

October 21, 2009

Dear Parents and Guardians:

We have been advised from the Office of Catholic Education that one of our parents has been diagnosed with pandemic influenza H1N1 or swine flu. The students of the parent will remain home until the doctor has given permission to return to school. Our school community of Mother of Divine Grace is taking this flu season very seriously and following measures outlined by the Pennsylvania Department of Health.

At our school, students and staff are encouraged to wash their hands frequently. Also, surfaces that are regularly touched or handled are disinfected often. We also ask that any student who has a fever accompanied by a cough, sore throat, vomiting or diarrhea be kept home from school. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention now stipulates that a student with the flu will need to stay home until he or she is **fever free for at least 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medications (Tylenol, Motrin, etc.)**. In most cases, a child would be fever-free in anywhere from three to five days. **It also states that the children be symptom free (vomit and diarrhea free) for 24 hours.**

With a confirmed case of influenza H1N1 at our school, we would like to reiterate some important information you received in a recent parent communications about this new flu strain.

We encourage you to speak to your children about taking the following everyday precautions to help prevent the spread of germs that cause respiratory illnesses such as influenza H1N1—wash hands often with soap and water, keep nails trimmed and cover your nose and mouth with a tissue or your sleeve when coughing or sneezing. It would also be helpful to discuss, as a family, plans for caring for your child, should he or she develop the flu. When a child is diagnosed with the flu he/she must stay home from school for 5-7 days.

Please do not send your child to school if he/she is saying he/she does not feel well. We all need to be pro active. We need to be working together. We thank you in advance for your cooperation and understanding.

Parents may also want to consider having children vaccinated against seasonal flu and this new flu strain. Recently, persons between ages 5 and 24 were identified as a priority group to receive the vaccine for the H1N1 flu strain. The Department of Health estimates the first doses of the new vaccine will be available in October and details of distribution of the vaccine will be forthcoming.

We are asking for donations of hand sanitizer, disinfecting wipes and tissues to be used in Art, Music and Gym classes.

For more information on the flu, and how you can protect your family, please visit www.health.state.pa.us, www.cdc.gov and www.flu.gov.

As always, the safety of our students remains our first priority. Please feel free to contact us directly with any concerns, questions or feedback.

Sincerely,
Rev. Joseph Logrip
Mrs. Jane Ellen Lockhart