

February 2018

Dear Parent or Guardian:

Cold and flu season is upon us and we are seeing a large number of students with flu symptoms. To prevent widespread flu in the school, we recommend that your child stay home from school if experiencing flu or cold symptoms. To decide whether or not to send your child to school, please consider the following guidelines.

Consider keeping your child at home for an extra day of rest and observation if he or she has any of the following symptoms:

- Very stuffy or runny nose and/or a cough
- Mild sore throat (no fever, no known exposure to strep)
- Headache
- Mild stomach ache

Definitely keep your child at home and consider seeking medical attention if he or she has any of these symptoms:

- Fever (greater than 100 degrees by mouth. Your child may return to school only after his or her temperature has been consistently below 100 degrees, by mouth, for a minimum of 24 hours without the use of fever reducing medications)
- Vomiting (even once)
- Diarrhea
- Chills
- General malaise or feelings of fatigue, discomfort, weakness or muscle aches
- Frequent congested (wet) or croupy cough
- Shortness of breath
- Lots of nasal congestion with frequent blowing of nose

To help prevent the flu and other colds, teach your children good hygiene habits:

- Wash hands frequently
- Do not touch eyes, nose or mouth
- Cover mouth and nose when sneezing or coughing, use a paper tissue, throw it away and then wash hands
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick

The flu shot is one of the best ways to prevent illness from the seasonal influenza virus. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends adults and children receive the flu vaccine each year. Yearly flu vaccination is needed because immunity against the flu wears off over time. In addition, the flu virus strains often change, so the vaccine also changes from year-to-year in order to match the flu viruses expected to be circulating in the community.

Colds and Flu are the most contagious during the first 48 hours. A child who has a fever should remain at home until "fever free" for a minimum of 24 hours.

Often when a child awakens with vague complaints (the way colds and flu begin), it is wise to observe your child at home for an hour or two before deciding whether or not they should attend school. Your child should be physically able to participate in all school activities upon return to school. Keeping a sick child at home will help minimize the spread of infections and viruses in the classroom.