displaying the children's artwork around the school;
- Having children write creative stories or rhymes highlighting what might happen if you do not wash your hands or cover your cough;
- Teach children how to wash their hands properly and award them with the enclosed "Scrub Club" certificate when they demonstrate handwashing success.

Participating in these types of activities is sure to get kids thinking about better personal hygiene and how they can help stop the spread of disease. In addition, the Health Department is available for partnerships and presentations at the request of each school. Health educators are available to visit classrooms and perform handwashing demonstrations for students using a special soap that glows under a black light where germs remain after washing hands incorrectly. To arrange for a presentation, contact the Health Department by calling (914) 813-5000. Educational materials are available through the Health Department's W.A.S.H. Up Westchester campaign and can be downloaded from the Health Department's website at [www.westchestergov.com/health](http://www.westchestergov.com/health).

Thank you for your assistance in making Westchester a healthier place to live and learn.

Sincerely,